



International Dalit Solidarity Network

WORKING GLOBALLY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION BASED ON WORK AND DESCENT



2009
annual report

Dhaka, Bangladesh, September 2009 The Dalits of Dhaka's slum colonies bathe and wash their clothes in the same place – with no privacy and little sanitation. Lack of access to basic amenities is a serious issue for millions of Dalits in Bangladesh. This photo featured in an article in the Guardian newspaper by UK journalist Mary Griffin



Moni Rani, Dalit woman living in a slum colony in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to the Guardian newspaper, 23 November



– If you are not considered to be human, human rights do not apply to you.

– Caste makes you powerful, but your caste can also make you powerless. The time has come for Dalit women to occupy leadership roles, to create a just and equal society.



Manjula Pradeep, Dalit activist and Director of the Navsarjan Trust, India, at the UN Forum on Minority Issues, November

IDSN International Dalit Solidarity Network

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– The time has come to eradicate the shameful concept of caste.



UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, in an opinion article, October

Cover page:

Pachnali, Far Western Province, Nepal, November 2007

Dalit children in a mountain village in Nepal. They are often born into specific caste-related professions and enslaved by a system of bonded labour where their lives are controlled by a powerful landlord.

Executive Summary

“Tearing down the wall of caste”

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, made history in 2009. In an unprecedented recognition of the struggle for Dalit rights, she stated that the time has come to eradicate the shameful concept of caste, and called on the international community to support such efforts. Comparing the campaign against caste discrimination to the ones that helped put an end to transatlantic slavery and apartheid, she argued that “we can and must tear down the barriers of caste too”.

The High Commissioner’s powerful thoughts are expressed in the opinion article “Tearing down the wall of caste”¹, published in October. She speaks from the depths of her own experience as a former anti-apartheid activist with Indian roots, and her words represent one of the greatest achievements of the Dalit cause till date. This is an outcome of decades of commitment, struggle and determination of Dalits in local communities, enforced by national level advocacy, and, over the last decade, supported by a growing sense of responsibility among international actors to end this form of discrimination.

Ms Pillay’s call for action is greatly encouraging for Dalits and similarly discriminated communities all over the world. The year 2009 offered other important benchmarks in caste-affected countries as well as internationally, demonstrating a broadening acceptance of the struggle against caste discrimination as a key theme in the human rights, development and security discourse of our time.

Several governments voiced their support for the draft UN Principles and Guidelines to eliminate caste discrimination, the first comprehensive UN framework to prevent and address this serious human rights issue and a cornerstone of IDSN’s work for several years. At a UN Human Rights Council parallel event in September, Nepal became the first caste-affected country to officially endorse this international framework. The Government of Pakistan has also expressed its support for the UN guidelines.

The Government of India, on the contrary, habitually refusing to recognise caste discrimination as an international human rights problem, was challenged on several occasions, internationally and at home, to change its stance and support the efforts of the international community. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights appealed to all states to endorse the norms, which could lead to the establishment of a much needed UN monitoring mechanism, and also called for a Convention on caste.

In 2009, IDSN intensified its lobbying efforts directed at international and intergovernmental institutions, national

governments, civil society actors and international media. Sustained input and advocacy was underpinned by a series of interventions at the UN and the EU. A cross section of Dalit leaders from affected countries met with parliamentarians, diplomats, officials, and UN mandate holders at events and meetings organised by IDSN and contributed their expertise or policy advice to relevant forums, briefings and seminars. This included UN parallel events, an EU briefing on caste discrimination hosted by the Swedish Presidency, and a regional seminar in Dhaka on “Indigenous People, Minorities and Dalits” organised by the European Commission. At the Durban Review Conference, a large group of Dalits manifested their discontent at the continued neglect of the review mechanism to cater for a discriminated group of 260 million people.

UN Special Procedures increasingly voiced their concerns about caste discrimination based on enhanced

Caste discrimination

Caste systems divide people into unequal and hierarchical social groups. Dominant castes enjoy most rights coupled with least duties, while those at the bottom perform most duties, but have few or no rights. They are considered ‘lesser human beings’, ‘impure’ and ‘polluting’ to other caste groups. They are known to be ‘untouchable’ and subjected to so-called ‘untouchability practices’ in both public and private spheres. ‘Untouchables’ – known in South Asia as Dalits – are often forcibly assigned the most dirty, menial and hazardous jobs, such as cleaning human waste. This kind of work adds to the stigmatisation they face from the surrounding society. Consequently, they are often very poor and excluded from decision making and meaningful participation in public and civil life. Caste discrimination affects an estimated 260 million people worldwide, the vast majority living in South Asia. It involves massive violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It is often outlawed in countries affected by it, but a lack of implementation of legislation and caste-bias within the justice systems largely leave Dalits without protection. The division of a society into castes is a global phenomenon not exclusively practised within any particular religion or belief system. In South Asia, caste discrimination is traditionally rooted in the Hindu caste system, according to which Dalits are considered ‘outcastes’. However, caste systems and the ensuing discrimination have spread into Christian, Buddhist, Muslim and Sikh communities. They are also found in Africa, other parts of Asia, the Middle East, the Pacific and in Diaspora communities around the world.

Highlights in 2009

- Lobbying with UN Special Procedures, including those working on contemporary forms of racism, slavery, violence against women, minorities, water and sanitation and extreme poverty
- Universal Periodic Review of Bangladesh in the Human Rights Council
- UN treaty body review of Pakistan by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- Adoption of Human Rights Council decision to publish completed Sub-Commission reports and publication of the final report on discrimination based on work and descent
- Global Ecumenical Conference on Justice for Dalits held by the World Council of Churches and LWF in Bangkok
- Nepal seminar on the inclusion of Dalit rights in the new constitution in Nepal organised by CHRJ and DNF
- Formal launch of the Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network in Karachi, Pakistan
- Interventions and parallel events highlighting the rights of Dalits at the Durban Review Conference
- Launch of the electronic IDS-N newsletter and upgrading of the IDS-N website
- Regional EU Commission workshop on minorities, indigenous peoples and Dalits in Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Approximately 25 members of the 'UN Global Compact' business initiative are mentioning caste as a form of discrimination they want to avoid
- Review of the Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act in India
- Human Rights Council parallel event on the draft UN Principles and Guidelines to eliminate caste discrimination at the 12th session, endorsed by the Government of Nepal and supported by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
- UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issues unprecedented statement on caste discrimination "Tearing down the wall of caste"
- Briefing on caste discrimination for the EU Working Parties on Asia (COASI) and Human Rights (COHOM) hosted by the Swedish Presidency
- Dalit voices raised at the second thematic session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues
- The report 'Hidden Apartheid – Voice of the Community' provides strong evidence that caste discrimination exists in South Asian diaspora communities in the United Kingdom
- UN independent experts on water and sanitation and extreme poverty visit Dalit colony during their country visit to Bangladesh

engagement with Dalit organisations – often with IDS-N as the interlocutor. The Special Rapporteur on Racism recommended states to engage in substantive discussions on caste discrimination and called on them to take action on the draft UN Principles and Guidelines. Other Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts reported on the issue, including the Independent Experts on water and sanitation and on human rights and extreme poverty, expressing serious concern about the human rights situation of Dalits in Bangladesh after a country visit.

IDS-N members and associates in affected countries were also deeply involved in political and legislative processes. In Nepal, Dalits and supporting organisations lobbied hard for constitutional and legal frameworks which engrain Dalit rights and address historical injustices. In India, Dalit organisations initiated a review process of the special legislation for 'Scheduled Castes', calling for political will at all levels of government to end caste discrimination. They demanded that laws be turned into reality and advocated special policies and budgets for Dalits.

Whilst the EU continued its political support in the UN for the Dalit cause, the European Commission commissioned IDS-N to carry out a study that included operational advice on the integration of Dalit issues into EC development cooperation. As the draft UN Principles and Guidelines make clear, development actors, such as governments, NGOs, and multinational and bilateral institutions, have a particular responsibility to ensure that caste discrimination is addressed fully in development and humanitarian programmes.

The year saw a welcome increase in media focus on the issue of caste discrimination, in caste affected countries as well as internationally. UN related events and in particular

the High Commissioner's statements received considerable international coverage, and the debate also took place on blogs and media websites. In May, IDS-N launched an e-newsletter that – together with an upgraded website – has become one of the leading international sources of information on the issue of caste discrimination to policy makers, activists and the media.

Finally, church leaders and human rights advocates further internationalised the struggle to end caste discrimination. A historic global conference on Justice for Dalits organised by the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation in March secured a firm basis for a global ecumenical movement against caste discrimination.

IDS-N is indebted to its group of funding partners, who, not only financially but also in many other ways, engage in the struggle for Dalit human rights. We wish to express our gratitude to these organisations and many others – individuals, diplomats and institutions – who have supported us in so many ways. It is our hope that the group of 'ambassadors for Dalit human rights' will grow across the world in the coming years.

The year has been truly productive and encouraging for IDS-N and the Dalit movement as a whole; but while there are very positive signs, Dalits continue to suffer appalling human rights violations in many countries. Women are particularly vulnerable, as they are subjected to discrimination because of their caste as well as their gender.

Navi Pillay's extraordinary statement was a wake-up call to the international community as well as affected governments. Now words must be turned into action; 260 million victims of caste discrimination are waiting.

Dhaka, Bangladesh, September 2009 A Dalit girl takes an outdoor bath in a slum colony. The UN Principles and Guidelines urge governments to “take all necessary measures to eliminate discriminatory practices that cause affected communities to suffer from inadequate food, water, sanitation, clothing and housing.”

United Nations

The growing number of statements and reports condemning caste discrimination by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, independent UN experts, caste-affected governments and concerned countries provided a vital boost to the global Dalit movement in 2009. It was the first time that the principal UN human rights official appealed so strongly to the international community, in particular caste-affected governments, to take immediate action to end this form of discrimination. Moreover, independent UN experts made extensive references to Dalit rights; more governments showed a commitment to addressing caste discrimination in relevant UN sessions; and there was growing support for a comprehensive framework to eliminate caste discrimination. Such steps demonstrated an increasing political will to treat this issue as one of the world's most serious human rights problems, which cannot and should not be overlooked in international forums like the UN.

Draft Principles and Guidelines for the elimination of caste discrimination

The draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the effective elimination of discrimination based on work and descent (hereafter “draft UN Principles and Guidelines”) is the first instrument to propose general and specific measures for state and non-state actors to address caste discrimination. After almost two years of intense lobbying by IDSN and other organisations, a decision was finally taken by the

“Caste is the very negation of the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination.”

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay

“India's ban on caste-based discrimination will not be effective unless the government moves away from its rhetoric and implements a stronger strategy both at the national and international level.”

Paul Divakar, General Secretary, NCDHR, during a press briefing in New Delhi on 4 December

Human Rights Council (HRC) in 2009 to publish the final Sub-Commission report containing the draft UN Principles and Guidelines. The HRC adopted a decision to publish the “completed and submitted” Sub-Commission reports at its 10th session in March (A/HRC/10/117), including the final report on discrimination based on work and descent. The European Union took a lead on tabling a procedural text which referred three completed reports from the former UN Sub-Commission to the HRC. Although India called for a vote, only two other states voted against the proposal out of the 47 members. The final report was issued as an official UN document (A/HRC/11/CRP.3) pursuant to this decision on 18 May.

While the publication of the report did not automatically lead to a consideration of the issue of ‘discrimination based on work and descent’ in the HRC, it was a necessary step to enable follow-up action on the draft UN Principles and Guidelines in this forum. In order to create more attention and support to the issue, IDSN, in co-operation with a number of its international associates, organised a parallel event at the 12th HRC session in September on the draft Principles and Guidelines. Nepal's State Minister for General Administration, Mr Jeet Bahadur Darjee Gautum, endorsed the framework on behalf of his government as a “useful tool” for the country's constitution-making process. Dalit representatives from six affected countries gave their views on its relevance in their countries. The two authors of the report, Professors Chung and Yokota of the former UN

IDSN background

IDSN was founded in March 2000 to advocate for Dalit human rights and to raise awareness of Dalit issues nationally and internationally.

IDSN is a network of international human rights groups, development agencies, national Dalit solidarity networks from Europe, and national platforms in caste-affected countries. Since its founding, the network has had a significant impact on the work of the UN and the EU. These institutions have begun to recognise the unacceptability of ‘untouchability’ and

other human rights abuses against Dalits and similar communities that suffer discrimination on the basis of work and descent.

IDSN bases its work on contributions from members and associates. Joint interventions in the United Nations and the EU constitute a major part of IDSN's activities. The network also produces crucial input in the form of research, planning of strategic interventions and actual lobby actions. Interaction between members adds to the dynamics of the expanding network.

IDSN has a Copenhagen-based secretariat which coordinates lobby and advocacy activities in close cooperation with members².

IDSN was formally registered as an organisation in October 2003. In 2009, the Secretariat was staffed by four full time staff members: Coordinator Rikke Nöhrind, Programme Officer Maia Ingvardson, UN Programme Officer Gitte Dyrhagen and Communications Officer Kim Wiesener (as maternity leave cover for Maria Brink Schleimann).



Sub-Commission, presented the content of the framework. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) also expressed her office's full support for tackling this issue. The UNHCHR had not previously supported a parallel event on caste discrimination, and it was the first time that an affected government gave its official recognition to the framework.

The event kicked off an intense media debate in international and regional media on the draft UN Principles and Guidelines and caste discrimination as a human rights violation – especially in India. The UN High Commissioner, who met with an IDSN delegation of Dalit activists in

“A follow-up monitoring mechanism such as a Special Rapporteur on Discrimination Based on Work and Descent should be established to effectively promote and oversee the compliance with the adopted UN Principles and Guidelines on a systematic basis.”

Prof. Yozo Yokota, former UN Sub-Commission member and author of the final report on discrimination based on work and descent, at UN Human Rights Council parallel event, 16 September

connection with the parallel event, issued an unprecedented statement “Tearing down the wall of caste” in October inspired by this meeting. She urged UN member states to take action on the draft UN Principles and Guidelines in the HRC. Later the same month she called for a new UN convention on caste in an interview³, which triggered another wave of media reports and debate internationally. Ms Pillay also made specific recommendations to the Government of India and Nepal during her country visits in March, and included a reference to caste-affected groups in her statement on the International Human Rights Day on 10 December. IDSN disseminated these statements to relevant political stakeholders, including state delegations, and used them as lobby tools to promote further action internationally and nationally. The Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) has now made caste discrimination a priority in its work to eliminate the global scourge of discrimination and impunity.

Human Rights Council

IDSN facilitated a number of interventions and meetings between Dalit activists, state delegations, UN experts, and the OHCHR in connection with the HRC sessions in 2009, the Durban Review Conference, and the UN Forum on Minority Issues. This was done in close collaboration with

the international and regional associates of IDSN. Many of the lobby activities were linked to the publication of the final report and follow-up to this decision which, despite its unnecessary delay, helped increase delegations' awareness of caste discrimination. More and more UN member states started paying attention to the issue as a serious human rights concern that should be tackled internationally, and voiced stronger concerns about this issue in debates and interactive dialogues.

The fact that a number of caste-affected countries started to recognise this form of discrimination as relevant to the work of the HRC created a new regional dynamic among affected states. It also enabled a more constructive and legitimate basis for further action on the draft UN Principles and Guidelines, and has raised expectations to a follow-up resolution in the HRC. The Government of Nepal played a particularly positive role through its endorsement of the draft UN Principles and Guidelines, and twice underlined its commitment to combating caste discrimination at the Durban Review Conference. Pakistan also expressed its support to consider caste discrimination at the HRC on a number of occasions in 2009.

Bangladesh and Japan also recognise caste-related problems in their countries, but have yet to take a strong international stand on the issue. When considering Bangladesh in February 2009, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the HRC did not explicitly address the situation of Dalits – only religious minorities and other vulnerable groups. This happened despite strong civil society recommendations, a consolidated national consultation process, and extensive information presented before the review. IDSN prepared an alternative report together with Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM)⁴. The UPR civil society forum in Bangladesh, which includes BDERM, also highlighted this specific group in their submission. A constructive national debate did however take place between civil society and the Government on this issue. India continued to oppose the consideration of caste discrimination internationally, despite growing pressure from media and international forums to address it. In Sri Lanka the ongoing conflict made it very difficult to address the issue.

Special Procedures

Several independent experts of the Human Rights Council, known as the UN Special Procedures, once again expressed concern about the prevalence of caste discrimination in their monitoring work in 2009. Caste discrimination and violent attacks against Dalits, mainly in India and Nepal, were in fact mentioned in reports and communications prepared by ten individual mandate holders⁵. These experts also expressed their concern as a whole by devoting

an entire section to "Discrimination on the grounds of caste and other systems of inherited status" in the joint contribution submitted to the preparatory process of the Durban Review Conference. IDSN is increasingly focusing its efforts on providing documentation and recommendations on key issues to the relevant mandate holders as an effective way of bringing claims and evidence from affected countries into the UN system and governments. In 2009 IDSN therefore set up meetings with experts and the OHCHR to provide substantive inputs, documentation and updates on the situation of Dalits.

The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, Mr Githu Muigai, made two strong interventions on caste discrimination in 2009, thereby upholding the work of his predecessor Mr Doudou Diène. Mr Muigai gave a statement at a parallel event during the DRC in April, urging caste-affected governments to challenge "long-entrenched perceptions" and help shape "public opinion to move towards fairer societies based on the equality of all human beings." When presenting his report to the UN General Assembly at its 64th session (A/64/271), Mr Muigai urged states to "rally around" the draft UN Principles and Guidelines. The Government of India objected to this statement and said it was "deeply offensive given India's past history" to which the rapporteur responded that he did not believe the issue was peculiar to one individual country.

An extensive reference to Dalit women's rights was made by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Ms Yakin Ertürk, in her last presentation as a mandate holder at the 11th HRC session in June. She concluded that, despite being banned by the Indian Constitution, "de facto discrimination and segregation of Dalits persists, in particular in rural areas." Ms Ertürk recommended her successor to undertake a study on violence against women exercised on the grounds of multiple forms of discrimination, including Dalit women.

The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, Ms Gulnara Shahinian, underlined caste discrimination as one of the root causes of traditional forms of slavery and expressed an interest in pursuing this as a thematic area of concern. In her report on debt bondage to the HRC, Ms

"Dalit women are confronted with discrimination, exclusion and violence to a larger extent than men. Land and property issues in particular, tend to cause or be at the root of conflicts over which Dalit women have faced eviction, harassment, physical abuse and assault."

Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Ms Yakin Ertürk, in a report to the HRC, June

Shahinian addressed the links between forced labour in South Asia and long-standing patterns of discrimination, including caste discrimination (A/HRC/12/21). She also took note of problems related to caste-based slavery during her visit to Mauritania in September.

The Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Ms Gay MacDougall, gave due consideration to the rights of Dalits in her work as a mandate holder and convenor of the UN Forum on Minority Issues. At the Forum's session in November, Dalit activists and some Dalit politicians from India and Nepal were invited to participate to highlight the obstacles to equal political participation for Dalits, especially women. IDSN also proposed a reference to the draft UN Principles and Guidelines in a UNDP Resource Guide on Minorities developed by the UN agency and the OHCHR.

The Independent Expert on water and sanitation, Ms Catarina de Albuquerque, and the Independent Expert on extreme poverty, Ms Magdalena Sepúlveda, visited Bangladesh in December. The Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM) organised a field visit to Dalit 'colonies' in Dhaka city where the two UN experts got a first-hand impression of the poor living conditions that Dalits endure. IDSN provided background information to the experts before their visit. In conclusion of their stay, the independent experts recommended the Government of Bangladesh to end all forms of discrimination, and to adopt immediate measures to guarantee the human rights of Dalits.

This was one of the few country visits by UN Special Procedures to caste-affected countries in 2009. Although several UN experts have requested such visits, none of the other affected governments have accepted these requests⁶.

UN treaty bodies

In February the Government of Pakistan was reviewed by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). It was the first time in ten years that the Committee was given the opportunity to review the State Party's implementation of the Convention. In preparation of the review IDSN helped prepare an alternative report on the situation of 'lower caste' Hindus and other minorities together with the Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network. IDSN also presented an oral statement to the Committee and monitored the examination. In response to the Committee Members' critical questions on this subject, the Pakistani delegation engaged in a constructive dialogue and recognised the challenges faced by the Government in addressing caste-based discrimination. In the Concluding Observations the Committee recommended the Government to take specific measures to eradicate this form of discrimination, and to make disaggregated

"This Durban Review Conference has totally eliminated any mention of caste or discrimination based on work and descent, despite including text on similar groups such as the Romas."

Paul Divakar, General Secretary, NCDHR, during the Durban Review Conference, April

statistical data regarding the ethnic composition of its population available in its next reporting to the Committee. This is a particularly relevant observation in connection with the next national census that is planned to take place in 2011.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) reviewed the Government of Japan in July and made some recommendations on the protection of minority and vulnerable women, including the Buraku women who are subjected to forms of discrimination similar to caste discrimination.

Two general recommendations adopted by the UN treaty body committees in 2009 included relevant observations and interpretations on caste: General Comment No. 20 on non-discrimination by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), and CERD General Observation No. 32 on special measures. The CESCR General Comment affirmed that caste discrimination falls under the 'birth' leg of article 2 in the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Durban Review Conference

The DRC was held in April with the purpose of reviewing the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA). Although the DDPA confirmed that states have an obligation to promote and protect victims suffering from discrimination on the grounds of descent and multiple forms of discrimination, the Government of India objected to the consideration of caste discrimination at the DRC as it did at the first conference in Durban in 2001.

A delegation of approximately 30 Dalit activists from South Asia participated in the DRC, and managed to make their

"We strongly reject the argument that caste-based discrimination is an 'internal affair' which should not be addressed by relevant UN mechanisms, including this Review Conference. Caste discrimination is a global human rights concern, which cannot be kept outside the scope of the UN."

Joint statement by Asian and international NGOs at the Durban Review Conference, April

Dhaka, Bangladesh, September 2009 The level of poverty in Dhaka's Dalit 'colonies' is very visible. The Head of the European Delegation in Bangladesh, Stefan Frowein, paid a visit to such a community in connection with a regional workshop and promised to ensure "a greater focus on Dalits" in EU development programmes.

voices and demands heard through media interventions, public demonstrations, and participation in parallel events. IDSN helped facilitate some interventions together with international associates and Dalit platforms from affected countries. IDSN, Human Rights Watch, the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights and other supporting organisations issued a joint position paper, which proposed key recommendations on how to express global recognition of this massive human rights problem in the context of the DRC and beyond.

Regretfully the DRC outcome document failed to include a reference to discrimination based on work and descent, although a reference was proposed by the EU group in an early draft. The lack of consistent political support to the conference by states and NGOs made it difficult to influence the negotiation process. The issue was however raised as a result of the interventions made by the Dalit group present at the DRC.

Global Ecumenical Movement Against Caste Discrimination

Church leaders and human rights advocates further internationalised the struggle to overcome caste discrimination in 2009. A historic global conference on Justice for Dalits organised by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), associates of IDSN, took place in Bangkok in March. It drew together 95 leaders and representatives of churches and human rights and development organisations from around the world. Among the subjects discussed were: the rape and abuse of Dalit women, forced labour, exclusion and persistent 'untouchability' practices.

The Bangkok Declaration⁷ calls upon global ecumenical bodies to develop their ongoing work on justice for Dalits, particularly by initiating a global watch on violence against Dalits and communicating this to member churches and beyond. The Declaration also calls upon churches in caste-affected countries to be in full solidarity with the Dalit movements, and to address discrimination within the churches' own structures.

In October, the Lutheran World Federation passed a historic resolution on Justice for Dalits committing the institution further to the struggle against caste discrimination. The resolution requests LWF member churches in both caste-affected and other countries to challenge their governments to make a firm, global commitment to the elimination of caste discrimination, and implement measures to fulfil that commitment.

European Union

IDSN continued to lobby the institutions of the European Union to address caste discrimination in a systematic, strategic and coherent manner. IDSN maintains that it is possible to help eliminate caste-based human rights violations, marginalisation, exclusion and poverty in the context of European Commission (EC) cooperation with affected countries. Caste discrimination needs to be addressed within development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, political dialogue, trade agreements and other relations. Ensuring that caste discrimination is comprehensively addressed in EC programmes and other areas of cooperation requires a policy commitment, a minimum framework and a programming guide.

In 2009, IDSN was given the opportunity to present concrete recommendations to both the European Commission and to Council Working groups. Underlying both sets of recommendations is the premise that EU action must be firmly politically anchored and effectuated across EU institutions.

IDSN interaction with the European Commission

The EU programme moved into a new and exciting phase with a strengthened dialogue with Commission offices and country delegations. In March, IDSN was commissioned by the European Commission to prepare a study on Caste Discrimination in South Asia with operational guidance to the Commission. The study which is available online was

Operational Guidance – extract of IDSN recommendations to the Commission

- **Prepare a political, social, and economic analysis of the situation of Dalits combined with a critical assessment of their access to justice, resources, jobs and services.**
- **Map legal and institutional frameworks for the protection of Dalits and assess the effective functioning of state mechanisms and administration of justice for Dalits.**
- **Take into consideration relevant recommendations by UN treaty bodies and Special Procedures**
- **Develop a framework for EC programming and operational guidelines and consider particular requirements for sector programmes**
- **Ensure that caste based discrimination is effectively on the agenda in dialogues, on human rights, democracy, good governance or development and humanitarian assistance, Ensure systematic involvement of Dalit organisations and other representatives of affected communities in regular consultations.**

For a full set of recommendations please see section on "Operational Guidance", in the EU study⁸.



shared by EuropeAid with a cross section of Commission departments and units⁸.

Meetings and communication with EuropeAid (the EU development agency), DG RELEX (the Directorate-General for External Relations) and ECHO (the EU humanitarian aid department) in 2009 moved forward ideas on mainstreaming measures – i.e. the designing of aid programmes in a way that addresses inequalities resulting from caste discrimination – in sector programming. Suggestions as to how the Commission can extend support at country level related to caste discrimination were also discussed.

In June, the Commission conducted a three day regional workshop in Dhaka on Indigenous People, Minorities and Dalits. IDS presented the above-mentioned study at the workshop, which included country specific contributions made by Dalit representatives from Nepal, Bangladesh and India. The 22 participants from EC delegations across the region and bilateral agencies in Bangladesh responded well to the one day seminar on caste discrimination. Workshop participants also visited Dalit communities in Dhaka accompanied by the Head of the European Delegation in Bangladesh, who pledged his delegation's support for Dalits, including a proper census process in 2011 to ensure adequate, comprehensive data on Dalits. The workshop

was a welcome opportunity to present IDS operational recommendations to the EU and to strengthen dialogue with officials also at country level.

IDS also initiated a dialogue with ECHO officials on 'caste-related' challenges in relief and rehabilitation work. In the IDS study, a section is devoted to this topic and suggestions made for ten minimum requirements to prevent discriminatory practices based on caste, which is usually highly prevalent in disaster situations. These requirements are meant to be included in contracts with government agencies and multilateral agencies for emergency aid delivery. ECHO officials encouraged IDS and local partners to approach the ECHO field offices and welcomed IDS and local experts to provide relevant input at an ECHO regional seminar for field offices.

“Caste-based discrimination and other forms of discrimination based on work and descent is an important priority for the European Union.”

EU statement delivered by the Swedish Presidency at UN Human Rights Council parallel event, 16 September

The continued dialogue with the Commission on addressing caste discrimination in Sri Lanka has resulted in a tentative commitment by the delegation in Colombo supported by the Asia desk in Brussels to look into mainstreaming. The Commission has expressed an interest in supporting a study on re-emerging caste discrimination in the post-conflict situation addressing the situation in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. Dialogue is now to be continued at delegation level with civil society partners.

In November, EuropeAid requested input from IDSN and Dalit organisations in Nepal for a planned EC civil society mapping exercise in the country. It is hoped this exercise may lead to increased engagement by the delegation in terms of mainstreaming Dalit concerns in education, health or other programmes.

With regard to India, EuropeAid asked IDSN and NCDHR to collate and forward existing benchmark studies on two sectors, namely health and education, with a view to look into a Dalit sensitive approach and improved programme outreach and benefit for Dalits. EuropeAid also supported the idea of a civil society consultation in India with the EU delegation on Dalit rights issues in advance of the annual EU-India human rights dialogue in 2010.

The Commission urged IDSN partners and other Dalit groups to respond to the local calls for proposals under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) which cater broadly and also specifically for Dalit-related activities. In the EIDHR strategy review process in 2009, IDSN recommended that people affected by caste discrimination are explicitly referred to as a target group and that this form of discrimination should be specifically addressed under the instrument.

While the constructive steps taken by the Commission as outlined above are appreciated, there is a need for a more concerted effort by the EU and an overall policy framework to address caste discrimination. This should for example translate into Country Fact Sheets and Country Strategy Papers (CSPs), reflecting a deeper understanding of caste discrimination and its impact on the human rights and development situation in affected countries. Such understanding is still conspicuously absent from most CSPs revised in 2009. Consequently, there is a considerable lack of effective programming to address the main issues faced by Dalits in such areas as education, health, housing and employment and the continued violation of their human rights.

European Parliament (EP)

In March, the EP issued a report on International Trade on an EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) calling on the European Council and Commission to work with the Indian

government to end caste discrimination⁹. It urges the EU to ensure that the FTA is not harmful to Dalits and that the potential benefits reach all members of society. According to the EP, this should be part of an 'ambitious sustainable development chapter' in the FTA. The EP offers its specific recommendations for improving the situation of Dalits and refers to the European Parliament resolution adopted on 1 February 2007¹⁰ on the human rights situation of the Dalits in India.

When investigating the matter, IDSN received indications during 2009 that the Parliamentary secretariat had presented the resolution to all relevant stakeholders addressed in the resolution, including the Indian government, EU member states, the World Bank, the United Nations Secretariat, the (former) Sub-Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, UNICEF, ILO and IMF. However, no follow-up procedure to assess the effectuation of recommendations to EU institutions could be traced. It appears that such follow-up mechanisms do not exist.

Following the elections to the European Parliament, IDSN took note of the constitution of new groups, committees and delegations. It engaged with MEPs to identify opportunities and agendas to insist on caste discrimination as an EU human rights priority – in its political dialogues, development assistance and economic cooperation, in inter-parliamentary dialogues and in multilateral relations.

Also in 2009, the EP Annual Human Rights Report had references to caste-based discrimination.

The Council

IDSN continued its dialogue with a number of EU member states on both UN and EU related agendas, and met on several occasions with officials of the Czech and Swedish Presidencies. Specific interventions have been made by both Presidencies in the UN on the subject. As a concrete outcome of the dialogue with the Swedish Presidency, a briefing on caste-based discrimination was hosted by the Swedish Mission in Brussels in November for members of the Council's Working Party on South Asia (COASI) and Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM). IDSN assisted in the preparation of the briefing, which was well attended. Dalit representatives spoke at the briefing, which concluded with a discussion on the recommendations made by the team to the EU.

Concrete steps to realise a number of these recommendations are currently being considered by the Spanish Presidency (as of January 2010) in cooperation with IDSN. A commitment has been made to organise a formal briefing in COHOM on caste discrimination in May 2010. Other initiatives which could systematically enhance the EU's capability to address this form of human rights violation are also considered.

Private sector

IDSN has engaged with international companies and some agencies for a number of years to promote active measures to avoid and eliminate caste discrimination in their operations in India. The cornerstone of this work has been the Ambedkar Principles (AP), a set of ten employment principles developed to assist companies in addressing caste-based discrimination. The AP were revised in 2009 jointly by the Dalit Network Netherlands (DNN) and IDSN and published in a redesigned booklet. The publication has been distributed to approximately 200 companies in Europe, a number of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and other relevant actors, such as government agencies and civil society organisations.

In 2009, contacts with private companies in a number of European countries have shown a shift in terms of recognising caste discrimination as an issue relevant for companies, as well as a motivation for taking this aspect into the CSR work of the individual companies. Thus far the knowledge of the scope and systemic nature of caste discrimination has been limited among most representatives of companies and private sector actors contacted by IDSN, but an increase in awareness is evident. This development is a result of consistent work not only with individual companies, but with confederations of industry, CSR initiatives and other important actors, e.g. relevant government agencies. This puts caste discrimination on the map as a serious human rights violation that responsible companies are obliged to address. Approximately 25 members of the UN Global Compact – an initiative for businesses that wish to follow ten universal principles on human and labour rights, environment and anti-corruption – are mentioning caste as a form of discrimination they want to avoid. A number of Indian and a few international companies have a more active policy on combating caste discrimination.

The increased awareness of the issue is furthermore reflected in a demand for IDSN services, such as input for business seminars on CSR and several lectures at business schools, as well as a growing interest in the subject from CSR and business publications. By invitation two articles authored by DSN-UK and the IDSN secretariat were published in Business Outlook and CRnet respectively.

Promotion of the Dalit Discrimination Check (DDC) has been an important entry point when engaging with private companies. DDC was developed in 2008 in cooperation between the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and IDSN, as a practical application of the Ambedkar Principles with the aim of providing companies with a concrete tool to address caste discrimination in their Indian operations¹¹. DDC is now

“One of the most effective solutions to caste discrimination within India would be the extension of ‘reservation’ or ‘affirmative action’ into the private sector.”

Meena Varma, Director, DSN-UK, in an article in OutlookBusiness India

featured on the websites of a number of CSR networks and other relevant actors, including the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Danish Confederation of Industry, the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, the UN Practitioner’s Portal on HRBA programming and the Child Rights Information Centre.

In IDSN’s interactions with companies it has become clear that cultural barriers prevent even initial dialogue on the subject of caste discrimination with partners and associates in India. The issue is considered very sensitive, and international companies have expressed a need for guidance on how to open the necessary constructive discussions with their Indian counterparts before actual policies and measures can be introduced.

In response to this need, a manual was developed in 2008 for training companies to tackle the issue of caste discrimination, and an IDSN team with representatives of DSN-UK, the Danish Institute of Human Rights and the IDSN secretariat conducted a workshop in New Delhi using the training materials in March 2009. The aim was to investigate approaches to appropriate training for international companies addressing caste discrimination in the workplace. The workshop was attended by representatives of civil society, trade unions and CSR specialists, and provided valuable feedback that was incorporated into the revised training programme. The assessment by the training team was that one or more partners with extensive experience in working with the private sector must be identified in India before substantial progress can be made with companies working there.

With the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies as an intermediary, IDSN met with private sector actors in India, such as the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry in India (ASSOCHAM). The purpose was two-fold; to use their experience to feed into the work with international companies and to promote the DDC. The CII gave an overview of their Affirmative Action Code of Conduct, which includes Indian companies such as TATA, Bharat Shell, HSBC India and HERO. The meeting provided valuable insights into the mindset of the private sector and the multinational companies in India. Meetings were also held with the Danish Trade Council, the EU delegation and Partners for Change.

These activities were supported significantly by the work undertaken nationally by a number of DSNs, most notably



Freedom Comes at a Cost

When Dalits challenge the unjust practices imposed on them, dominant castes often use violent means to restore their non-dominant position and keep Dalits 'in their place'.

Every hour in India two Dalits are assaulted, every day three Dalit women are raped, every day two Dalits are murdered and two Dalit homes are burnt. Government statistics from the Ministry of Welfare.

Impunity for the perpetrators permeates the justice and law enforcement systems. Crimes against Dalits are often not reported, investigated or prosecuted properly. Politicians, lawyers and judges often belong to dominant castes and they are unwilling to investigate, prosecute and hear cases of crimes against Dalits. Very few cases lead to conviction.

Dalits continue to assert their rights and to hold the state accountable for crimes committed against them.

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recommends, with specific reference to caste-discriminated communities that all states 'take the necessary steps to ensure equal access to the justice system for all members of descent-based communities as well as ensure the prosecution of persons who commit crimes against members of descent-based communities and the provision of adequate compensation for the victims of such crimes'.

The total number of Dalits in India is nearly 200 million. They are the most vulnerable group in Indian society and are subjected to the most severe forms of discrimination. They are the most vulnerable group in Indian society and are subjected to the most severe forms of discrimination. They are the most vulnerable group in Indian society and are subjected to the most severe forms of discrimination.

When Disaster Hits

On 26 December 2004, the Tsunami claimed more than 200,000 lives and affected the livelihoods of more than one million people primarily in South and South East Asia.

While natural disasters are caste-neutral, the marginal relief and reconstruction efforts are not. In the weeks, months and years after the Tsunami hit, discrimination by default continued to take place in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Despite unprecedented levels of relief and reconstruction aid, many Indian Dalits living on the fringe of coastal fishing communities are now worse off than before the Tsunami. Relief was mainly given to the directly affected fishing communities of dominant castes, which Dalits both depend on and are oppressed by. Since those dominant caste fishing communities are now better off, Dalits are no longer needed for manual labour.

A heavy rainfall caused floods in South Asia in the summer of 2007. The same was set for more discriminatory relief efforts.

When disaster hits, UN institutions, member state governments, relief agencies and NGOs must act proactively to overcome caste blindness and confront caste discrimination in all relief operations. If caste barriers to society are not taken into account, relief efforts will continue to be caste-blind.

Dalits have faced a complex discrimination in society that is compounded by historical oppression of Dalits in general, vulnerability to natural disasters, and a lack of political representation.

The highly acclaimed [IDSN photo exhibition](#) – with photographs by Jakob Carlsen taken on trips to caste-affected communities in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan in 2007 and 2008 – continued to travel in 2009 and was shown in Bangkok as well as Geneva.

DNN and DSN-UK. The Ethical Trading Initiatives (ETI) has taken a special interest in the issue of caste discrimination and has invited input from DSNs. The DSN-UK is the lead NGO of the ETI UK Stone Group and helps to guide the member companies towards full implementation of the Base Code through their supply chains and to raise awareness of the extent of and need to address caste discrimination in India. DNN and DSN-DK gave elaborate input to the Good Practice Guide India of the Norwegian and Danish Ethical Trade Initiative to ensure mainstreaming of measures against caste discrimination in the CSR of companies. In the UK, the Netherlands and Denmark ETI are important fora for engaging with private companies and provide a recognised CSR platform through which to involve the business community and promote the Ambedkar Principles and the DDC.

The Dutch network has actively worked in the international working group on the International Standard on Social Responsibility, ISO26000, to include language on descent/caste based discrimination. The standard is to be finalised in the first half of 2010 and the inclusion of caste discrimination in the document is an important achievement, given the expected prominent status ISO 26000 will have as a key international standard for the social responsibility of companies and other organisations.

DSNs in the Netherlands, the UK, Germany and Denmark have contacted a number of companies in their respective countries for promotion of the AP and the DDC, and more general awareness raising on the issue of caste discrimination. In the Netherlands the Export Promotion Service of the Ministry of Economic Affairs is bringing the Ambedkar Principles (and DDC) to the attention of companies operating or planning to operate in India.

Communication and networking

The year 2009 saw a welcome increase in media focus on the issue of caste discrimination. Events such as the Durban Review Conference, the parallel event at the UN Human Rights Council and UN High Commissioner Navi Pillay's powerful statement on caste discrimination received considerable coverage, largely due to IDSN's efforts. On the general communication side, the upgrading of the website [www.idsn.org](#) continued, and IDSN launched a monthly e-newsletter. The website and the newsletter have become two of the world's main sources of information on caste discrimination. The efforts to attract more public attention to the struggle for Dalit rights have been strengthened further with the formulation of a new IDSN media and communications strategy.

Media work

A major focus of IDSN's media work in 2009 was the Durban Review Conference (DRC) in April. Prior to the event, IDSN, in cooperation with Human Rights Watch (HRW), distributed a press advisory and a press kit to key international media.

During the DRC, IDSN conducted a joint press conference with the Lutheran World Federation, HRW, the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) and other partner organisations. The theme was the failure of the DRC to address caste discrimination, and afterwards all co-organisers issued a press release that was sent to key international media and UN accredited journalists. A number of media picked up the story – most significantly the news agency Associated Press. One of its stories from the DRC, highlighting the issue of caste discrimination, received worldwide coverage.

In September, the parallel event at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva and, a few weeks later, the powerful statement by UN High Commissioner Navi Pillay unleashed a veritable boom in media attention. Following the parallel event, IDSN and Anti-Slavery International issued



Waste, India, 2009

Waste, India, 2009
A group of people, including children, gathered outdoors, possibly in a village setting.



Waste, India, 2009

Waste, India, 2009
A group of women in colorful saris standing outdoors, possibly in a rural area.

The Son of a Sweeper is a Sweeper



The son of a sweeper is a sweeper, the headline of a 2009 article in the Indian newspaper, The Hindu. The headline is a reference to the caste system in India, where the son of a sweeper is also a sweeper.

Seen as polluted, Dalits are assigned work considered to be humiliating and dirty, such as removing human waste, sweeping, cleaning sewers or handling dead bodies and carcasses. Once covered in dirt, they are marginalized even more. They live in slums or in huts, if at all.

Manual scavenging is the task of clearing human excrement from toilets, latrine tanks and dry latrines. Using little more than a broom, a tin plate and a bucket, Dalits are made to clear faeces from public and private latrines and carry it to dumping grounds. This is usually a hereditary occupation reserved for Dalits, and manual scavengers are among the worst off and victims of untouchability. The work is extremely hazardous.

In India, the practice of manual scavenging has been outlawed since 1986, and the legislation is far from implemented. An estimated 3.5 million people are employed as manual scavengers—most of them women. Many are employed by the authorities themselves.

No political will to eradicate the degrading occupation of manual scavenging seems to exist on the part of either the Central or State Governments. A Supreme Court case has been pending for years and the Court has recently asked several states to explain why they have not met their responsibilities.

The United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recommends that all States take "immediate measures... to eliminate degrading conditions of labour associated with descent based discrimination."



Waste, India, 2009

Waste, India, 2009
A group of people, including children, gathered outdoors, possibly in a village setting.



Waste, India, 2009

Waste, India, 2009
A group of people, including children, gathered outdoors, possibly in a village setting.



Waste, India, 2009

Waste, India, 2009
A person in a blue shirt working with a large metal container, possibly a water tank or a waste container.

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Waste, India, 2009

Waste, India, 2009
A group of people, including children, gathered outdoors, possibly in a village setting.

a joint press release that was distributed to UN accredited correspondents and key international media. Within a couple of weeks, the story had received wide coverage in India. The attention increased with the publication of Ms Pillay's opinion piece and a subsequent joint press release by IDSN, HRW and NCDHR. The piece was published in a number of international publications, including the influential US news blog The Huffington Post, and many media ran news stories. It also triggered an intense debate on a number of blogs. Further attention was caused by Ms Pillay's interview to US weekly The Nation.

Other press releases and statements were issued during the year, some by IDSN alone, others jointly with partner organisations. These included the Rafto Foundation for Human Rights (Norway), the Asian Human Rights Commission, the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, the Feminist Dalit Organisation (Nepal) and the Dalit NGO Federation (Nepal).

Other notable media exposure in 2009 included an article about caste discrimination in the influential weekly, New Europe¹². In November, the European Affairs Correspondent of the Pakistani television network, Geo TV, interviewed a visiting IDSN team in Brussels. A news item was aired several times on Geo TV, which is broadcast across South Asia.

In some cases, statements by IDSN and its member organisations and their subsequent distribution were directly instrumental in attracting media attention. Also, IDSN ensured that important statements on caste discrimination made by other parties were widely disseminated. Such steps secured broader coverage of the issue. Thus, it is safe to say that the combined efforts by IDSN and other organisations resulted in an intensified media focus on caste discrimination in 2009.

Publications

Following the decision in March of the UN Human Rights Council to publish the completed Sub-Commission reports – including the report on discrimination based on work and descent – IDSN decided that this significant document

must reach a wider audience. Consequently, IDSN made arrangements to have the draft UN Principles and Guidelines printed in a user-friendly format and distributed to interested parties. Subsequently, this document has been published in local languages by the IDSN national advocacy platforms in India and Bangladesh.

An important IDSN publication was the revised version of the Ambedkar Principles (read more on page 13). This document was published in September. Also, an updated IDSN presentation pamphlet was issued that same month. All these publications were designed by graphic designer Søren Maarbjerg with photographs by Danish photographer Jakob Carlsen. Other important publications included the EU commissioned study on caste-based discrimination in South Asia (read more on page 11) and the reprinting of the Dalit Discrimination Check (page 13).

The IDSN photo exhibition – featuring photographs from South Asia by Jakob Carlsen – continued to travel to various international venues. In March, it was shown in Bangkok during the global conference on 'Justice for Dalits'. The following month, it featured during the DRC in Geneva.

Finally, IDSN maintains a number of interactive list serves for distribution of important material on caste discrimination to interested parties. As part of the network's internal communication, the secretariat prepares programme updates to the IDSN Council and working groups.

IDSN website – www.idsn.org

A new and more user-friendly IDSN website was launched in December 2008 with the aim of turning it into an indispensable information hub for the IDSN network as well as the broader public. During the course of 2009, it was upgraded significantly and a number of new features were introduced.

An average of one news story per week was published on the website's front page throughout the year, and during times of particularly intense activity the output was considerably larger. The website also enables an IDSN News RSS Feed, updating interested readers whenever a news

story is published. Tens of thousands of viewers watched the powerful short documentary 'I'm Dalit – How are you?' which provides shocking images of the realities of caste discrimination. The film is featured on the front page of www.idsn.org, and it is expected that the number of viewers will have exceeded 100,000 by early 2010.

The following sections of the website were particularly expanded in 2009:

- **Key issues: A number of pages focusing on particular problems for victims of caste discrimination were launched. These key issues – such as bonded labour, gender issues and manual scavenging – affect millions of Dalits and transcend international borders.**
- **International Advocacy: The pages on the United Nations and its relevance for the global struggle against caste discrimination were significantly expanded.**
- **Country information: Separate pages with information on individual countries with caste systems were introduced.**
- **Publications: A large number of relevant publications on caste discrimination were uploaded to the website.**

The website will be improved further in 2010 with a particular focus on upgrading the Country Information, EU, and Business and CSR sections. A tagging system will also be introduced, making it easier to search for relevant documents.

In 2009, the number of visits to the website steadily increased with particular interest during times of important developments, such as High Commissioner Pillay's October statement on caste discrimination. All in all, the website had approximately 10,000 unique visitors from a large number of countries.

IDSN monthly newsletter

IDSN's long awaited monthly electronic newsletter was launched in May, and by the end of the year the number of subscribers had increased to more than 500. They constitute a mix of decision makers in international institutions, government officials, media professionals, Dalit activists and concerned individuals with a particular interest in the subject of caste discrimination.

The newsletter is divided into main sections. The section on International News features developments in the UN system as well as the European Union, two of IDSN's main focus areas for lobby activities. The section on National News presents important news from caste-affected countries. The natural focus is on South Asia, but other countries – such as the United Kingdom which has a sizeable diaspora community – are included. The news items feature information on relevant national developments as well as specific activities carried out by IDSN members. Media clippings, particularly from India, are also included.

"If you really want to understand climate change, then come and talk to people like us."

Narsamma Masanagari, Dalit activist from a village in Andhra Pradesh, India, quoted by the IDSN website in a news piece on the COP15 climate change conference in Copenhagen, 15 December

Upcoming events as well as new studies and publications are announced in the newsletter, which is already seen as an important information resource by its readers. The goal is to reach 1,000 subscribers before the end of 2010.

Developments in caste-affected countries

Dalit activists in caste-affected countries form the backbone of IDSN. In 2009, they continued to make headway in their struggle for Dalit rights. Although huge problems persist, there were notable achievements, such as the national campaign in India to review and strengthen the legislation to protect Dalits from atrocities. In Nepal, Dalit groups gave important input to the development of the country's new constitution. The Dalit movement in Bangladesh grew steadily – in size and in confidence – and increased its lobbying and advocacy efforts. In Pakistan, a national platform, the Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network, was officially launched, and engaged in preparations for the country's next important census, a key concern also for Dalits in Nepal and Bangladesh.

The national Dalit platforms in caste-affected countries were at the forefront of these activities, but other groups, including IDSN national associates, made valuable contributions. Together with the IDSN secretariat, Dalit activists also made crucial interventions during the ongoing efforts to internationalise the struggle against caste discrimination through lobby activities at the UN and EU.

It goes beyond the scope of this report to describe country situations in any detail. Only the main developments are presented along with a summary of the platforms' own activities. Member platforms and Dalit Solidarity Networks are financed independently of IDSN.

National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights – India

The year 2009 was in many ways an important one in the struggle for Dalit rights in India. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, as well as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh expressed concern about 'untouchability' and atrocities against Dalits – known officially as 'Scheduled Castes'. Voices were raised in Parliament in favour of Dalit

rights, and all the major political parties considered the issue to some extent.

Throughout the year the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) focused on strengthening the accountability of the state and holding the judiciary and law enforcement agencies accountable through public interest litigation (PIL) and public actions. NCDHR also held policy-makers accountable by mobilising civil society to campaign for their rights.

During her visit to India in March, Navi Pillay urged the government to show global leadership in the fight against caste discrimination. She noted that the policies and measures established so far to protect Dalits have “neither sufficiently alleviated their conditions, nor have they satisfactorily curtailed the climate of impunity that enables human rights violations.” Following a meeting with civil society representatives, including NCDHR, Ms Pillay called on the Government of India to act upon recommendations from various UN bodies and accept visits by the UN special rapporteurs.

In April, the time came to review the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action at the Durban Review Conference (DRC). This was a historic event for the Dalit movement in India, because the Durban conference in 2001 was the first time that the issue of caste discrimination was recognised as an international human rights problem. To prepare for the DRC, NCDHR brought together civil society organisations for a strategy consultation in February in New Delhi.

A delegation of Dalit activists from India participated in the DRC and raised their voices on the need for strengthening Dalit rights, although the concern was not specifically addressed in the outcome document. NCDHR took a lead in facilitating the participation of South Asian Dalit representatives at the DRC in Geneva. Along with IDSN it organised parallel events, a public rally, and interventions in the DRC proceedings which brought a high level of visibility through media and events.

In April and May, India voted to elect a new government. NCDHR established a national-level platform called the ‘National Dalit Election Watch’ (NDEW) to monitor the election process. Previous studies show that Dalits’ rights to franchise are systematically violated, as they are either not allowed to vote or forced by the dominant castes to vote for certain parties and candidates. NDEW covered 13 federal states, monitored 3770 polling booths in 264 parliamentary constituencies, and received 490 cases through its complaint mechanism. The complaints were immediately submitted to the Election Commission, and the findings were documented in a report and a video documentary and shared with national media.

Human Rights Watch and caste

Human Rights Watch (HRW), a pioneer of the global struggle against caste discrimination and an international associate of IDSN, continued its good work on the issue in 2009. Speaking to the media after a HRW board meeting in New Delhi in October, the organisation’s executive director, Kenneth Roth, expressed strong support for the draft UN Principles and Guidelines that could lead to the establishment of a UN monitoring mechanism. HRW’s Asia director Brad Adams stated that “political will to end the scourge of caste discrimination is needed at all levels of government to alter traditional attitudes and turn well-meaning laws into reality.” HRW and IDSN cooperated closely on several occasions, issuing joint press statements during the DRC in April and following UN High Commissioner Pillay’s powerful opinion article in October. HRW was also a co-sponsor of the parallel event on caste discrimination at the HRC in Geneva.

For nearly a decade, NCDHR has monitored atrocities against Dalits, organised fact finding missions, made legal interventions and other activities. But instead of only fighting for the Dalits, NCDHR made a decision in 2009 to fight with the Dalits. As a result, nearly 1200 Dalit human rights defenders were trained and groups of survivors and witnesses were formed. In addition to legal interventions in individual cases, NCDHR filed three PILs in High Courts for the implementation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and Rules, 1995.

The year 2009 marked the 20th anniversary of this important act, which was the first to criminalise various forms of atrocities against Dalits and provide a practical mechanism to address them. The National Dalit Movement for Justice – one of the four movements of NCDHR – initiated a process whereby more than 70 organisations came together to review the implementation and propose amendments to the Act. The “National Campaign for Strengthening Prevention of Atrocities Act” was launched. It included campaigns, training of activists, and public actions throughout the country¹³.

“Why should only Dalits take the entire burden of fighting against the caste system? The burden lies with the entire society.”

Manjula Pradeep, Dalit activist and Director of the Dalit rights organisation, Navsarjan, 23 December

Dilahi, Bihar, India, October 2007 The devastating floods in Bihar in 2007 left millions displaced. Dalits are particularly vulnerable when natural disasters strike – dominant castes are often responsible for distribution of government aid and discriminate against Dalits in the process. Since 2007, the National Dalit Watch has been monitoring all major disasters in India.

“It is shocking that the conviction rate for cases of atrocities against SC/STs is less than 30% against the average of 42%.”

Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India, 7 September

Since 2007, the National Dalit Watch has been monitoring all major disasters in India, with a view to enable civil society organisations and state agencies to avoid discrimination against Dalits and take corrective measures to counter such exclusion. This year the team visited the ‘Aila’ cyclone hit areas of West Bengal, the flood affected areas of Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. In all these areas the exclusion of Dalit communities from relief and rehabilitation efforts by the local dominant castes and the local administration was sadly visible on a significant scale. NDW exposed this discrimination and exclusion of Dalits through systematic surveys, analysis and reports along with local partners.

To monitor the promotion and protection of Dalits’ economic, social and cultural rights, NCDHR established research and advocacy centres in ten federal states and at national level. These centres undertake state budget analysis; organise meetings with policy makers, bureaucrats, and intellectuals to ensure proper correction measures; and advocate for the proper implementation of existing laws and affirmative action programmes. The Special Component Plan (SCP) is a budgetary provision which channels individual or community development schemes for Scheduled Castes in all the ministries and departments. However this policy is not implemented effectively. In the Union Budget for 2009-2010 an amount of Billion \$4.96 has been diverted out of what should have been allocated. This is a challenge that is being highlighted by NCDHR along with other civil society organisations.

Dalit children’s equal access to education was an important focus in 2009. A survey was conducted with support

“They have good laws in India, and they have media; they have well developed civil society organizations. So how come there is no implementation of these good laws, these good intentions?”

Navi Pillay in an interview with US weekly The Nation, 26 October

from UNICEF on caste-based discrimination in elementary education in four states (Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra). The main purpose of the survey was to explore the nature and intensity of discrimination in schools and to further develop a mechanism to address these issues.

A bill on Reservation (Quotas) for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) was passed by the Rajya Sabha (Upper House of Parliament). NCDHR and the Dalit Student Solidarity Movement (DSSM) studied the Bill along with other organisations across the country and found it quite harmful to the interests of the SCs and STs as it went against the basic principle of equity on which the Reservation was framed. After a citizens’ debate a draft amendment Bill was prepared and distributed to all political parties. NCDHR had a series of meetings with Members of Parliament and Ministers, and held a peoples’ rally. After these interventions the Bill was deferred.

Prior to Human Rights Day on 10 December, NDCHR took part in a press briefing under the auspices of the Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN (WGHR). A panel of experts urged the Indian government to radically change its international stand on caste discrimination and support the efforts of the international community to address the multiple human rights violations that affect India’s estimated 200 million Dalits.

Dalit NGO Federation – Nepal

Caste-based discrimination continued to be a source of non-development, instability, and conflict in Nepal, a country generally characterised by political instability and institutional challenges. Despite the Government’s declaration of Nepal as an ‘untouchability free state’, Dalits are still subjected to violence and social exclusion, bonded labour, and forced prostitution. The constitution-making process has provided unprecedented opportunities as well as challenges for the Dalit movement. Dalits in Nepal demanded and worked hard to secure inclusion of Dalit rights in the Constitution in accordance with Nepal’s international human rights obligations, proportionate political representation and special measures to address the historical injustices.

One of the critical issues is the lack of adequate disaggregated data. According to Government statistics, Dalits constitute 13 percent of the population. However, a survey done by Dalit organisations estimates that the number should be as high as 20 percent. Dalits only constitute eight percent of the Constituent Assembly. It is therefore essential that the Government, Dalit



organisations, and donors make efforts to secure adequate and correct data in the national census planned for 2011.

The government made concessions, including a number of bold new provisions on caste discrimination in its budget proposal. These included grants for inter-caste couples and child protection measures for poor Dalit families. Nepal's Maoist Prime Minister also announced plans to ban the country's dowry system. In a televised address in January, he called caste discrimination "inhuman" and a "national shame".

Later that year, the Government of Nepal joined the international struggle against caste discrimination by making strong statements within the framework of the United Nations, including the Durban Review Conference in April.

The main focus of activities undertaken by the Dalit NGO Federation (DNF) was on integration of Dalit human rights in Nepal's new constitution through lobbying different thematic committees of the Constituent Assembly (CA). DNF held a seminar for Dalit members of the CA to increase their lobbying capacity. The program was organised jointly by the Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ), DNF, and IDS. At the seminar DNF presented key recommendations for the inclusion of Dalit rights in the new constitution.

A joint statement submitted by DNF, CHRGJ, and IDS in February called on the CA to respect and promote international human rights principles in the drafting process in compliance with the main human rights treaties that reject the inherently discriminatory features of the caste system. The statement addressed the substantive rights guarantees in areas such as equality and non-discrimination and economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the issue of enforcing such rights. The President of the Thematic Committee, Bindha Pandey, received the recommendations and acknowledged the need for Dalit rights as fundamental rights in the new constitution.

In August DNF organised a national seminar on Dalit rights in the new constitution with the objective of influencing political parties. State Minister Jeet Gautum participated as a chief guest and made a commitment to address Dalit issues in the new constitution. Other seminar participants included political party leaders, Dalit activists and CA members.

"Untouchability is a heinous social crime and stern actions will be taken against the offenders by amending the law if necessary."

Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Prime Minister of Nepal, 25 January

Nepal Constitutional Project – Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ)

In support of the constitution-building process in Nepal, IDS_N has contributed financially to the Nepal Constitutional Project held by CHRGJ (research associate of IDS_N). In April 2008, CHRGJ's report *Recasting Justice: Securing Dalit Rights in Nepal's New Constitution* was issued. The report analyses Nepal's Interim Constitution in order to suggest how the new constitution may be drafted in accordance with the country's international human rights obligations to ensure the rights of Dalits. Since the launch of the report CHRGJ, DNF and IDS_N have worked to disseminate its findings. In 2009 With IDS_N and DNF, CHRGJ co-authored an eight-page Joint Statement in February 2009 distilling DNF's major recommendations and those outlined in CHRGJ's report *Recasting Justice*. To enable broad dissemination, the Statement was published in both English and in Nepali. CHRGJ also commenced research on Nepal's international human rights obligations to enact special measures as a way to ensure equality for Dalits and other marginalised groups.

CHRGJ staff organised a visit to Kathmandu in April, with the support and partnership of IDS_N and DNF, and met with relevant actors in the constitution-building process. CHRGJ also contributed to a one-day seminar organised by DNF, bringing together a group of CA members and Dalit civil society representatives to discuss how to best protect Dalit rights in the new constitution.

Main points from CHRGJ's research into Nepal's international human rights law obligations as to special measures:

- **Nepal is obligated to implement special measures to remedy discrimination and/or to ensure substantive equality;**
- **Special measures programs must address the marginalised among the marginalised, e.g., Dalit women – in a meaningful way;**
- **International human rights law requires that special measures apply to the government, public, and private sectors;**
- **Special measures must be accompanied by a larger set of measures designed to ensure substantive equality of Dalits and other marginalised groups;**
- **Go beyond reservations and include programs to change social and cultural attitudes and norms; include capacity building, education, and training.**



Besides having regional and district level activities on Dalit rights, DNF also conducted a signature campaign for Dalit rights in the new constitution to draw the attention of CA members, political parties and other stakeholders. 25,000 signatures were collected from Dalits, human rights advocates, and other political activists and submitted to the Chief of the CA political parties and the relevant thematic committees.

DNF also undertook an analysis of the annual government budget and programme of the fiscal year 2009/2010, and disseminated the analysis countrywide.

One of the burning issues in 2009 was how to position the Dalits in a new federal structure. Some political parties propose that the federal state should be based on ethnicity and caste. However, since Dalits are found in all parts of the country, which state should they belong to? The political Dalit organisations came up with different proposals. The Dalit Liberation Front focused on 'special rights' for Dalits, some wanted 'progressive reservation', and others wanted no reservations at all. For two years DNF facilitated a platform for bringing together different political sister organisations, most of which represent different agendas. With these joint efforts, it was possible to produce a common Dalit demand paper, which was submitted to the Government and the CA Chief in 2009.

In 2009 DNF made a documentary movie named "Whip Up" as a follow up to the documentary "Achhut", which was made in 2008. The first documentary covered the social, political and economic conditions of the Terai Dalit population. DNF also published a number of books and reports.

"The draft principles and guidelines can serve as good reference in devising the ways and means to address the issue of caste-based discrimination. These principles and guidelines also may be useful tools to work out amendments and reforms of discriminatory laws and revitalize their implementation."

State Minister Jeet Bahadur Darjee Gautum, Government of Nepal, at UN Human Rights Council parallel event, 16 September

Dalit demands create results

During a meeting with the city corporation mayor in Barisal, Dalits demanded higher salaries. The mayor took instant action and increased the salary level from taka 600 to 1500 and appointed five young Dalits to city corporation jobs. In another instance, a local leader in Joypurhat and a BDERM leader, Advocate Babul Robidas, protested against the eviction of a cobbler. Now the cobbler is reemployed.

Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement

The Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM) was established as a national platform for Dalits in the beginning of 2008. It faces a number of challenges in asserting Dalit rights, including such key issues as various forms of discrimination against Dalit women, i.e. forced prostitution and bonded labour. Extremely limited access to health care, employment and education continues to dominate the lives of the Dalit 'colonies' in Bangladesh.

Nevertheless, the movement is growing steadily, and Dalits are gaining more footing and confidence at various levels. Because of BDERM activities, local Dalit groups have become very active in asserting their rights. They have formed human chains to protest against human rights violations of Dalits – including the rape of a Dalit girl in Jessore in July.

The movement organised the first ever Dalit Human Rights Conference in Bangladesh in Dhaka in January. Approximately 300 Dalit representatives from 47 districts attended the event, and a wide range of topics related to Dalit rights were presented and discussed.

In preparation of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Bangladesh, 17 organisations formed a network called the Human Rights Forum on UPR. BDERM was one of the key members of this forum. A shadow report on the human rights situation of Dalits were prepared together with Nagoryik Uddyog and IDS-N, and BDERM representatives attended the UPR session during the UN Human Rights Council in February 2009. As a follow-up to the review, a press briefing was organised in Dhaka in June 2009 where a BDERM representative raised the Dalit issue. The briefing was attended by the Foreign Minister who gave specific attention to this problem in her speech, although the issue

Tipakir Kailal, Nepal, November 2007 Bahadur Lohar, a Dalit, was born to become a blacksmith. He serves ten families and is paid once a year. The caste system has locked his family into a pattern of bonded labour for generations. Nepal's Dalits are now making demands for a more inclusive constitution.



was not raised in the UPR debate and recommendations that were approved by the Human Rights Council.

To advocate for adequate living conditions and housing rights for Dalits, BDERM organised a national level seminar in March entitled 'Housing Rights of Dalits and special allocation national budget 2009-10 to build more houses/ colonies for Dalits'. A Charter of Demands was sent to the Finance Minister, who said in his budget speech: "We believe in harmony among the different religions, castes, groups and communities. We want the end of differential treatment and oppression of minority population. We will guarantee political, administrative, legal and social security for them."

Other issues were also raised by BDERM, including the right to an adequate standard of health, access to water and sanitation, and quotas in educational institutions. The Government responded positively in some cases. For example, it started to build 60 apartments for the Dalit community. The Law Ministry has also showed an interest in drafting a law against discrimination. An increased advocacy capacity would enable BDERM to direct more of its lobbying efforts at government officials.

BDERM successfully organised an event to mark the International Day against Racial Discrimination in March 2009. This event contributed to raising further awareness of

caste discrimination. BDERM also organised series of events countrywide on International Human Rights Day and the World Dignity Day in December. 10,000 leaflets and 5000 posters were printed to raise awareness, and approximately 2000 Dalits attended the events.

In terms of international advocacy, BDERM and Nagorik Uddyog (a supporting organisation to BDERM) facilitated a number of events and visits in 2009. An international consultation on caste discrimination was held in Dhaka in June in connection with a regional seminar held by the

Human chain against land grabbing

Land grabbing is one of the serious problems facing the Dalit community in Bangladesh. On 29 March a group of people tried to evict Dalit inhabitants of 11 houses in Dhaka city, and demolished a temple. To protest the local land grabbers, BDERM organised a series of activities, including the formation of a human chain, and held a press conference and coordination meeting with other human rights organisations and victims between March and June. Finally the perpetrators decided to quit the land grabbing from the Dalit colony.

Dhaka, Bangladesh, September 2007 Dalit sweepers contribute to Dhaka's production of public goods, but get very few goods or services in return. They even struggle to hold on to these underpaid and low regarded jobs. The Dalit movement in Bangladesh is now growing in confidence.

"They [Dalits of Bangladesh] are reportedly denied education because of social stigma, and their jobs are threatened. Although they work in sanitation all day long, they have no or inadequate access to water and sanitation in their own homes. The Government must end all forms of discrimination and adopt immediate measures to guarantee their human rights."

Statement by the two UN Independent Experts on water and sanitation and on extreme poverty after their visit to a Dalit colony in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 10 December

EU (read more on page 11). Two UN Independent Experts visited a Dalit colony as part of their joint field visit to Bangladesh in December (read more on page 9).

BDERM held its first General Council in Dhaka in October with participation from 50 of the country's 64 districts. The Council adopted its constitution as amended, and approved the annual work plan. It also decided that Nagorik Uddyog will work as secretariat for the next two years of BDERM to support its activities and provide advice. BDERM organised two consultation meetings at divisional level in June and July in Chittagong and Sylhet respectively. Approximately 155 Dalit representatives participated in the meetings, and were joined by tea plantation workers. BDERM issues a quarterly newsletter Dalit O Bonchito Shamchar which has approximately 1500 active readers.

Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network

The Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN) was formally launched in Karachi on 5 April 2009 in connection with a consultation entitled "Problems faced by Dalits: Strategies for Solution." Although the network has been in place for some years, it was re-launched in the presence of a wider group of civil society organisations. The consultation took detailed account of the problems faced by Dalits in Pakistan and discussed PDSN strategies to raise these issues.

In 2009 PDSN engaged in a number of activities to highlight the Dalit issue in Pakistan. A main focus area concerned preparations for the next national census, due every ten years. The latest census was held in 1998, but the next one was only announced by the Government in October 2009. The census is a major issue for Dalits because the previous censuses have undercounted the total numbers of Scheduled Castes, as Dalits are officially called. Official statistics have been widely contested, and representatives claim that the current number (330,000) has deliberately been made lower and may be as high as two million. PDSN therefore included this issue in its advocacy agenda and organised a series of meetings at grass root level, including

a major consultation in Hyderabad in June. PDSN also raised the issue in consultations on the topic organised by other organisations. PDSN sent its recommendations on changes in census forms to the Central Census Office. The Central Government, however, postponed the census process, and a new date has yet to be announced.

The PDSN secretariat, which is currently based at the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER), maintained a database with press clippings on violence against Dalits and related government actions. On this basis PDSN issued several urgent calls for action against such attacks, and wrote letters to the higher judiciary on the matter. One appeal concerned the case of Mr Ramzan Bheel, a Dalit who was beaten and humiliated by private guards of a landlord in Sindh province in May. PDSN also informed the Ministry of Human Rights of this case.

An overwhelming majority of the thousands released from labour bondage in 2009 were Dalits. Given that bonded labour is one of the main sources of economic exploitation of Dalits, PDSN remained engaged in advocacy on the issue throughout the year. This involved grass root support of bonded labourers when they were released and help with unionisation and advocacy at a national level.

In August Christian villages and colonies were attacked in Punjab based on allegations of blasphemy, and several people were burnt alive and homes set on fire. Most of the victims were 'lower caste' Christians who were occupied by the local municipality to do cleaning and other menial jobs. PDSN was among the first few organisations that visited the affected villages and sympathised with the victims. A press statement was issued condemning the incident.

In mid-2009, the Government of Pakistan established a committee to receive recommendations on constitutional reform. Civil society organisations also formed a committee, and PDSN participated to raise the Dalit issue. While the process halted due to political uncertainty, this will remain a priority area for PDSN.

One of the main challenges for Dalits in Pakistan is the need for acceptance; caste discrimination is still not accepted and recognised, neither by state institutions nor at the local level. Though there has been some change over the last years, there is a long way to go. Dalits continue to be

"The Committee urges the State to intensify its efforts to implement the laws and programs adopted to put an end to bonded labour and discrimination against marginalised groups such as the scheduled castes."

CERD concluding observations on Pakistan, February

economically exploited by landlords that thrive on the Dalit labour force. Hence, a large number of Dalits remain in bondage. Those who are successful in securing their freedom have no place to live, and the Government offers no rehabilitation plan for them. A number of Dalits also face eviction threats due to the lack of any entitlement documents, as the majority of Dalits in Pakistan are without such documents. There is an urgent need for comprehensive constitutional and legal reforms to address such issues.

The Dalit rights movement in Pakistan is still very young, and faces several challenges in its struggle to highlight the Dalit issue. The network lacks capacity and resources within the Dalit rights movement. Also, the situation in the country poses a constant obstacle to any serious progress, in particular political uncertainty and terrorism. With daily incidents of suicide attacks and terrorist threats, it becomes

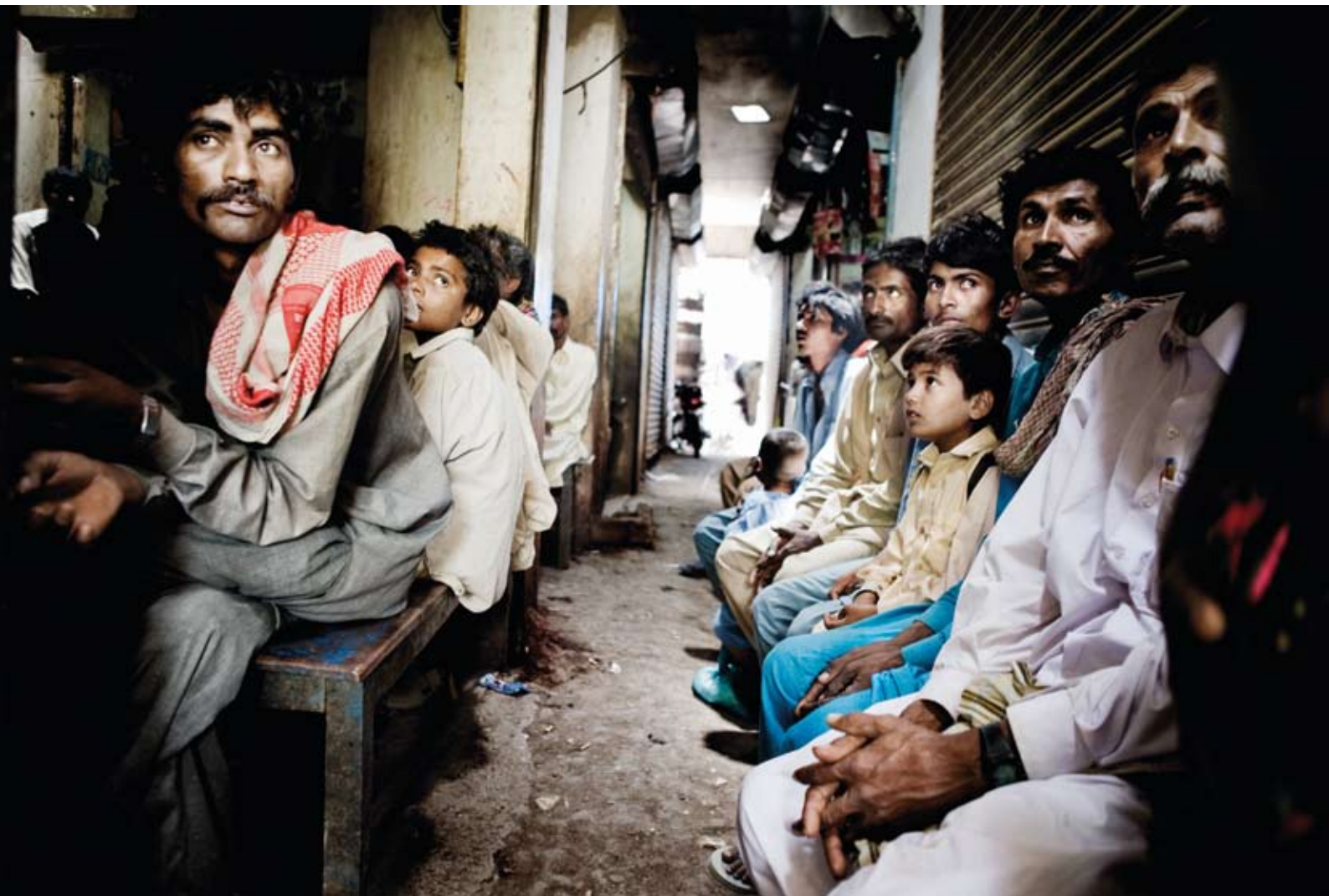
Kidnapped for helping bonded labourers

PDSN and its members actively joined the struggle for the release of a Dalit activist, the advocate Amar Chand. He had helped with the release of a group of 78 bonded labourers through legal means from a landlord in early 2009. Following this action, the landlord turned against him. Mr Chand was kidnapped by armed people when he was travelling to appear before a court in a false case registered by the landlord. PDSN actively participated in a hunger strike and campaigned for his release. He was released two days after the PDSN secretary and relatives of Mr Chand approached the Sindh Chief Minister.

difficult to raise the Dalit issue because most of the Government functionaries, media and other stakeholders are preoccupied with security related issues.

Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, at least three separate caste systems coexist and interact with each other as well as with Hindu caste systems in India: the Sinhala, Sri Lanka Tamil and Indian



Virtual resource center

The South Asia Research Network on Caste Based Discrimination run by the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS) established a virtual resource centre, <http://dalitssouthasia.org>. The platform intends to promote the production, exchange and dissemination of research knowledge on caste discrimination and other forms of social exclusion, and facilitate academic exchange across the region. It further functions as both a resource centre and network of Dalit researchers and researchers on Dalits in South Asia. Working papers on three caste-affected countries, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were published in 2009. Due to a huge demand from grass root organisations and students, they were translated in to Hindi and made available online and in print. In May, IIDS organised an international Seminar on “Comparative Context of Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Policies in Asia”, which included national level presentations of the findings of the regional research project. IDSN has supported the project since its inception and partners with IIDS in dissemination of research findings and related activities.

Tamil caste systems. Although there is no uniform practice of ‘untouchability’, caste-based discrimination is found in varying degrees in all three systems.

The caste system in Jaffna was traditionally the most rigid one with clearly defined patterns of inequality, discrimination and social rejection as described in a new book on caste discrimination in Sri Lanka launched in February: “Casteless or caste-blind? Dynamics of concealed caste discrimination, social exclusion and protest in Sri Lanka” edited by Kalinga Tudor Silva, P.P. Sivapragasam and Paramsothy Thanges¹⁴.

The relative significance of certain depressed caste communities in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Jaffna suggests that caste discrimination is by no means a dead issue in contemporary Sri Lanka. Many of the IDPs remaining in camps in Jaffna are of Panchar (low caste) background. This is a consequence of a combination of factors, including lack of alternative housing, deep-rooted poverty, lack of social capital, exclusion from the local land market and security and welfare considerations of the affected people.

Karachi, Pakistan, April 2008 The segregation of Dalits is complete in this Karachi tea shop. They are simply not allowed into tea shops owned by Muslims or dominant castes. The Dalit movement in Pakistan is still very young and faces several challenges in its struggle to highlight the Dalit issue.

As an effect of the civil war, caste discrimination has become surreptitious and socially explosive in some instances. In the post-conflict phase caste consciousness seems to reappear affecting the reconstruction and relief phase, as reported by researcher Prof. Tudor Silva. Underprivileged caste groups are often the hardest hit by civil war and natural disasters like the Tsunami. It is essential to learn from these experiences and not have ‘caste-blind’ policies; therefore caste must be explicitly addressed in social impact assessments and monitoring and evaluation of development programmes, including the reconstruction and reconciliation phase. In the course of 2009, local organisations and IDSN engaged with the European Commission on these issues and recommended that it support a post-conflict study on these aspects.

IDSN partners in Sri Lanka further report about growing evidence of caste backgrounds getting into play in the post-conflict political dynamics.

Dalit Solidarity Networks

The national Dalit Solidarity Networks (DSNs) in a number of European countries continued to make important contributions to IDSN’s international advocacy work. At the same time, they lobbied governments in their own countries to pay attention to the issue, and engaged with the public and their national media communities to raise awareness of caste discrimination. The DSNs in the UK, the Netherlands and Denmark were particularly active in working with private companies to include the caste issue in their CSR policies.

Dalit Solidarity Network UK

The Dalit Solidarity Network UK (DSN-UK) continued its activities in 2009 under the ‘FOUL PLAY’ Campaign to end Manual Scavenging by 2010, which was launched in solidarity with the Safai Karmachari Andolan (SKA) in July 2008. In March, DSN-UK coordinator Meena Varma led a delegation of women to celebrate International Women’s Day by presenting a cheque to the Indian High Commissioner demanding the release of the £109 million set aside by the Indian Government for the rehabilitation of the 1.3 million manual scavengers – 90 percent of whom are women. Furthermore, the Commonwealth Foundation decided to give a grant for a DSN/SKA ‘Photovoice’ proposal to deliver a skills-based participatory photo training programme to SKA campaigners and former manual scavengers. The project, which will tell personalised stories

“There is a danger that if the UK government does not effectively accept and deal with the issue of caste discrimination the problem will grow unchecked.”

From a report published by the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance, 11 November

about the issues affecting the involved persons, their families and community, will be finalised in February 2010. The images will be used as postcards, leaflets, newsletters and in exhibitions by DSN-UK, IDS and SKA. The network also met with the Head of Human Rights, Dr Purna Sen, at the Commonwealth Secretariat to discuss the need to apply their principles of ‘Humanity, Equality, Destiny’ to the millions of Dalits in South Asian Commonwealth countries.

In connection with the campaign DSN-UK met with the representative from ILO India to discuss the ILO Dalit Employment Paper, the ILO work in New Delhi to eradicate manual scavenging, and the ratification and non-implementation of ILO Convention 111. A meeting was also held with an ILO representative in Geneva on how to better mobilise ILO mechanisms, including the ILO Committee of Experts.

Other ‘FOUL-PLAY’ campaign activities included a petition with over 80 signatories at No.10 Downing Street, an Early Day Motion tabled in the British Parliament October 2008 which gained 60 parliamentary signatories, the sending of campaign postcards with the slogan ‘So you think you’ve had a shitty day?’ to over 100 UK Members of Parliament, and increased awareness in the UK through press and media coverage.

In November DSN-UK, together with One World Action, presented the draft UN Principles and Guidelines on caste discrimination at an event in the UK Houses of Parliament. Dalit activists Ruth Manorama (India) and Durga Sob (Nepal) spoke at the event, which was chaired by Jeremy Corbyn MP.

Throughout the year, DSN-UK promoted private sector work, mainly through the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) to address caste discrimination in employment and with ETI member companies in the UK. Together with the Dutch Network (DNN) and IDS, DSN-UK also explored how to take forward the Ambedkar Principles and The Dalit Discrimination Check with European companies, including training and other CSR initiatives on caste.

In New Delhi, Meena Varma delivered a ‘Train the Trainer’ programme for the effective elimination of caste discrimination in the private sector. The participants were a mix of NGOs, CSR specialists and Trade Unions who will go on to deliver the training themselves as part of ongoing

empowerment and education of Dalits in India. Meetings were also held between IDS, including DSN-UK, and a number of private sector actors.

DSN-UK is the lead NGO of the ETI Stone Group and helps to guide the member companies to raise awareness of caste discrimination in India. Working through the Stone Group DSN-UK has introduced new Southern partners who are experts on stone quarries as well as Dalit rights.

Over the past three years, DSN-UK has campaigned for the inclusion of ‘caste’ as a discriminatory factor in the UK’s Single Equalities Bill. The importation of the caste system through the UK’s own Asian communities affects up to 250,000 people in the spheres of education, employment and provision of good and services. The network continues to lobby the House of Lords to support an amendment tabled in November 2009. Without legal provision discrimination on the basis of caste will continue in many ways and forms.

The Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance launched a ‘scoping study’ at the House of Lords in November 09 called ‘Hidden Apartheid – Voice of the Community’. The report shows clear evidence of caste discrimination in the UK and the launch was attended by MPs on the Equalities Bill committee. This has become a truly cross party issue and it is hoped that the Government will take note of the evidence and agree to the amendment. In this connection there is a need for more education and raising awareness programmes with teachers, local authorities and in schools in the UK. If such issues were to be addressed, it would be the first time that a European country deals with this problem internally, which would be an important signal worldwide – in particular to India.

The UK network facilitated meetings on how UK churches could respond to the global call for justice for Dalits made by the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation in 2009. Caste has been an issue hovering around the edges of the British Churches for some years now, and could be addressed in more a focused fashion.

In 2009 DSN-UK engaged with written, online, radio and TV media on its work and campaigns. As well as proactively seeking media opportunities, it had several opportunities to do reactive media work. The film ‘Slumdog Millionaire’ provided the hook for a comment piece ‘India’s Elephant in the Room’ for the Guardian ‘Comment is free’ site. An article appearing in Outlook Business India magazine – Bite the Caste Bullet – also featured DSN-UK. Meena Varma wrote another article for the same magazine titled ‘End the Apartheid’ on the need for Affirmative Action policies which was published in October 2009. Finally, she was interviewed about caste discrimination in Britain by BBC London radio in September.

Dalit Network Netherlands

In 2009, the issue of caste discrimination was raised by three Dutch political parties in Parliament in a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. They asked the Minister to be active in the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and to intensify the political dialogue with India. This was a major achievement for the Dalit Network Netherlands (DNN) and helped strengthen the profile of the issue in the Ministry. As a result caste discrimination was raised by the Dutch government both in the EU and UN. DNN helped prepare inputs for the HRC sessions. Particular focus was given to the draft UN Principles and Guidelines, manual scavenging, access to water and sanitation, and Dalit women. The network facilitated the submission of 30 cases of violence against Dalit women in 2007, which was taken up in the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women in 2009. DNN also facilitated discussions with the UN Independent Expert on water and sanitation about caste discrimination and manual scavenging, and helped facilitate the participation of Dalit women in the UN Forum on Minority Issues.

Various activities were undertaken by the Dutch network in 2009 to help create a stronger framework for tackling caste discrimination in the private sector. DNN was the main author of the revision of the Ambedkar Principles, and worked actively in the national and international working group on ISO 26000 to keep language on descent/caste-based discrimination in the Draft International Standard. The text now includes a section on 'People discriminated against on the basis of descent, including caste'. When it is finalised in 2010 it will become an important source of guidance for social responsibility of organizations. The network also provided inputs to the Good Practice Guide India of the Norwegian and Danish Ethical Trade Initiative. The Dutch network published a brochure on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and Dalits, and started disseminating it together with the Ambedkar Principles and the Dalit Discrimination Check to relevant trade initiatives, companies and banks. One (ethical) bank will send it to around 100 multinational companies it is investing in, and the governmental Export Promotion Agency has actively promoted the information. The strong focus on fundamental labour rights and CSR in the Dutch and European debate is a hopeful sign that private investors and traders will have to start dealing with this issue sooner rather than later.

The general impact of DNN's work on the general public opinion is on the rise. According to an opinion poll from 2009, the number of people that know about the caste system went from almost 40 percent to nearly 50 percent. Of those, 80 percent feel that caste discrimination is a problem that matters to the whole world, compared to

70 percent five years ago. More than two out of three respondents feel that both the Dutch government and Dutch companies, including their supply chains, should be active on the issue. In 2009, DNN organised a meeting with students in Utrecht where a video 'Outcaste Heroes' was screened and a Dalit student spoke, followed by a fruitful discussion among the 70 participants. DNN also participated in two other movie screenings at film festivals, one of which had Dalit activist and Livelihood Award Winner Ruth Manorama as a speaker. In total more than 100 people participated in these lively debates.

Dalit Solidarity Network – Sweden

The main activity by the Dalit Solidarity Network Sweden (DSN-S) took place in April when a delegation met with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss the upcoming Swedish EU Presidency from July to December. Paul Divakar (NCDHR), IDS-N Coordinator Rikke Nöhrlind and Hans Magnusson, DSN-S also had meetings with two political parties (the Social Democrats and the Centre Party), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the Swedish section of Amnesty International.

During the meeting with the Ministry, the IDS-N delegation referred to the Swedish Government's commitments to be a 'distinct voice for human rights' and to strengthen EU's politics, instruments and tools for human rights. IDS-N also pointed out the many opportunities for the Swedish government to raise concern about caste discrimination during its Presidency, including the yearly EU-India summit and human rights dialogues with affected governments. In May the DSN-S Coordinator, Hans Magnusson, wrote a letter to the Minister for Foreign Affairs urging him to take resolute action during the EU Presidency.

While there has been a certain reluctance to take leadership on this issue in the past, the Swedish Government took some important initiatives during its Presidency in 2009, both at EU and UN level. In September Sweden prepared a strong statement and delivered it on behalf of the EU at the UN Human Rights Council parallel event on the draft UN Principles and Guidelines. Sweden also took a leading role as a host for the EU briefing on caste discrimination in November.

Members of Parliament expressed a positive attitude during meetings with DSN-S. The members from the Social Democrats took note of the Dutch Government's policy, which has caste discrimination as a priority area. They also responded positively to the idea of liaising with other MPs from Europe, and of conducting a parliamentary hearing as in Denmark, the US Congress and the UK. Representatives from the Centre Party International Foundation were also positive towards the idea of a hearing.

Litani, Haryana, India, October 2007 Sukhwinder Singh, 14 years old when this picture was taken, has worked for years to pay off his deceased father's debt to a local landlord. Bonded labour and debt slavery affect millions of Dalits all over South Asia.

DSN-S has continuously tried to convince Amnesty International (AI) Sweden to take a more active role in the work against caste discrimination. Considering Amnesty's worldwide representation and resources, its cooperation and support would be of great value to the global Dalit movement.

DSN-S was involved in two public meetings about India and caste discrimination in 2009. Students at four schools also approached DSN-S for information before travelling to India. It is, however, still felt that it is necessary to inform the wider Swedish public about caste discrimination.

RAFTO Foundation – Norway

The Rafto Foundation for Human Rights in Norway has been associated with IDSN since the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights was awarded the Rafto Human Rights Prize in 2007. The Rafto Foundation sought to influence the Norwegian Government's policy on caste-related issues in India on a few occasions in 2009. On 15th May Rafto and IDSN published a joint press statement urging the Norwegian government to work against caste-based discrimination as a new member of the UN Human Rights Council. Later that month Rafto and IDSN presented a set of recommendations for inclusion of Dalit concerns in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' India Strategy. A large number of other Norwegian organisations also signed up to this document. The five-page India Strategy published in August did, however, not contain any explicit references to Dalits or caste-based discrimination. It emphasised economic cooperation, a general commitment to promote human rights, and non-discrimination in broader terms.

In September a delegation from Rural Education for Development Society (REDS) from Karnataka, India, a grass-root organisation that promotes equal political participation for Dalits, visited Norway to study Norway's system of parliamentary elections, including the separate parliament for the indigenous Sami people living in the north. The delegation, which was led by M. C. Raj, met with a number of researchers and politicians from several universities and both parliaments. Rafto provided contacts and some practical advice on how to organise the trip. The delegation from REDS seemed to find the trip useful, and Norwegian researchers may visit India in a follow-up to the visit.

Dalit Solidarity Network – Denmark

In 2009 the Danish Government presented a draft strategy on human rights and democratisation, which did not refer to caste discrimination. The Dalit Solidarity Network – Denmark (DSN-DK) submitted proposals for changes to the text, and successfully lobbied for specific mentioning of Dalits together with other vulnerable groups (e.g.

minorities, indigenous people, and disabled persons) in the strategy.

DSN-DK maintained its good relations with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who continued to work constructively on the issue of caste discrimination in international forums in 2009. In cooperation with other EU countries, Denmark worked for a collective EU position on the issue and supported the publication of the final Sub-Commission report on discrimination based on work and descent in the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). The delegation also made some oral interventions during relevant thematic and country reviews in the HRC.

As part of its work on the private sector, DSN-DK became a member of the Danish Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), which is a platform engaged with some of the largest Danish companies on corporate social responsibility (CSR). The Danish ETI commissioned DSN-DK to review their Suppliers Handbook for India with a view to incorporating the issue of caste discrimination where relevant. Following this exercise the focus on caste discrimination continued in the network and was a main topic at a seminar on India attended by a number of companies and CSR actors, including the largest Danish textile companies. DSN-DK's presentation on the responsibility of companies to address caste discrimination was well received and the topic became the main discussion point.

DSN-DK was invited to co-organise a seminar on Human rights and caste discrimination in India with a focus on company responsibilities by Amnesty International's Business Club in Denmark. At the seminar, the Dalit Discrimination Check (DDC) and the Ambedkar Principles were presented and formed part of a discussion on how to deal with caste discrimination in company operations. DSN-DK remained in touch with some of the companies and the Fund for Industrialisation of Developing Countries after this meeting.

DDC was introduced to companies in the ETI and the Amnesty Business Club and is now recommended on the websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Trade Council of Denmark and the Danish Confederation of Industries. The dialogue with private companies have illustrated that while there is an increasing awareness of the issue as well as a motivation for addressing it, the cultural barriers are still very difficult to overcome. This is a challenge for the work in the private sector programme, which requires new and different strategies.

The Danish media increasingly addressed the issue of caste discrimination, which is a sign of broader public awareness of the issue in Denmark. Major daily newspapers printed articles on caste discrimination on several occasions, including on developments at UN level. The electronic media



focused occasionally on developments in caste-affected countries, including Nepal's constitution-making process. The daily newspaper 'Information' featured two articles on caste discrimination among Sri Lankan Tamil immigrants living in Denmark.

Dalit Solidarität in Deutschland – Germany

The German platform, Dalit Solidarität in Deutschland (DSiD), was involved in three large public events in 2009. In April-May the platform organised the "CHINDU-Tour" on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Bread for the World (BfW). A Dalit theatre group from India, closely associated with the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, participated in a theatre festival for one week. Additionally a visiting tour was organised with performances in churches, schools, "One-World-groups" and on the streets in town centres. The group also participated in the Protestant Church Convention (Kirchentag) in Bremen before large audiences. Most of the performances were well covered by the local media. The group received positive feedback from the audience, particularly from young people. The Dutch organisation Cordaid and BfW now try to integrate these experiences into their theatrical group work.

In May, the Church Convention (Kirchentag) took place. For the second time, DSiD presented the Dalit issue in the form of an "Indian village" where visitors were invited to visit the village in pairs (one as Dalit, the other as a 'higher caste' person) and were treated differently according to their caste status. A lot of visitors were shocked and asked with disbelief if the situation was still that serious for Dalits. The village had between 100-150 visitors per day for three days. There was also a full-day event called 'Forum India' highlighting different aspects of India. DSiD was involved in the preparations for the event, which was visited by approximately 500 people.

An India Seminar on the theme 'Politics – Religion – Violence: India after the national elections' was held in Bad Boll in September. The seminar was organised during the period of religiously related violence in Orissa state. At the seminar the results of the elections were analysed, and Father Dibakar gave a shocking report on the situation in Orissa. The contributions will be compiled in a small booklet and published in 2010. Before the Boll-seminar, DSiD conducted a lobby tour, visiting five German protestant churches and three mission societies that have partnerships with churches in India. Presentations were prepared on how to initiate a dialogue and a mutual learning process

with the Indian partner churches wanting to address caste discrimination within their own constituencies. All churches responded positively to the idea of adopting the Bangkok declaration and the resolution of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, but also felt that there must be a level of commitment from the Indian churches.

DSiD cooperated with REDS and the National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ) in India on two campaigns, and helped prepare a third one on land rights for Dalits. Together with REDS the platform is working on a Campaign for Electoral Reforms in India (CERI), which was launched in October 2008 in Bangladesh. Contacts have been established in Norway with the Sami parliament, the London School of Economics, the Chief Election Commissioner of Nepal, and scholars and representatives of the Maori people in New Zealand. DSiD Coordinator Walter Hahn was involved in the NDMJ project on the National Election Watch Campaign (NDEW), which proved that a significant number of Dalits are excluded from exercising their voting rights.

As a part of the platform's expansion strategy, a list of contacts to "India groups" in Switzerland, Austria, and some more in Germany has been identified. As there are already German speaking members from Switzerland, Austria and Luxemburg in DSiD, the platform is hoping to develop into a "Dalit Solidarity Network of German speaking organisations and groups".

Finland

A group of Finnish concerned individuals and organisations gathered for a few informal meetings on how to address the issue of caste discrimination in 2009. Approximately 30 people, mostly with a church background, met three times and decided to call their group the Dalit Solidarity Network in Finland. This was the first step in the formation of a network, although nothing was formalised in 2009. One meeting was held in connection with an international conference organised by Finnish Church Aid in Helsinki in September, with the participation of IDS N Coordinator Rikke Nöhrind. As a result of the group's activities, including some public meetings, the church media reported well on the new initiative and the issue. In September, FinnChurchAid organised a conference on "Inclusion and Human Rights as a Key to Development and Security Policy" with broad international participation. Nepal, with a focus on the situation on Dalits, was one of three case studies, bearing evidence to the widening acceptance internationally of caste discrimination as a key theme in human rights, development and security discourse today. Recommendations from the conference are aimed at EU institutions.

Organisation, administration and finance

IDS N Council meeting

IDS N members and associates (35 participants) convened in Geneva on 10-11 March for the Annual Council meeting held in connection with the 10th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). A thematic debate on the promotion of an international framework to address caste-based discrimination was stimulated by the key note speaker Prof. Asbjørn Eide, former UN Sub-Commission member, and an expert on minorities and indigenous peoples' rights. Strategic options towards a new normative framework and soft law instrument on caste discrimination were discussed. The Council debate paved the way for a successful parallel event in September on the draft UN Principles and Guidelines.

As always, a central agenda item was the connection between action on the international level and national level insights and strategies – as well as the effect and use of international results at the country level. Organisational matters, policies and programme direction were discussed as usual. No major changes in strategic direction or programme focus and implementation were proposed; recurrent points for consideration included working mode of working groups and response capacity.

The Council decided to invite the Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO) from Nepal, and two organisations from India, National Federation of Dalit Women (NDFW) and NACDOR, respectively, to join as national associates. The invitations were later accepted. The addition of FEDO and NDFW as associates is a welcome strengthening of Dalit women representation in IDS N.

In connection with the Council meeting, IDS N members, associates and staff met with diplomats and officials and used the space for interventions and networking at the HRC. The Council meeting was followed up by a full day planning session in September in Geneva focusing on the UN and EU programmes. On this occasion, IDS N had organised participation of about 20 members, associates and other resource persons for the aforementioned side-event, meetings with diplomats, Special Procedures and the Office of the High Commissioner, including the High Commissioner herself.

Executive Group

The Executive Group (EG) met twice during the year; in March and September. EG membership initially remained as in 2008, but in October Vincent Manoharan decided to withdraw and Vijay Parmar, the current Convenor of the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, stepped in.

Current members of Executive Group

Mr Gerard Oonk (IDSN Co-Convenor and Coordinator of DNN)

Mr Vijay Parmar (Convenor of NCDHR)

Ms Meena Varma (Executive Director of DSN-UK)

Mr Tirtha Bishwakarma (Executive Director of Dalit NGO Federation Nepal)

Ms Manjula Pradeep (Director, Narvsajan Trust – India and Co-convenor of the Dalit Women Working Group)

Mr Bijo Francis (Senior Advisor, Asian Human Rights Commission)

Ms Rikke Nöhrliind (IDSN Coordinator – ex-officio member)

Secretariat

Several changes in staffing took place during the year due to maternity leaves. Maia Ingvardson's temporary replacement as programme and administrative officer, Anna-Karin Johannsen, left the office in November. Communications officer Maria Brink Schleimann, employed in February, went on maternity leave in September, and journalist Kim Wiesener took over communication responsibilities. In October, Nikita Junagade, communications specialist, offered her voluntary services for IDSN and, on a part time basis, supported web-site development and preparation of issue papers. Two other interns contributed for shorter periods. Their contributions are very much appreciated.

Towards the end of the year, the secretariat started preparations for an office move, as the five year lease of office space with CARE-Denmark expires in 2010. New office locations were identified in the same area of Copenhagen and also with an international NGO. The secretariat expects to move towards the end of March 2010.

IDSN staff and representatives of some European members of IDSN continue to face problems of acquiring visas to India. However, in February the Coordinator was granted a visa to India, only made possible with high level intervention by a member of the Indian Parliament. This made it possible for her to join the NCDHR National Consultation on the Durban Review Process and to visit Dalit programmes in Gujarat.

Early in the year, IDSN engaged the consultancy services of a Brussels-based agency to support its EU work, but had to terminate the working relationship in July, as the consultancy did not work out according to expectations.

Application for consultative ECOSOC status

IDSN submitted its application for consultative ECOSOC status in June 2007. In 2008, the application was considered at two consecutive sessions by the Committee on NGOs, but deferred based on questions asked by the Indian delegation towards the end of each session. The application was considered for the fourth time at the Committee's session January 2009, and again deferred due to late questions by the Indian delegation. In advance of the June session, the Indian Government had announced that it would raise questions again, which eventually did not happen, but the

mere announcement resulted in an automatic deferral of the application. The IDSN application is now scheduled for consideration in January 2010.

Finances, fundraising and perspectives for 2010-2012

Five international NGOs, and DANIDA, funded IDSN's work in 2009. The continued support from the long term funding partners is incredibly valuable, and their deep substantial engagement on many levels crucial to the continued struggle against caste discrimination. The important and sustained input from members and associates to strategic and programmatic developments must also be accredited full value as in-kind contributions to IDSN as an organisation.

Against expectations, in 2009 additional funding from alternative sources was not obtained so IDSN was not fully covered for the original expenditure budget. For this reason, special projects and campaigns had to be postponed and money saved on certain budget lines, such as UN and EU consultancies. Cost efficient administration made it possible to implement core programmes.

A programme proposal for 2010-2012 was developed early in the year with a revision in August and applications submitted to a large number of potential funders.

Due to the financial crises, IDSN is, unexpectedly, faced with a shortfall in 2010 and the coming years. It is a fact that both INGOs and bilateral agencies are faced with budget reductions and/or reduced income, making it difficult if not impossible to take on new partners or projects. Some of the current funders to IDSN have also had to reduce their contributions in the coming years.

IDSN has been instrumental in internationalising caste discrimination as a key human rights problem and continuously brings visibility to the issue through interventions, lobby work, publications and communication, including our website and newsletter. The collective efforts of IDSN have resulted in an unprecedented momentum, internationally and in some caste-affected countries, and a much increased political commitment to the Dalit cause as evidenced by the developments in 2009, narrated elsewhere in the report.

A reduction in planned activities and staff would work much to the detriment of the Dalit rights movement, and to ongoing successful engagements and processes. The demand for cooperation with IDSN in 2010 by multilateral and intergovernmental bodies has never been higher.

It is therefore our sincere hope that additional funding from new sources can be made available for our work and other initiatives towards eliminating caste discrimination.

Financial statements 2009

	DKK 2009	EURO 2009	DKK 2008
Profit and loss			
Opening balance	1,814,078.68	243,778.63	454,220.34
Income			
DanChurchAid	187,501.09	25,196.68	271,816.00
DanChurchAid (received for DSN-DK)	152,498.91	20,493.03	168,184.00
Membership fees recd. for DSN-DK	13,600.00	1,827.59	17,200.00
Danida	700,000.00	94,067.06	1,450,000.00
CCFD	163,592.00	21,983.74	148,812.00
ICCO			744,260.00
Cordaid	743,346.00	99,891.96	1,488,908.00
Christian Aid (for 2010 programme)	77,976.95	10,478.66	365,827.50
Interest	5,948.76	799.40	17,674.31
	2,044,463.71	274,738.12	4,672,681.81
Expenditure	3,591,217.55	482,593.23	3,312,823.47
Balance	267,324.84	35,923.52	1,814,078.68

Balance statement

Assets			
Cash at bank at 31.12 *	540,008.95	72,567.22	2,084,372.05
Master card deposit	0.00	0.00	31,372.11
Petty cash	5,681.57	763.50	9,437.40
Outstanding accounts	19,551.24	2,627.33	3,523.41
	565,241.76	75,958.04	2,128,704.97
Liabilities			
Balance Master Card account	-8,493.80	-1,141.41	-27,691.84
Compulsory holiday payment fund	-215,292.63	-28,931.35	-193,578.78
Outstanding accounts	-74,130.49	-9,961.77	-93,355.67
	-297,916.92	-40,034.53	-314,626.29
Balance carried forward	267,324.84	35,923.52	1,814,078.68

The financial statements are presented in Danish kroner.

For reasons of comparison, amounts in Euro are presented, using a fixed exchange rate as of 31.12.09: 7.4415

Hence, some discrepancies may appear compared to actual amounts received in Euro.

	DKK
* Cash at bank include	DKK
Danida OPP earmarked project grant	242,819.91
Christian Aid 2010 grant, received in December	77,976.95
DSN-DK membership fees	10,224.00

Expenditure 2009

	Budget DKK 2009	Expenditure DKK 2009	Budget EUR 2009	Expenditure EUR 2009
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Networking and coordination

General staff expenses

Staff training	25,000	11,156	3,360	1,499
Insurance	6,500	12,581	873	1,691
Other staff expenses	2,000	18,122	269	2,435
Holiday allowance	40,000	21,458	5,375	2,884
Communications officer	325,000	440,389	43,674	59,180
Finance officer	88,200	75,097	11,852	10,092
Maternity leave payment	300,867	193,474	40,431	25,999
	787,567	772,278	105,834	103,780

Office costs

Rent	150,000	148,942	20,157	20,015
Office supplies	5,000	4,901	672	659
Postage and freight	10,000	558	1,344	75
Hospitality expenses	3,000	2,326	403	313
Communication	16,000	14,059	2,150	1,889
Materials/memberships	2,000	952	269	128
Equipment	2,000	1,253	269	168
Audit	25,000	17,250	3,360	2,318
	213,000	190,240	28,623	25,565

Information technology

Internet/web	3,000	1,660	403	223
Consultancy/tech. Assistance	25,000	12,500	3,360	1,680
	28,000	14,160	3,763	1,903

Publicity and publications

	70,000	73,845	9,407	9,923
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Bank

	12,300	3,607	1,653	485
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Travelling

	25,000	20,925	3,360	2,812
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Campaign and activity support

	100,000	2,615	13,438	351
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Governing bodies

Executive group meetings, travel	50,000	34,271	6,719	4,605
Venue/lodging	20,000	24,525	2,688	3,296
Council meetings ,travel	90,000	84,740	12,094	11,387
Council meetings, venue/lodging	90,000	76,013	12,094	10,215
	250,000	219,549	33,595	29,503

Programme management and implementation

	332,754	377,518	44,716	50,731
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Total Networking and Co-ordination	1,818,621	1,674,736	244,389	225,054
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Campaign	0	0	0	0
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Consultant in USA	0	0	0	0
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Total Network projects	0	0	0	0
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UN Programme

UN Human Rights Council

Interventions for universal periodic reviews

Travel, affected country reps	20,000	21,674	2,688	2,913
Travel, secretariat	4,000		538	0
Food	4,000	2,918	538	392
Accommodation	11,000	3,763	1,478	506
	39,000	28,355	5,241	3,810

Interventions at Council sessions

Travel, affected country reps	42,000	36,539	5,644	4,910
Travel, secretariat	17,000	9,075	2,284	1,220
Food	10,000	10,320	1,344	1,387
Accommodation	46,000	46,649	6,182	6,269
	115,000	102,584	15,454	13,785

	Budget DKK 2009	Expenditure DKK 2009	Budget EUR 2009	Expenditure EUR 2009
Operationalisation of principles & guidelines	50,000	62,975	6,719	8,463
Durban review conference				
Travel, 4 affected country reps.	28,000	14,011	3,763	1,883
Travel, secretariat	5,000	8,254	672	1,109
Food/consumption	9,000	12,541	1,209	1,685
Accommodation	18,000	12,768	2,419	1,716
	60,000	47,575	8,063	6,393
Special Procedures				
International travel	9,000	39,279	1,209	5,278
Accommodation	4,000	4,642	538	624
Food/consumption	5,000	614	672	83
	18,000	44,535	2,419	5,985
UN Treaty Bodies				
Travel, affected country reps	28,000		3,763	0
Travel, secretariat	6,000	2,108	806	283
Food	10,000	2,976	1,344	400
Accommodation	20,000	4,039	2,688	543
	64,000	9,123	8,600	1,226
ECOSOC application	5,000		672	0
UN follow up/capacity building in Asia	50,000		6,719	0
UN research	50,000	9,094	6,719	1,222
Geneva consultant	100,000		13,438	0
Programme management and implementation	436,689	458,491	58,683	61,613
Total UN Programme	987,689	762,732	132,727	102,497

EU Programme

	Budget DKK 2009	Expenditure DKK 2009	Budget EUR 2009	Expenditure EUR 2009
Lobby interventions				
Travel, national Advocacy platforms	20,000	21,753	2,688	2,923
Travel, secretariat	8,000	34,317	1,075	0
Food	13,000	9,631	1,747	1,294
Accommodation	17,000	16,560	2,284	2,225
	58,000	82,260	7,794	6,443
Developm. of guidelines and review EU policies	50,000	0	6,719	0
Brussels consultant	200,000	79,465	26,876	10,679
Brussel intern (from Asia)	50,000	0	6,719	0
Programme management and implementation	370,653	423,014	49,809	56,845
Total EU Programme	728,653	584,739	97,917	78,578

Private Sector

	Budget DKK 2009	Expenditure DKK 2009	Budget EUR 2009	Expenditure EUR 2009
Training/consultancies	20,000	4,426	2,688	32,939
Research				
Publications				
Sector study				
	20,000	4,426	2,688	595
Programme management and implementation	179,234	226,182	24,086	30,395
Total Private Sector programme	199,234	230,608	26,773	30,989

Summary of expenses

	Budget DKK 2009	Expenditure DKK 2009	Budget EUR 2009	Expenditure EUR 2009
Networking and coordination	1,818,621	1,674,736	244,389	225,054
Networking projects	0	0	0	0
UN Programme	987,689	762,732	132,727	102,497
EU programme	728,653	584,739	97,917	78,578
Private sector*	199,234	230,608	26,773	30,989
Total IDSN core programmes	3,734,197	3,252,815	501,807	437,118

Funded separately by a Danida OPP grant

Private sector - Dalit Discrimination check
Promotion of DDC and Ambedkar Principles

	Budget DKK 2009	Expenditure DKK 2009	Budget EUR 2009	Expenditure EUR 2009
Development of training programme	51,413	44,650	6,909	6,000
DIMR researcher for training in India	19,000	17,476	2,553	2,348
Production of training materials	20,000		2,688	0
Travel - Consultants	30,000	22,312	4,031	2,998
Travel - IDSN representative in India	8,750	11,091	1,176	1,490
Pilot training in Europe	10,000		1,344	0
Consultancy for promotion in India	26,000	12,189	3,494	1,638
Consultancy for training in Europe	15,000		2,016	0
Printing of DDC	35,370	53,097	4,753	7,135
Development, print and dissemination of booklet	35,000	17,700	4,703	2,379
Development of exportable version	10,000		1,344	0
Software changes	10,000		1,344	0
Total	270,533	178,514	36,355	23,989

Funded separately by DCA and members

	Budget DKK 2009	Expenditure DKK 2009	Budget EUR 2009	Expenditure EUR 2009
Website		914		123
Hospitality		227		30
Membership DIEH		6,250	0	840
Salaries	150,000	152,498	20,157	20,493
	150,000	159,888	20,157	21,486

Total expenses

	Budget DKK 2009	Expenditure DKK 2009	Budget EUR 2009	Expenditure EUR 2009
IDSN core programmes	3,734,197	3,252,815	501,807	437,118
Dalit Discrimination Check	270,533	178,514	36,355	23,989
DSN-DK	150,000	159,888	20,157	21,486
Grand total expenses	4,154,730	3,591,218	558,319	482,593

Footnotes:

1) Ms Pillay's article is reproduced on the opposite page (35). It can also be found via this link:

<http://idsn.org/international-advocacy/un-principles-guidelines/unhchr-opinion-piece/>

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

3) "Putting Caste on Notice" by Barbara Crossette, The Nation, 26 October

4) The shadow report "The human rights situation of Dalits in Bangladesh" was prepared together with BDERM and Nagorik Uddyog. The OHCHR summary of other stakeholders' information (A/HRC/WG.6/4/BGD/3) contained extensive references to the situation of Dalits in Bangladesh (para. 6, 10, 12, 13, 38, 43, 54) based on this report.

5) The following mandate holders addressed the issue in their annual reports and communications in 2009: The Special Rapporteur (SR) on contemporary forms of racism, the SR on slavery, the Independent Expert (IE) on minorities, the SR on violence against women, the SR on adequate housing, the SR on the right to food, the SR on human rights defenders, the SR on freedom of religion and belief, the IE on water and sanitation and the IE on extreme poverty. For a full overview of references to caste discrimination by UN Special Procedures, go to the IDSN website: http://idsn.org/fileadmin/user_folder/pdf/New_files/UN/UNSP_2005-2009_Nov.pdf

6. For a comprehensive list of outstanding requests for country visits to caste-affected countries, see: http://idsn.org/fileadmin/user_folder/pdf/New_files/UN/SR_countryvisits_Dec09.pdf

7) For more information on the Bangkok declaration, follow this link: <http://idsn.org/news-resources/idsn-news/read/article/conference-on-justice-for-dalits-calls-for-international-action/128/>

8) Link to the EU study: <http://idsn.org/country-information/south-asia/>

9) Link: <http://idsn.org/news-resources/idsn-news/read/article/press-release-european-parliament-ensure-that-dalits-benefit-from-eu-india-free-trade-agreement/128/>

10) Link: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2007-0016&language=EN&ring=B6-2007-0021>

11) Link: <http://idsn.org/business-csr/dalit-discrimination-check>

12) Link: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/95375.php>

13) For further information on this act, see: <http://idsn.org/caste-discrimination/key-issues/non-implementation/>

14) Published by Kumaran Book House in collaboration with IDSN and the [Indian Institute of Dalit Studies](http://www.IndianInstituteofDalitStudies.org).

List of Abbreviations

AI	Amnesty International
AP	Ambedkar Principles
ASSOCHAM	The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry in India
BDERM	Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement
BfW	Bread for the World
CA	Constituent Assembly
CEDAW	(UN) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CERD	(UN) Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CERI	Campaign for Electoral Reforms in India
CESCR	(UN) Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights
CHRGJ	Center for Human Rights and Global Justice
CII	Confederation of Indian Industry
COASI	(EU) Working Party on Asia-Oceania
COHOM	(EU) Working Party on Human Rights
CSP	(EU) Country Strategy Paper
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DDC	Dalit Discrimination Check
DDPA	(UN) Durban Declaration and Programme of Action
DG RELEX	(EU) Directorate-General for External Relations
DNF	Dalit NGO Federation
DNN	Dalit Network Netherlands
DRC	(UN) Durban Review Conference
DSiD	Dalit Solidarity in Deutschland
DSN	Dalit Solidarity Network
DSN-DK	Dalit Solidarity Network Denmark
DSN-S	Dalit Solidarity Network Sweden
DSN-UK	Dalit Solidarity Network UK
DSSM	Dalit Student Solidarity Movement
EC	(EU) European Commission
ECHO	(EU) European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department
EG	Executive Group
EIDHR	(EU) European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EP	European Parliament
ETI	Ethical Trading Initiatives
EU	European Union
EuropeAid	EU Development Agency
FEDO	Feminist Dalit Organization
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
HRC	(UN) Human Rights Council
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IDSN	International Dalit Solidarity Network
IIDS	Indian Institute of Dalit Studies
ILO	(UN) International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MEP	(EU) Member of European Parliament
NACDOR	National Conference of Dalit Organisations
NDFW	National Federation of Dalit Women
NCDHR	National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights
NDEW	National Dalit Election Watch
NDW	National Dalit Watch
NDMJ	National Dalit Movement for Justice
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PDSN	Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network
PIL	Public Interest Litigation
PILER	Pakistan Institute of Labour Research
REDS	Rural Education for Development Society
SC	Scheduled Castes
SCP	Special Component Plan
SKA	Safai Karmachari Andolan
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCHR	UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
UPR	(UN) Universal Periodic Review
WCC	World Council of Churches
WGHR	Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN



Opinion Piece: Tearing down the wall of caste



A group of representatives from caste-affected communities in Asia recently gave me a piece of brick from the wall of a torn down latrine. The brick symbolised the global struggle against the degrading practice of making members of a “lower caste” clean public toilets with their bare hands.

This practice, which persists in many places despite increasing prohibition in law, is not the workers’ choice. It is rather a task that they inherit because of their social origins and descent. In turn, these discriminated individuals are further “contaminated” by their work and further trapped in a generational cycle of social exclusion and marginalisation.

Today caste-affected communities and civil society activists are hoping to tear down the much bigger invisible wall of discrimination by trying to promote new international standards of equality and non-discrimination. I have tremendous respect for their determination and courage. As a woman of colour from a racial minority growing up in apartheid South Africa, I know a thing or two about discrimination.

“Untouchability” is a social phenomenon affecting approximately 260 million persons worldwide. This type of discrimination is typically associated with the notions of ritual purity and pollution which are deeply rooted in different societies and cultures. The problem is neither confined to one geographical area nor exclusively practised within one particular religion of belief system. It is a global phenomenon.

Caste is the very negation of the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination. It condemns individuals from birth and their communities to a life of exploitation, violence, social exclusion and segregation. Caste-discrimination is not only a human rights violation, but also exposes those affected to other abuses

of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

“Lower caste” individuals are frequently confined to hereditary, low-income employment, and deprived of access to agricultural land and credit. They often find themselves battling high levels of indebtedness, or even debt and labour bondage, which is practically a contemporary form of slavery. The barriers they face in seeking justice or redress are formidable. Child labour is rampant in descent-based communities and children of “lower castes” suffer high levels of illiteracy. For women, caste is a multiplier that compounds their experience of poverty and discrimination.

Laws and policies have been put in place in many to combat this scourge. Constitutions prohibit caste-based discrimination and “lower caste” members have been elected to the highest offices of the land. Special legislation has been enacted to provide for affirmative action in education and employment, as well as protection from violence and exploitation. Judiciaries have sought to enforce laws and provide relief to victims. Dedicated institutions monitor the conditions and advocate on behalf of “lower caste” groups.

At the international level, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination explicitly lists descent as a ground of racial discrimination. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the World Conference on Racism in 2001, recognised descent-based discrimination. It also provided a comprehensive roadmap to combat it which was reaffirmed by States in April this year.

Yet, there is a real need for targeted social policies and programmes to address caste-based discrimination. It is imperative to implement education programmes that can change deeply rooted systemic, cultural and social

prejudices, customs, beliefs and traditions based on descent, power and affluence. Above all, caste-affected communities must be given a voice and full participation in the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies aimed at empowering them. The international community should come together to support these efforts as it did when it helped put an end to apartheid.

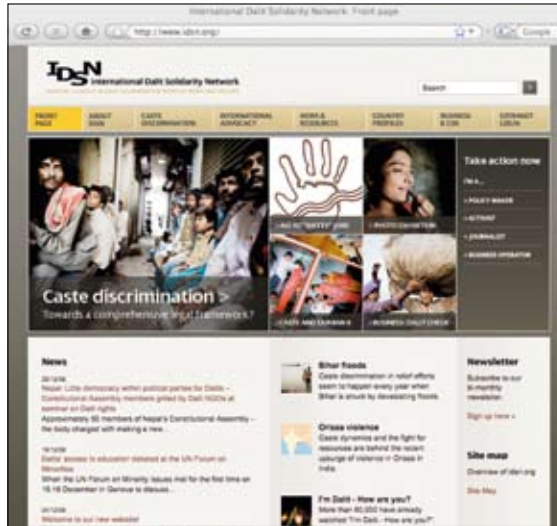
This action to stem an abhorrent form of marginalisation and exclusion which traps the victims in hopelessness and poverty is long overdue. We owe it to those “lower-caste” families forced to leave their village because they dared to vote in a parliamentary election against the favoured candidate of the upper caste. We owe it to the villagers belonging to the lowest social class starving to death because they were not able to benefit from the public services which they were entitled to. We owe it to that “lower caste” woman assaulted, publicly humiliated and forced to eat her own excreta by members of the upper caste community accusing her of witchcraft. All caste-victims demand and deserve remedies. The plight of hundreds of millions cannot be justified as age-old traditions, nor can it be regarded merely as a “family business”.

The Human Rights Council, the premier intergovernmental body for the protection and promotion of human rights, should promote the 2009 Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent. This study complements existing international standards of non-discrimination. All States must rally around, and endorse these norms.

The time has come to eradicate the shameful concept of caste. Other seemingly insurmountable walls, such as slavery and apartheid, have been dismantled in the past. We can and must tear down the barriers of caste too.



International Dalit Solidarity Network
 Nørrebrogade 66 C, 1. sal
 DK – 2200 Copenhagen N
 Denmark
 Phone +45 35 24 50 80
info@idsn.org
www.idsn.org



IDS N website
 The new and more user-friendly IDS N website was upgraded significantly in 2009. New features include key issue pages and expanded information on caste-affected countries. The website has become an indispensable source of information on caste discrimination, as has the IDS N e-newsletter, which is sent out every month to hundreds of subscribers. You can register via the website at www.idsn.org.

IDS N members

National platforms

- The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights – India
- The Dalit NGO Federation – Nepal
- Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement
- Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network
- The Human Development Organisation – Sri Lanka

Dalit Solidarity Networks

- 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 Dalit Solidarity Network – Belgium

IDS N associates

Associated organisations

- RAFTO Foundation – Norway
- National Conference of Dalit Organisations (NACDOR) – India
- Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO) – Nepal
- National Federation of Dalit Women – India

International associates

- 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 Robert F. Kennedy Foundation
- Pax Romana ICMICA/MIIC
- FORUM-ASIA
- The World Council of Churches
- The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
- Asian Centre for Human Rights

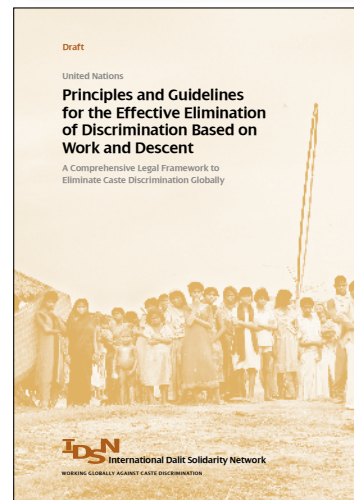
Research associates

- Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice, NYU School of Law



New publications

IDS N launched a new presentation pamphlet in September with photos by Jakob Carlsen. It was designed by graphic designer Søren Maarbjerg who can also claim credit for the two publications listed below – as well as this annual report.



The draft [UN Principles and Guidelines](#) for the elimination of caste discrimination is a significant document which IDS N has decided to print in a user-friendly format and distribute for international advocacy purposes.

The [Ambedkar Principles](#), developed to assist companies in addressing caste discrimination, were published in a revised version in 2009. The booklet has been distributed to approximately 200 companies in Europe.

