



**IDS**N

International Dalit Solidarity Network

WORKING GLOBALLY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION BASED ON WORK AND DESCENT

**2010**  
annual report



**Cover photo:** South Asia is a region prone to natural disasters. Dalits suffer doubly when disaster strikes because they are discriminated against in relief work and aid distribution. In 2007, when flooding hit Bihar in India, Dalits did not receive the aid they should have. The Dalit man in this photo was starving and desperately tried to fish in flooded rice fields. IDS has repeatedly urged international decision makers to take action to end caste discrimination in relief work, but unfortunately discrimination was evidenced again in 2010 when the severe floods in Pakistan left thousands of Dalit families displaced, starving and at an unfair disadvantage. Caste discrimination was also found in relief work following the 2010 Yamuna floods in India.

# IDS

## International Dalit Solidarity Network



**Leaping for change.** A young Dalit boy in Nepal makes a courageous jump. Dalits of Nepal are demanding constitutional rights, special anti-discrimination legislation, and a full and equal share in development.

**– We are doing everything we can as Dalit activists and grassroots organisations and networks, but we need impact from the international level to move forward in our struggle. This is the time to join us to fight caste discrimination and stop untouchability.**

Durga Sob, President of the Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO) in Nepal



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# 2010

## annual report



## Executive Summary

### “All it takes is commitment and courage”

On 10 March, IDSN celebrated its tenth anniversary as a network. At the Annual IDSN Council meeting held on the same day in Geneva, many of those present were part of the group that had initiated IDSN a decade earlier. On this occasion it was noted that IDSN through its collective efforts has succeeded fairly well in “linking grass root voices and priorities to international decision making” and, in this way, has contributed to the everyday struggle of Dalit communities, activists and human rights defenders on the ground.

In 2010, this struggle was characterised by some very interesting trends. First and foremost, Dalits in affected countries made remarkable progress in demanding protection by law; secondly, many high level political leaders from different countries voiced their concerns about caste discrimination for the first time; thirdly, while discussions were continued and intensified in the corridors of multilateral fora, there was a notable lack of formal decisions by the international community on how to address caste discrimination.

In India, implementation of the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act was scrutinised at the initiative of Dalit civil society and proposed amendments to the act presented to parliamentarians; in Nepal, a draft anti-discrimination and untouchability bill was subjected to critical analysis and debate with input from civil society, national institutions and the OHCHR-Nepal. The broadening Dalit movement in Bangladesh gained further political momentum in its demands for constitutional and legal protection. Following a study on caste discrimination in the diaspora community in the UK, the Government took steps towards extending anti-discrimination legislation to cover caste.

The struggle against caste discrimination did not go unnoticed by the international community. In fact, in 2010, a record number of statements of concern by political leaders at the highest level were made. Dutch Foreign Minister Verhagen raised concern in the Human Rights Council March session that discrimination based on work and descent was not covered by the Council's agenda. In his address to the Indian Parliament in November, President Obama paid homage to Dalit leader, Dr. Ambedkar, and on several occasions throughout the year, Foreign Affairs or Development Ministers, including those from Denmark and the UK, raised the topic of caste discrimination in bilateral dialogues with their counterparts in affected states. For the first time, and prompted by reports of Dalits being denied access to aid during the flood relief operations in Pakistan, President Zardari spoke out against caste discrimination.

Collective in-country efforts and solidarity action have played a role in such developments. In IDSN we are encouraged by this new level of leadership calling for an end to caste discrimination. We hope this engagement translates into creative diplomacy and policy decisions that can lead to the endorsement of the draft United Nations Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent.

Throughout the year, IDSN continued its efforts to promote broad support for a Human Rights Council resolution on these guidelines. Unfortunately for the many millions of victims of caste discrimination, the negative attitude of one particular caste-affected country remains a major stumbling block to this process, and progress towards endorsement of the draft UN Principles and Guidelines has been slow. On the positive side, a series of statements and joint input to the UN Human Rights mechanisms ensured high visibility on the topic. In 2010, UN Special Rapporteurs on racism, education, health, adequate housing, and slavery as well as Independent Experts on minorities, extreme poverty and water and sanitation referred to caste discrimination in their reports and communications. Three such reports were based on country visits, depicting the wide-ranging human rights violations and irreversible impact this form of discrimination has on individuals and communities, not only in Asia but also in Africa.

## IDSN Background

- **IDSN was founded in March 2000 to advocate for Dalit human rights and to raise consciousness of Dalit issues nationally and internationally. IDSN is a network of international human rights groups, development agencies, national Dalit solidarity networks from Europe, and 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 that ‘untouchability’ and other human rights abuses against Dalits and similar communities that suffer discrimination on the basis of work and descent are unacceptable.**
- **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 documentation, strategic interventions and 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 members. IDSN was formally registered as an organisation in October 2003. In 2010, the Secretariat was staffed by five staff members: Coordinator Rikke Nöhrind, Programme Officer Maia Ingvarson, UN Programme Officer Gitte Dyrhagen, Communications Officer Maria Brink Schleimann and part-time bookkeeper Ole Westergaard. Kim Wiesener covered for Maria Brink Schleimann and Gitte Dyrhagen during their respective maternity leave periods.**

## 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.

In 2010, IDSN continued its engagement with the institutions of the European Union and presented its recommendations for a comprehensive EU Policy Framework to address caste discrimination at a Council Working Group hearing on caste discrimination in May. IDSN called for EU action at three levels; in its engagement with caste-affected countries, through its action in multilateral fora such as the United Nations and through its development policies and instruments. This call for a high profile and official EU stand reflecting that caste-based discrimination is unacceptable, was also presented to EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Catherine Ashton, in an open letter.

Whereas a strong, unified position of the EU is still in the making, it is notable that some EU delegations and member states have stepped up their efforts to support Dalits in their quest for justice and social inclusion in affected countries. However, there is clearly a need for an EU policy to ensure systematic and coherent action. At the EU-India human rights dialogue held in March, the largest human rights issue, caste discrimination, affecting 200 million people in this country, was not discussed.

Towards the end of the year, members of the European Parliament took steps to secure a joint Committee hearing on caste discrimination in South Asia to be held in early 2011. Whilst the EU-India Summit in December avoided the issue, negotiations on the EU-India Free Trade Agreement did not escape parliamentary scrutiny into the caste dimension.

Awareness of the need to incorporate considerations of caste in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies among the business community in Europe and India continued to grow, albeit slowly. An important milestone for CSR recognition was reached when the ISO 26000 standard on social responsibility, adopted in 2010, specifically mentioned people discriminated on the basis of caste.

For IDSN, 2010 was another busy year. In March, the secretariat moved offices and intensive efforts were made throughout the year to fend off funding insecurity. In spite of reduced staff for more than six months, a full

programme of activities was carried out involving members, associates, allies and other stakeholders.

Dalit Solidarity Networks (DSNs), international associates of IDSN and also international organisations belonging to DSNs played important roles in many ways with their support to the Dalit movement, promotion of policy demands and awareness raising.

In the course of the year, Dalit representatives from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal took part in IDSN meetings with government delegations and officials, parliamentarians in Europe, UN offices, the public and the media. In South Asia interaction, visits and solidarity action between Dalit organisations increased – in some cases these were facilitated by IDSN.

The IDSN newsletter and website continued to develop as important sources of information and their readership expanded. IDSN statements, briefing papers and articles were widely distributed, linking up to debates in caste-affected countries.

IDSN's 10th Anniversary was also an opportunity to welcome new allies in the struggle against caste discrimination and express our sincere gratitude to long term and new funding partners of IDSN, as well as to governments, institutions, organisations, and individuals, who contribute their resources, political will, skills and insights to fight caste discrimination.

“All it takes is commitment and courage,” said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, in a press statement on Human Rights Day 2010 – encouraging everyone to become a human rights defender. We hope that the international community will extend such commitment and courage to the 260 million Dalits in South Asia and affected people elsewhere, who need international support in their struggle and may otherwise remain condemned to a lifetime of abuse simply because of the caste into which they are born.

Please join as an ambassador for Dalit human rights.

Rikke Nöhrind  
Coordinator



- IDSN celebrated its 10th Anniversary
- Several high level political leaders voiced concern over caste discrimination and reports from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, The Asian Legal Resource Centre, The Asian Human Rights Commission and more, stated concern over Dalit rights and welfare
- Fighting discrimination, including caste discrimination, is a priority of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in 2010-2011 and OHCHR- Nepal stepped up efforts to combat caste discrimination in Nepal
- UN independent experts, Special Rapporteurs and treaty bodies stated concern over caste discrimination and called for action
- The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery presented numerous examples of caste-based slavery in Mauritania to the Human Rights Council
- Dalits participated in the UN Minority Forum
- A hearing on caste discrimination was organised in the EU's working party on human rights (COHOM) and IDSN presented a draft EU policy framework for the elimination of caste discrimination

# 2010 highlights

- The ISO 26000 standard for CSR policies was adopted with an expanded section on ending caste discrimination in organisations
- The President of Pakistan called for an end to caste discrimination in relief efforts after the Pakistan flooding and IDSN presented policy recommendations on eliminating caste discrimination in disaster relief efforts
- In India, Bangladesh and Nepal, Dalit activists worked to ensure implementation of legislation to protect Dalit rights and influence new legislative measures
- Activists in India fought to end manual scavenging by the end of 2010 and were supported by Dalit Solidarity Networks in Europe
- The UK government included a caste clause in the Equality Bill, pending a report of evidence
- The UK government commissioned report found evidence of caste discrimination in the UK
- The Dutch Foreign Minister spoke out against caste discrimination in the UN Human Rights Council
- Dalit Solidarity networks and their members staged exhibitions in Europe to highlight caste discrimination
- Dalit activists staged a number of events to highlight caste discrimination in the run-up to Human Rights Day 2010 and IDSN issued a statement

## United Nations

### 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<sup>1</sup> (hereafter 'draft UN Principles and Guidelines') remained the cornerstone of IDSN's international lobby work throughout 2010. Published by the UN Human Rights Council in 2009 after almost two years of intense lobbying by IDSN and other organisations, this is the first instrument to propose general and specific measures for state and non-state actors to address caste discrimination. The draft UN Principles and Guidelines have been welcomed by some caste-affected countries as well as a number of high ranking UN human rights officials, including the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, and two Special Procedures mandate holders who are calling for endorsement and follow-up by the Human Rights Council.

While this support is extremely important, the process to secure follow-up action on the guidelines by the Human Rights Council remains a challenge. Throughout the year, IDSN continued its efforts to secure broad support and action for a resolution on the draft UN Principles and Guidelines, through communication and meetings with governments and UN officials. While IDSN is encouraged by the support from a number of governments as well as several independent UN experts, the fact remains that broad cross-regional support is essential for progress. Unfortunately for the many millions of victims of caste discrimination, the negative attitude of one particular caste-affected country, India, remains a significant obstacle to this process.

The struggle for an international framework to address caste discrimination did not go unnoticed by high ranking government officials. In his response to a call from DSN-UK, Alan Duncan, UK Minister of State, made the following remark about the UN process: "The UK is currently working with EU partners to discuss ways for the EU to combat discrimination on the basis of work and descent as part of the EU's human rights policy. We believe that for international action to be effective, initiatives led by a country from the affected region would have a far greater chance of success".

Whereas consistent interventions were made on caste discrimination by the EU and its member states in UN bodies, a more pro-active role by the European Union in the UN Human Rights Council on the draft UN Principles and Guidelines is still pending further work by the EU Working group on Human Rights (COHOM), a body which in 2010 took a considerable interest in this human rights issue.



Kamlesh was just seven when she was pushed onto a pile of burning rubbish while walking with her mother. This was her punishment for walking along a path reserved for 'upper' caste people. In most cases of caste-based violence perpetrators escape justice, or cases simply drag on for many years. The UN Principles and Guidelines state: "State actors should take special measures, such as devising and implementing comprehensive plans of action and creating a monitoring mechanism, to protect affected communities from physical violence, including torture, sexual violence and extrajudicial killings." DSN-UK member CSW featured this photo in their 2010 exhibition 'Being Untouchable' in London.

IDSN continues to encourage all relevant state and non-state actors to support and make use of the draft UN Principles and Guidelines in its current format by taking immediate, concrete steps to implement the measures contained therein. The guidelines have been translated to Bangla and consultation on the draft UN Principles and Guidelines was held in Dhaka with participation from civil society and government. In Nepal preparations for a similar, joint consultation is ongoing.

### Human Rights Council

IDSN provided governments with regular input on issues relating to caste discrimination prior to and during HRC sessions. Such input took the form of specific recommendations to be considered during relevant agenda items at HRC sessions as well as other kinds of information on caste discrimination, including briefing papers on discrimination of Dalits during relief efforts following the floods in Pakistan<sup>2</sup> and on the situation of Dalits in Bangladesh<sup>3</sup> with policy recommendations.

Together with its international and regional associates, IDSN facilitated interventions and meetings between Dalit activists, state delegations, UN experts, and the OHCHR in connection with HRC sessions in 2010 – particularly at the

13th session in March and the 15th session in September. The vast majority of government representatives were sympathetic and displayed a very good understanding of this human rights issue that affects 260 million people. IDSN remains hopeful that caste discrimination will be addressed by the Human Rights Council in 2011.

In December, IDSN representatives met with the President of the Human Rights Council, Sihasak Phuangketkeow,

**"In terms of issues, I think the Council's agenda does not yet reflect all the substantive issues that need to be addressed. Discrimination on the basis of descent or work, for example, is still missing from the non-discrimination agenda. There are approximately 260 million people in the world that suffer such discrimination. For these men and women, it is impossible to escape grinding poverty because the society they grew up in does not allow them to take their fate into their own hands and improve themselves,"** Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Maxime Verhagen, at the 13th session of the UN Human Rights Council



Ambassador of Thailand, who expressed his interest and sympathy for the cause.

In the course of March, September and December, IDSN teams held altogether more than 50 bilateral meetings with government representatives of permanent missions to the UN in Geneva.

The Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Maxime Verhagen, made a strong statement on caste discrimination at the 13th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) pointing out that discrimination on the basis of descent or work was still missing from the non-discrimination agenda.

In April, IDSN issued a position paper on the interrelations between caste, descent and race arguing that the debate on whether caste is similar to race is unproductive and that it is time to move beyond semantics. Caste – and related discrimination and exclusion – is a unique phenomenon that warrants separate and distinctive treatment in the UN human rights system.

The Indian media had engaged in a debate on the merits of internationalising the issue of caste discrimination focusing on the draft UN Principles and Guidelines – a framework that the Indian government opposes – but had also included the question of equating caste with race. IDSN pointed out that several UN human rights bodies and experts have confirmed that caste discrimination falls under the scope of the UN race convention (ICERD), as this convention includes discrimination based on descent. IDSN aligns itself with this position. Nevertheless, IDSN considers caste to be distinct from the concept of race, although both types of discrimination produce comparable forms of political, economic and social exclusion. States have a duty to protect the rights of citizens against all forms of discrimination, including caste discrimination, regardless of the ground on which discrimination is exercised.

### Special Procedures

The UN Special Procedures under the Human Rights Council system remain an effective way to provide substantive inputs on the situation in caste-affected countries and to enable communication with affected governments. In 2010, IDSN focused part of its UN work on UN Special Procedures. The Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts of

**“I can't think of another issue in the human rights arena that involves so many people, that remains unaddressed in the Human Rights Council. I am bewildered about how this is possible.”** Peter Prove, IDSN Council Member, December 2010

## UN Forum on Minority Issues

The third UN Forum on Minority Issues was held in Geneva in mid-December under the leadership of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Gay McDougall. Its overall theme was 'Minorities and Economic Participation' and it provided Dalit activists from South Asia with a welcome opportunity to speak on the issue of caste discrimination as panellists, at side events and in plenary discussions. IDSN sponsored some Dalit participants and an IDSN lobby team, consisting of Dalit leaders from India and Nepal as well as staff members from the IDSN secretariat, had discussions with a number of state delegations and UN and EU officials during the Forum.

the Human Rights Council continued to express concern in their monitoring work about the prevalence of caste discrimination.

IDSN values the contribution of the Special Procedures mandate holders very highly and will continue to consider it an important priority to provide them with relevant information on caste discrimination. IDSN representatives had regular contact with a number of Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts and met with them and their staff on numerous occasions when travelling to Geneva.

In June, the mandate holders gathered in Geneva for their 17th annual meeting. On this occasion, IDSN issued an appeal to the Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts commending them for the attention they have paid to the issue of caste discrimination and calling on them to support and refer to the draft UN Principles and Guidelines in their work.

Two mandate holders have already done so. In October 2009, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, Mr Githu Muigai, publicly endorsed the draft UN Principles and Guidelines. A year later, he made another strong intervention on caste discrimination, expressing serious concern about the continuing existence of the caste system and describing caste discrimination as a form of “societal” structural racial discrimination. This happened at the 8th session of the intergovernmental working group that monitors the implementation of the Durban Declaration against racism. Mr Muigai urged states to review and redesign legislation that may discriminate various groups, including victims of inherited status systems, i.e. Dalits. He also reiterated his support for the position on caste discrimination expressed by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in 2002.

The Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Gay Mc Dougall, became the second mandate holder to express support for the draft UN Principles and Guidelines. In her annual report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/13/23), presented at its 13th session in March, Ms McDougall called these guidelines “an important contribution to the global struggle to combat discrimination on the grounds of work and

descent which often affects members of minority groups.” As the convenor of the UN Forum on Minority Issues in December, she enabled Dalit activists to highlight obstacles to their full participation in economic life. Towards the end of the year, the Independent Expert paid an informal visit to India where she met members of various minority groups, including Dalit activists.

Following their joint visit to Bangladesh in December 2009, two Independent Experts – on water and sanitation and on extreme poverty – presented a report (A/HRC/15/55) containing numerous references to the Dalit issue at the 15th session of the Human Rights Council. Ms Catarina de Albuquerque and Ms Magdalena Sepúlveda noted that pervasive discrimination against Dalits ‘keeps them poor, uneducated, in terrible living conditions and in menial jobs.’ They also urged the government of Bangladesh to ‘explicitly recognize the discrimination experienced by Dalits and take more concrete steps to redress it, including through the enforcement of existing laws and the establishment of a special commission with a mandate to address concerns particular to Dalits.’

In the latter part of the report, Ms de Albuquerque analysed the particular issues relating to Dalits under her water and sanitation mandate. She expressed concern about discrimination against sweepers who clean out sewers and septic tanks without protective gear and who are predominantly Dalits. The sweepers have no access to water or safe sanitation in their own community. The Independent Expert called on the government to ‘adopt an explicit policy to address the situation of Dalits, and to eliminate discrimination against them; and to take special measures to improve the situation of sweepers.’ In August, IDSN prepared a briefing paper on Bangladesh<sup>5</sup> with policy recommendations and disseminated it widely to government officials and other stakeholders.

The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, Ms Gulnara Shahinian, made numerous references to caste

**“Most probably, humankind has never devised a more comprehensive system of keeping a section of society under perpetual subjugation amidst inhuman conditions. It has never devised a worse way of dehumanising fellow human beings and reducing them to being mere labour force devoid of any dignity leave aside rights. Everything said and done, when it comes to committing atrocities on people, the caste system has proved itself to be far more clinical in brutalising its victims than race and not less.”** Asian Human Rights Commission, 8 September 2010

**“While the practice of slavery is illegal, deeply embedded discriminatory attitudes form part of the basis of slavery in Mauritania. The country's stratified, caste-based society means that even those who are former slaves or descendents of former slaves still live under the shroud of their “slave class” and are ostracized from society.”** Gulnara Shahinian, UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery in a report on Mauritania, September 2010

in 2010. Her report on domestic servitude (A/HRC/15/20), presented at the 15th session of the Human Rights Council, underlined the intrinsic link between domestic servitude and caste discrimination. The report noted that in South Asia, Dalits and certain indigenous communities make up the vast majority of people in domestic bonded labour, a form of domestic servitude. Moreover, many Dalit women in India still have to engage in manual scavenging.

Following a country visit to Mauritania in late 2009, Ms Shahinian presented her report at the same HRC session. It mentioned numerous examples of caste-based slavery in Mauritania's stratified society, including that of the Haratine, the ethnic group mostly associated with slavery in the country. They are members of a 'slave caste' and consequently suffer discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion. In her concluding recommendations, the Special Rapporteur urged Mauritania's Minister of Justice to consider introducing a law against discrimination based on caste or ethnic slavery.

Three other mandate holders – the Special Rapporteurs on education, health and adequate housing respectively – referred to caste discrimination in reports and communications in 2010. All in all, 13 mandate holders have made such references over the past few years. The comments on caste discrimination made by these UN experts can be found in our compilation of References to caste-based discrimination in reports by thematic Special Rapporteurs (2005-2010)<sup>6</sup>.

### Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

IDSN and individual members continued to raise awareness about the need for caste sensitive programming in UN agencies and international institutions, and engaged specifically with the OHCHR. IDSN maintains close relations with OHCHR staff.

Following High Commissioner Pillay's strong expression of support for the draft UN Principles and Guidelines in 2009, her office has taken commendable initiatives in its work particularly at country level. The thematic priorities of the OHCHR's strategic management plan for 2010-2011 are all highly relevant for the fight against caste discrimination; they include countering discrimination; combating impunity and strengthening accountability, the rule of law and democratic society, pursuing economic, social and cultural rights and combating inequalities and poverty.





Caste discrimination is mentioned several times in the plan's section on the Asia/Pacific region. A thematic priority is to "counter discrimination, with a particular focus on women and caste." IDS N has recommended that activities be reviewed and expanded to fully address the Dalit human rights issues in all relevant thematic areas. IDS N is also currently discussing training on UN human rights mechanisms for Dalit constituencies with the office.

The High Commissioner herself addressed the issue of descent-based discrimination during a visit to Japan in May. While praising the Japanese government for its efforts to combat 'forms of work and descent-based discrimination, such as those faced by the Burakumin', Ms Pillay also urged

it to adopt a comprehensive law on discrimination. Such a law should provide better protection for minority groups, including the Buraku community.

On the UN Human Rights day on 10 December, the National Dalit Commission of Nepal (NDC) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal (OHCHR-Nepal) issued a joint publication "Speak up Stop Discrimination – observations on the untouchability bill". While welcoming the draft bill, the two bodies call for improvements and point out a number of shortcomings that have to be addressed to strengthen the current bill. IDS N commends the OHCHR in Nepal for its work and shares information from this office to its members and broader constituency.

## OHCHR analyses Nepal's Untouchability Bill

In their observations on the Untouchability Bill, NDC and OHCHR note that 'many areas of the bill require improvements for the law to have the desired impact'. Among the shortcomings are: a failure to define caste discrimination and 'untouchability'; an inadequate emphasis on the government's obligations under

international human rights law; a lack of classification of offences; a failure to provide guidance to police officers; inadequate provisions for punishments; and a failure to set out positive duties for the government. The analysis of the draft 'Caste-based Discrimination and Untouchability Crime and

Elimination Punishment Act' also notes that this draft has some significant strengths, such as penalising caste discrimination in many areas; criminalising incitement to caste discrimination; and providing increased punishment for public officials found responsible for discrimination.

In the village of Tikha in Nepal the majority of the villagers are Dalits. The village well, where all water supplies come from, is divided into two separate wells about 50 meters apart, one for Dalits and one for non-Dalits, who fear that they will become 'unclean' if they use the same tap as the Dalits. The Dalit tap is always overcrowded while the other tap is seldom used. In 2010, OHCHR-Nepal released two reports urging the Nepal Government to take action to end caste discrimination.

**"The life of Burakumin has gotten worse, and people in general have increasingly become unaware of the Buraku problem... Meanwhile, discrimination against Burakumin has continually been manifested in different forms."** Kenzo Tomonaga, Director of the Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute, Japan

On UN Human Rights Day, and under the banner "Speak up Stop Caste Discrimination", IDS N issued a special statement with an account of activities by Dalit activists in the run-up to this day. Dalit activists have been mobilising through marches and awareness raising activities from activism in Nepal, a march in India, and human chains in Bangladesh to an exhibition in the UK to highlight the plight of Dalits.

### UN treaty bodies and UPR

In 2010, few reviews were scheduled for countries affected by caste discrimination.

In February the Government of Japan was reviewed by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). In its concluding observations, the Committee urged Japan to consider specific legislation against direct and indirect racial discrimination. Such steps would be particularly relevant to the Buraku community, which suffers similar forms of descent-based discrimination as the Dalits of South Asia. The Committee also recommended Japan to set up a government agency to deal with Burakumin discrimination cases and to do more to improve the living conditions of the Buraku communities. Although the government maintains the position that discrimination against the Burakumin does not constitute racial discrimination, the Japanese delegation did elaborate on steps taken to eliminate discrimination against them. Prior to the review, a report with inputs from a large number of NGOs had urged the government to consider the views and recommendations expressed by CERD as well as the UN Special Rapporteur on Racism.

In 2010, the IDS N secretariat updated its comprehensive overview of UN treaty body recommendations on caste discrimination (1996-2010)<sup>7</sup>, and circulated this compilation to a wide range of governmental, UN, EU, and NGO stakeholders.

Towards the end of the year, the preparations for the Universal Periodic Review of Nepal in early 2011 started in cooperation with civil society coalitions and Dalit organisations in Nepal.

## European Union

In 2010, IDS N continued lobbying key institutions of the European Union; the European Council, the European Commission (EC) and the European Parliament (EP). IDS N successfully intensified work with the Council through its Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM). A long term lobby goal for IDS N was achieved, when COHOM decided to host a hearing on caste-based discrimination in the early spring.

In the course of the year, different IDS N teams had a series of meetings in Brussels, including with members of the European Parliament (MEPs), permanent representations of EU member states, and officials of the Council and the Commission, in particular EuropeAid (the EU development agency) and ECHO (the humanitarian aid department). In May, an IDS N presentation was made for UN agencies in Brussels hosted by the OHCHR Regional Office. In October, an IDS N team took part in the Asia Europe People's Forum in Brussels and members spoke at a workshop on manual scavenging and caste discrimination. The Human Rights and Democracy Network – of which IDS N is a member – considered the topic of caste discrimination in the context of the EU at its October meeting.

At the level of affected countries, IDS N together with Dalit national platforms maintained a constructive dialogue with some Commission delegations, in particular in Bangladesh and Nepal. Commission officials have on several occasions promised to step up country level engagement to address caste discrimination. In India, the EU-India human rights dialogue held in March failed to address caste discrimination, in spite of many efforts made to ensure that the biggest human rights issue in the country formed part of the dialogue. This gives further validity to IDS N's call to the EU for the adoption of a policy on the

### AEPF calls for action on Dalit rights

**Hundreds of civil society representatives, activists and parliamentarians from Asia and Europe took part in the 8th Asia Europe People's Forum (AEPF) in Brussels from 2-5 October. For the first time, the Forum's Call to Action presented to the ASEM heads of state contains a recommendation on caste discrimination:**

**"Take immediate measures to prevent discrimination on any grounds, including caste-based discrimination, and take special measures to assure decent work conditions for the Dalits in South Asia."**





topic and integration into instruments that can withstand political pressure. If not the issue may face a constant risk of 'disappearing from the agenda', when political pressure becomes too intense.

### Council Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM)

Prior to the COHOM hearing on caste discrimination which was held on 10 May, the Spanish Presidency requested IDSN to prepare policy recommendations for EU action on the topic. Such recommendations were subsequently presented in the IDSN paper "Towards an EU Policy Framework for the Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent<sup>8</sup>". Henri Tiphagne, Director of People's Watch in India, spoke at the hearing about the human rights implications of caste discrimination, whereas IDSN Coordinator Rikke Nöhrind outlined policy options to the COHOM members, calling for EU action at three levels; in its engagement with caste-affected countries, through its action in multilateral fora such as the United Nations and through its development policies and instruments.

With a view to advance work by COHOM on the topic, a group of member states met in Copenhagen in June, and discussions were resumed by COHOM in its meetings

towards the end of the year. In spite of the urgency of the matter, progress is slow suggesting that even today a number of EU member states hesitate to advance EU leadership on one of the most serious human rights issues in the world. However, an important decision was made in COHOM to include caste discrimination as a topic in all future human rights and policy dialogues with caste-affected countries, also those outside South Asia.

As described in the UN section of this report, the current hesitant position by COHOM has some implications for the potential progress in securing consideration and endorsement by the Human Rights Council on the draft UN Principles and Guidelines.

### The Commission/ European External Action Service (EEAS)

IDSN pursued the policy matter in an open letter (21 October) to Ms Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security and head of the new European External Action Service (EEAS). IDSN called upon her to ensure that caste-based discrimination is given the attention appropriate for a human rights problem of this magnitude. IDSN maintained that the EU must take a high profile official stand on the unacceptability of caste-

Sweeping the streets is a dirty job and Dhaka's sweepers are mainly Dalits. They are discriminated against and confined to live in slums. 500 people live in 98 shacks under unsanitary conditions. Each shack is extremely small, only a few square meters. The authorities provide no safe drinking water, no electricity and no special health facilities. There are no schools in the vicinity.

based discrimination. Unless this issue is taken up with strong leadership at the highest levels of government, an estimated 260 million people around the world will remain condemned to a lifetime of abuse simply because of the caste into which they are born.

Whilst the EU calls for proposals increasingly accommodate activities to combat caste discrimination and to strengthen Dalit civil society, current country strategy papers and programming documents still fall short. Without an EU policy to address caste discrimination, people affected by this form of discrimination risk remaining politically and programmatically invisible. Likewise, without strengthening EU instruments specifically to address this form of discrimination, the need for special measures may remain unaddressed.

IDSN suggested to the High Representative that the EEAS – within the framework of the Human Rights Policy Review initiated in 2010 – consider the progress made by the Commission, the Council and the Parliament to address discrimination based on 'work and descent' and work towards an effective EU policy. The open letter and IDSN's recommendations for an EU policy on the topic were widely distributed. Recipients included EU Commissioners Piebalgs and Georgieva with the portfolios for development and humanitarian assistance, respectively, MEPs, senior officials in the EU Commission, and member states. Dalit Solidarity Networks in Finland, the Netherlands, the UK, Denmark, Belgium and France shared the letter with their foreign ministry officials and parliamentarians.

The letter created a fair level of response; in a reply from Ms Ashton and Ms Georgieva, it was stressed that the EU is concerned about all forms of discrimination, including caste discrimination. The issue is seen as part of the recurrent social exclusion theme and "addressed at country level as such, including in the EU-India human rights dialogue". Responding on behalf of Ms Ashton, Mr Remond, Head of the Asia Section, mentions that "combating social exclusion is a subject that is regularly on the agenda of the EU-India Human Rights Dialogue, and in this context an EU-India workshop on the subject is presently being given consideration." In light of these statements it is highly regrettable that although placed on the agenda for the EU-India human rights dialogue in March, the topic was not addressed in the actual meeting.

IDSN had been engaging with the Commission, i.e. the delegation in India on a proposal for an EU-civil society consultation on caste discrimination in advance of the annual EU-India human rights dialogue, and prepared input for a proposed February consultation in Delhi. The consultation was never taken forward, but we hope the EEAS will decide on a workshop or seminar specifically

## Discrimination and Development Assistance

A study requested by the European Parliament's Development Committee, was conducted in 2010 to address the anti-discrimination policies of the EC development cooperation<sup>9</sup>. The study entitled "Discrimination and Development Assistance" examines to what extent EC development policies contribute to combating discrimination of marginalised groups through a review of country strategy papers, thematic strategy papers, communications and guidelines.

The study concluded that the EC policies are mostly "confined to combating ethnic, racial, religious and gender discrimination" and pointed to a need to give further attention to LGBT and disabled people's concerns. The study did not carry a single reference to caste-based discrimination. Dalits or other people affected by 'discrimination based on work and descent' were invisible. Among the ten country papers examined were those of India and Bangladesh.

addressing caste-based discrimination in early 2011. Whilst it is encouraging that high level representatives of some EU member states in India in informal discussions reflect their concern about caste discrimination, a higher public profile on the issue could be wished for.

The Head of the Human Rights Unit, Mr Timans, has expressed an expectation for the member states to move beyond a mainly project based approach, and welcomed IDSN's contribution to inform EU's policy approach regarding Dalit issues.

IDSN disseminated printed briefing materials, as well as electronic versions of key documents, including UN compilations on the issue of caste discrimination, and have on occasion prepared tailor-made packages for EU or member states' officials in Brussels, capitals and also affected countries.

### The European Parliament

In May, IDSN contacted a number of MEPs with the recommendations, "Towards an EU Policy Framework for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent," asking for support action. Letters were written to Chairs of the Delegation on India and South Asia, respectively, and a request made to the Chair of the Committee on Development (DEVE) to take a cross party initiative to support a process for an EU policy and follow up to EP resolution B6-0021/2007 on the human rights situation of Dalits in India. Following discussions, including



This young Dalit boy carries a heavy load. He has been working since he was six years old to pay off a loan inherited from his father who passed away. Dalits are often used as child labourers and bonded labourers. IDS promotes active measures to combat discrimination against Dalits and the resulting exploitation of Dalits in the private sector.

with Graham Watson, chair of the EP Delegation on India, and other members of the committee, who had raised their concern about caste discrimination, progress was made. In December, an agreement was reached between the EP Sub-Committee on Human Rights, DEVE and the Delegation on India to co-host a hearing on caste discrimination early in 2011 in association with the EP Delegation on South Asia.

The EP's Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2009 and the European Union's policy on the matter adopted on 16 December 2010 carries references to caste, the first being a call for recognition of the fact that minorities, such as indigenous groups and people discriminated against because of their caste are disproportionately vulnerable and subjected to torture. The second reference is in article 159 which deals with human rights dialogues with third countries and calls for follow-up to the dialogues. In the specific reference to the EU-India human rights dialogue the EP regrets that the issue of caste-based discrimination was not discussed "at the last dialogue".

Whilst the EU-India Summit in December had no expressed concern for the biggest human rights problem in India, negotiations around the EU-India Free Trade Agreement did not escape parliamentary scrutiny about the caste dimension. A motion in the Dutch Parliament dealing with the sustainability chapter of the Free Trade Agreement expressed concerns about Dalits and the potential risk of further social exclusion. Questions to Ms Ashton were raised by MEPs about the Commission's intention to raise human rights issues with India, in particular issues related to child labour, forced labour, torture, freedom of religion and the situation of the Dalits.

## Dalits and 2011 censuses

National Dalit platforms and IDS have lobbied governments and state agencies for appropriate methods to ensure Dalit related statistics in censuses coming up in four caste affected countries in 2011. The EU delegation in Bangladesh had followed up on a 2009 promise to look into the census issues and engaged with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Government on the topic.

In November the Head of Operation invited Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM), One World Action and IDS to make a submission with suggestions for solutions to methodological problems. In December, this group presented an urgent request<sup>10</sup> to include data on citizens affected by discrimination based on work and descent in the Bangladeshi census proposing a way forward. This submission and specific suggestions drew upon schedules and instructions from the Nepal and India censuses.

## Private Sector

As a result of reduced staff during maternity leave, the IDS Executive Group made a decision to scale down the Private Sector programme in order to align staff resources with workload. The activities of this programme were consequently reduced compared to the level envisaged for 2010, with a focus on feeding into existing processes and responding to ad hoc requests.

The trend of a slowly growing awareness of the need to incorporate considerations of caste in CSR policies among the business community in Europe and India continued in 2010. A number of media articles have drawn attention to the caste aspect of business and employment in India, including an analysis by India-CSR<sup>11</sup>, which made the case for introducing special measure to eliminate caste discrimination using extensive references to documentation from the DSN-UK and IDS and recommending the Ambedkar Principles<sup>12</sup> (AP) as a tool for companies wishing to avoid discrimination on the basis of caste.

Contacts made with German, British, Dutch and Danish companies indicate a genuine interest in pursuing ways to include anti-caste discrimination measures in their Indian operations.

With organisations such as the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) promoting a pro-active stance on caste among their members, it will be increasingly easier for European based companies to address the issue without hitting the barrier of cultural sensitivity, which has so far been the main obstacle for progress in this area. By signing up to the CII Code of Conduct on Affirmative Action, 700 companies, including 55 of India's largest companies, have decided to disclose the caste composition of their work force in their next annual report.

The Dalit Discrimination Check<sup>13</sup> (DDC), alongside the Ambedkar Principles (AP), represent a cornerstone of IDS's work to promote active measures in private sector operations. The DDC was developed in cooperation between the Danish Institute of Human Rights, IDS and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and launched as an online self-assessment tool for companies in 2008. Responding to feedback from companies, the DDC was re-launched in a new more adaptable version in 2010 with options for selecting specific sections of the tool.

Companies or other actors operating in a caste-affected environments can thus now choose to use the section(s) of primary relevance to their operations, rather than going through the full comprehensive checklist as was required in the first version. It is now possible to focus on one or more of the four sections on Employment Practices, Community Impact, Supply Chain and Utilities and Services and the



company or organisation in question can tailor the tool to match their specific needs.

The Dutch and Danish governments recommend the AP and the DDC to companies operating in India and both countries have in 2010 responded to a call to take up the issue in connection with official trade delegation visits to India. The Dalit Network Netherlands (DNN) was invited to give a presentation to thirty corporate participants of the Dutch trade delegation, and the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lene Espersen, highlighted caste discrimination as an important issue for Danish companies to include in CSR cooperation with their Indian counterparts during her interactions with the Danish-Indian business community. The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs have furthermore published the Ambedkar Principles and Dalit Discrimination Check on their website.

The ISO 26000 standard on social responsibility for all organisations was finalised in 2010. The active engagement in the working group of a DNN staff member has secured recognition of caste discrimination with specific mentioning of people discriminated on the basis of caste in the section on vulnerable groups, with recommendations for organisations to contribute to its elimination. The standard has been developed by stakeholder groups comprising

among others industry, government, labour, consumers, and NGOs, with working groups in 83 countries.

Reference in a widely recognised standard like the ISO 26000 is an important step for further acceptance of caste discrimination as a human rights issue to be considered in CSR policies of companies and organisations.

Involvement in the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) continues in the Netherlands, Denmark and the UK, the latter with representation at Board level and leadership in the cross-national ETI Stone group.

**People discriminated against on the basis of descent, including caste: "Hundreds of millions of people are discriminated against because of their hereditary status or descent. This form of discrimination is based on a history of rights abuse justified by the wrongful notion that some people are considered unclean or less worthy because of the group into which they are born. An organization should avoid such practices and, where feasible, seek to contribute to eliminating these prejudices."** ISO 26000 on caste discrimination



## Communication and networking

Strengthening and supporting IDS network communication, internally as well as externally, alongside work to raise public awareness of caste discrimination, continued to be the focus of IDS's communication and networking activities in 2010. The newsletter, listservs and website are crucial and unique sources of information for global news, resources and background on caste discrimination and IDS worked to expand and enhance these outlets in 2010.

IDS also pursued building relations with international journalists, media monitoring and pitching international level coverage of news on caste discrimination through the issuing of joint statements, press statements and media advisories. There was significant coverage of the issue in certain international outlets such as the BBC, The Economist, The Guardian, and The Telegraph.

IDS furthermore undertook networking activities to increase solidarity and awareness including participation in key events and conferences entailing substantial travel activities – particularly for the IDS Coordinator.

### Website, newsletter and social media

Following significant upgrades to the IDS website in 2009, further material was added in 2010 along with regular news updates, confirming the website's status as an indispensable and widely praised global information hub on the issue of caste discrimination. An average of one news story per week was published throughout the year. The website news stories continue to be statistically very popular with the website audience. The number of visits and visitors increased significantly compared to 2009 – the former was up by 11 percent while the latter increased by no less than 26 percent to 12,200 unique visitors with an average time spent on site of 4,5 minutes, which is significantly longer than comparable sites.

A new website tagging system became technically operational towards the end of the year. When fully implemented on the website, the system will make it easier to search for relevant documents, and create specifically tailored news, publication and page content lists, increasing the IDS secretariat's capacity to provide targeted information on caste discrimination to its partners. This tagging system will play a vital role in securing the website's capacity to function as a resource hub and online archive on caste discrimination in future – as more and more documentation and information is added to it. The website back-end system was furthermore technically updated to resist security threats and increase functionality.

### Caste discrimination and the international media

BBC Journalist Mike Thomson travelled to India in October to explore the flipside of 'incredible India'. Upon his return IDS spoke to him about the difficulties in getting media coverage of the Dalit issue. Mr Thomson explained that in many ways India has been successful in cementing its image as an emerging superpower and covering up its many internal problems in the process. Poverty and discrimination in India are therefore rarely on the global news agenda – due also to a focus on more sensationalist issues such as humanitarian crises and natural disasters. He also commented that he met significant resistance when covering Dalit issues in India. In a village in Bihar he was even told to leave due to the fear of reprisals, against the Dalits who he was interviewing, by a group of upper caste men who were gathering around them. However, he said that, "I believe that when the Dalit issue is given attention, as the BBC's Today programme enabled me to do, the topic receives great interest from the public. Following one of my reports on manual scavengers in Bihar we must have received more than fifty emails from people, outraged by the situation, and wanting to make donations. So, there is no doubt that people are interested and do care about the plight of Dalit people when their problems are highlighted in the media."

Launched in 2009, the monthly IDS electronic newsletter has become an increasingly valued source of information on caste discrimination for a diverse readership, which includes officials, media professionals and activists. The number of subscribers continues to rise steadily and increased by almost 40 percent in 2010 to 700 subscribers. The newsletters, which are also made available on the website, constitute an important record on developments and are also read periodically by non-subscribers who receive news of them through the IDS website or RSS feed.

An IDS Facebook page was launched in 2010, and it has already gathered a substantial following. The page features various IDS related news and will be expanded further in 2011 to increase awareness raising through social networking. The IDS Twitter profile, IDSUpdates, will furthermore be integrated with the IDS Facebook page in early 2011.

### Media work

In March, on the occasion of its tenth anniversary, IDS issued a press release, which included a message of support for the Dalit struggle by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The world famous South African human rights campaigner strongly urged the governments of India and his native South Africa to endorse international efforts to end the practice of 'untouchability', which he has described as 'a blot on humanity'.

The following month, a comment piece by IDS coordinator Rikke Nöhrind was published on telegraph.co.uk – the website of one of the leading UK newspapers, The Telegraph. The article entitled "Caste discrimination against India's 'untouchables' is an international issue," argued that India has much to gain from encouraging international



In the run up to Human Rights Day 2010 Dalit activists mobilised through marches and awareness raising activities from activism in Nepal, a march in India, and human chains in Bangladesh to an exhibition in the UK to highlight the plight of Dalits. IDS issued a statement including information of the many activities taking place in the run-up to Human Rights Day 2010. In Nepal

statements and reports were also released by the OHCHR-Nepal and other human rights organisations, urging Nepal's government to act immediately to ensure access to justice for victims of caste discrimination and voicing concern over the drafting of Nepal's 'Untouchability Bill'. Also in Nepal IDS national associate FEDO organised 16 days of activism to bring awareness to the

issue of violence against Dalit women, with a particular focus on inter-caste marriage. Reports released by the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), on the State of Human Rights in India and in Nepal, furthermore highlighted widespread caste discrimination and pointed out that India's position, that caste issues are an 'internal matter', only exacerbates the problem.

involvement in the struggle against caste discrimination. In connection with the UN Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, IDS collated the national level activities surrounding violence against Dalit women and issued a media advisory and news piece on the topic entitled 'Activists call for end to violence against the world's 'untouchable women,' which was also distributed through IDS international associate Minority Rights Group's online news outlet.

In December, on International Human Rights Day IDS issued a statement entitled 'Speak up! Stop caste discrimination'<sup>14</sup> that included a list of the many activities to stop caste discrimination taking place in connection with the day globally. This statement was widely distributed to IDS contacts, media and policy makers.

Throughout the year, the IDS secretariat has cooperated with journalists from national and international news media and also monitored reporting on Dalit issues in caste-affected countries as well as in Europe. IDS has facilitated establishing contacts between international journalists and relevant national and local level Dalit organisations and provided relevant background information and briefing for journalists interested in the issue. Dalit organisations in South Asia have made important headway in raising awareness of caste discrimination through their media work as have Dalit Solidarity Networks (DSNs) in Europe. In countries with DSNs, national level media coverage proved not only to be more extensive compared to countries

**"In 2001, I noted that India was at the forefront of the struggle against apartheid and expressed the belief that the Indian people would want to end the scourge of caste discrimination. I still hope that this is so, and I strongly urge the Indian government and my own government to endorse international efforts to end the practice of 'untouchability', which is a blot on humanity. Such support would be a boost to the struggle for Dalit rights, not only in India, but all over the world."**  
Archbishop Desmond Tutu, March 2010

without a network, but in most cases it also had increasing coverage on the topic.

IDS have pursued a dialogue with BBC journalist Mike Thomson, who featured two stories on caste discrimination in India on the BBC Today programme and The Guardian and Guardian Weekly have also featured several articles on the issue. Numerous other internationally renowned media such as The Daily Telegraph, The Independent, The Economist, and The New Statesman have also taken up caste discrimination in their coverage.

Nonetheless, the amount of media attention given to caste discrimination still does not match the magnitude of the problem. Considering that caste discrimination affects an estimated 260 million people and is rightly perceived as one of the world's most serious human rights issues, it receives disappointingly little coverage by the international news media. IDS is working to change this and is encouraged by an increase in media interest over the past couple of years. Nevertheless, much remains to be done in order to inspire the same level of media attention as other major human rights outrages – such as the apartheid system – managed to attract.

Some signs of encouragement can be found in India where there is an increasing media awareness of the plight of the country's Dalit population. A recent debate among readers of the Hindu newspaper included many expressions of sympathy for Dalits and demonstrated that the situation has changed compared to 15-20 years ago. At that time, reports of harsh practices of 'untouchability' in many parts of the country carried little credibility.

### Statements and letters

IDS have also issued a number of joint statements/letters and two open letters over the course of the year.

In October The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) and IDS wrote an open letter to US President Barack Obama appealing to him to raise the issue of caste discrimination during his visit to India in early November.

The same month IDS wrote a letter to EU High Representative Catherine Ashton urging her to address



caste discrimination in upcoming EU dialogues with India, ensure that the issue is given proper attention in EU cooperation with caste-affected countries and pursue an EU policy on the issue – the outcome of which has been described in the EU chapter of this report.

IDSN issued a statement on the humanitarian situation in Pakistan in September entitled 'Caste discrimination and humanitarian assistance – the case of Pakistan'. A joint letter to the Constitutional Committee and the High Level Taskforce in Nepal in December urging that they include measures to combat caste discrimination in the constitution was issued in cooperation with international human rights law experts, Dalit rights advocates and activists.

IDSN also issued a message of solidarity in connection with the 'Samajik Parivartan Yatra' – The National Bus March for the Eradication of Manual Scavenging in India, organised by Safai Karmachari Andolan (SKA).

### Publications

The user friendly printed version of the draft UN Principles and Guidelines – published in 2009 – continues to be one of IDSN's most important lobbying tools and is distributed to contacts in many countries. As the original supply was running out, the secretariat printed more copies towards the end of the year. Another important IDSN document, the EU commissioned study on caste discrimination in South Asia, was updated with relevant links throughout the year.

IDSN distributes information on relevant publications on caste discrimination through the listservs and newsletter and feature and archive them on the IDSN website. IDSN is working on improving access to online publications and documentation, something that will be facilitated as the website tagging system is fully implemented in 2011.

Researchers working on the issue of caste discrimination often contact IDSN for background information or to facilitate contact to national level organisations. IDSN endeavour to respond promptly to the many requests for information and also invite researchers to become newsletter subscribers.

### Documentaries, books and exhibitions

'I'm Dalit – How are you?' is a powerful short documentary on caste discrimination in India, which has featured on www.idsn.org's front page as well as the video-sharing website YouTube for several years. By April, the number of YouTube viewers had exceeded 100,000, and at the end of the year it had reached almost 120,000. IDSN is planning to produce a new documentary that will also include footage from other caste-affected countries than India.

IDSN is also frequently contacted for background information and facilitation of contacts by documentary

filmmakers working on the issue of caste discrimination. In the course of the year there have been a wide range of films produced on the issue, in particular there have been a number of documentaries on Dalit women including 'Prostitutes of God', 'The Gulabi Gang', and 'India's Forgotten Women'.

In general there have been an impressive amount of books, films and exhibitions on the topic of caste discrimination released this year – reflecting that awareness levels of the issue are rising. IDSN has distributed information on this through the IDSN newsletter and is planning to launch a section on the IDSN website with information on films, books and exhibitions on caste discrimination.

IDSN's own photo exhibition "We are not untouchable: 260 million reasons to act" continued to be popular in its online version and the print exhibition is now being translated into Dutch and printed by the Dalit Network Netherlands – to increase exposure even further. The Dalit Solidarity Network – Germany (DSiD) produced and distributed an exhibition on manual scavenging and sewage workers in Mumbai and members of the Dalit Solidarity Network – UK produced important exhibitions in London. These include the powerful and disturbing exhibit "Being untouchable," an intimate series of portraits of the lives of Indian Dalits exposing the impact of oppression, exploitation and injustice, produced by Christian Solidarity Worldwide and photographed by Marcus Perkins, and One World Action's exhibition 'Dalit Rights are Human Rights', on the Dalits of Bangladesh, exhibited at the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

### Networking

Over the course of the year, many Dalit leaders from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal presented their analyses and recommendations in IDSN teams' meetings with government delegations and officials, parliamentarians in Europe, UN offices, the public and the media. In particular, IDSN executive group members are recognised for their succinct contribution, including DNN and DSN-UK coordinators.

In South Asia, there is an encouraging trend towards more interaction, visits and solidarity action between Dalit organisations, most often as direct arrangements between organisations, but also in some cases facilitated by IDSN. International organisations belonging to Dalit Solidarity Networks also play important roles in different ways, such as One World Action (member of DSN-UK) with its substantive support to the Dalit movement in Bangladesh, the promotion of policy demands and awareness raising.

The IDSN coordinator visited Nepal in June and Bangladesh in November. The visits centred on networking and lobby

activities with Dalit organisations, including meeting parliamentarians, Ministries, UN offices, as well as bilateral and multilateral donors. In both countries, the responsiveness of the UN and donor community proves that caste discrimination is moving further up the agenda. Concrete policy advice and other inputs were specifically requested suggesting a new level of engagement and action by key agencies.

The June visit to Nepal was an occasion to participate in the three day international conference 'Envisioning New Nepal: Dynamics of Caste, Identity and Inclusion of Dalits'<sup>15</sup> organised by the Samata Foundation in association with IDSN and others. Bringing together scholars, politicians and activists working on Dalit issues across South Asia, the conference covered issues of critical importance to the Dalit movement. Networking and lobby activities included meetings with the OHCHR, the Prime Minister's Office and Constituent Assembly members.

At a seminar at the Danish Institute for Human Rights, IDSN staff members were invited to give a training session on addressing discrimination against Dalits at international, regional and national levels. Participants included eight representatives from government structures in Bangladesh and Nepal. Interactions during the training session were fruitful and highlighted a need for sensitisation of professionals in government services to issues relating to discrimination on the basis of caste.

IDSN also gave a presentation in Norway, on the invitation of the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations, who together with the Rafto foundation, have been exploring possibilities of joint advocacy activities to be carried out in 2011, notably connected to the CSR and Decent Work agendas related to the growing Norwegian business presence in India. Contacts are being established between these two organisations and other Norwegian civil society organisations with interests in Dalit human rights and caste-based discrimination. The group links up with IDSN and participates in joint activities on an ad hoc basis. A meeting with the Dalit Solidarity Network Finland, formed in 2010, was also held in Copenhagen in December.

On a general level IDSN works to build solidarity and link the network together globally through all its programme and communication work. IDSN continue to encourage and facilitate the sharing of information between network members and distribute this information through the listservs, website, newsletter and now also Facebook page managed by IDSN. The secretariat also responds to general requests for information coming from interested individuals ranging from school students to politicians.

## Developments in caste-affected countries

In 2010, Dalit activists and human rights defenders continued to raise their voice against caste discrimination locally, nationally and internationally. Much of the focus of the National Platforms in India, Nepal and Bangladesh was on ensuring implementation of existing legislation and lobbying for new legislative measures to protect Dalit rights. Supporting the participation of Dalit women in their activities and in politics in general, and general awareness raising, were also key concerns for these three platforms. In Pakistan, work centred around combating caste discrimination in the relief efforts following the terrible floods in the Sindh province.

It is beyond the scope of this report to describe country situations in detail. In the following sections the main developments in this year's work of the national platforms are presented. Member platforms and Dalit Solidarity networks are financed independently of IDSN.

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**"The work of IDSN and others have helped break through the glass ceiling at the UN and other global forums, and this has provided enormous support for our own national struggles. As IDSN is celebrating its tenth anniversary, we are hopeful that caste-affected countries will feel increasingly obliged to end this form of discrimination."** Paul Divakar, General Secretary of the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) in India, March 2010

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### National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights – India

India may be the 'world's biggest democracy'. But despite this status, the country is "drawn with the crayons of caste and religious prejudices, where millions of citizens are still considered 'untouchable'." Such is the verdict expressed in the 2010 report on the state of human rights in India from the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC).

The report highlights widespread caste discrimination in access to justice, health care, land, social services, and right to food and outlines several cases of atrocities committed against Dalits. It also points out that India's insistence on caste issues being an 'internal matter' only exacerbates the problem.

The AHRC report sums up what India's approximately 200 million Dalits experience in their daily lives. In 2010 numerous other reports from respected human rights organisations made similar assessments of the situation. Amnesty International noted that members



Manual Scavenger Niita Tank is suffering from illness and constant headaches because of her work. She is paid next to nothing and cannot afford medical care. To add insult to injury, those whose excreta she cleans abuse her and call her derogatory names. In India, former manual scavengers are demanding that the Government end this practice and rehabilitate manual scavengers.

of Dalit communities face "attacks, social boycotts and discrimination in access to health, education and legal services".

A major problem in India is the lack of implementation of existing laws that are meant to protect Dalits and other marginalised groups, but in reality have little effect. Hence, the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) focused many of its efforts in 2010 on campaigning for proper implementation of legislation and contributing to ensuring the effectiveness of future legislative measures.

The National Coalition for Strengthening the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act (SC/ST Act), of which NCDHR is a member, published a report card (status report) on the implementation of the act as well as a set of draft recommended amendments. It reflects how deep rooted discrimination in law enforcement and judiciary systems, as well as society in general, continues to undermine the act's effectiveness.

## Campaign to end manual scavenging by the end of 2010

- In 2010, the national movement for the eradication of manual scavenging, Safai Karmachari Andolan (SKA), intensified its campaign against this reviled practice. Campaigners took part in a national bus yatra (march), to end the manual cleaning of human excreta from non-flush toilets and "reclaim dignity, equality and human personhood" of manual scavengers".
- The march has highlighted the Dalit struggle in 20 Indian states, spreading awareness and inspiring manual scavengers across India to quit and protest, before culminating in New Delhi. SKA set out a number of demands for immediate government action to end manual scavenging once and for all, rehabilitate former manual scavengers and apologise for decades of suffering imposed on this group. IDSN issued a letter of solidarity to support the movement in their demands.
- The campaign received extensive media coverage in India, and the UK newspaper – The Independent – ran an interview with SKA coordinator Bezwada Wilson.
- In 2010 the UK Secretary of State for International Development also met former manual scavengers in a village in Madhya Pradesh, the BBC ran stories on manual scavengers in India and a documentary on the practice was released at an event hosted by SKA and attended by the UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Gay McDougall.



Following the launch of the report card in April at a national consultation involving MPs and civil society organisations, nearly 30 parliamentarians raised at least 12 questions in Parliament about the implementation of the SC/ST Act.

NCDHR and other coalition members were invited to meet with the Cabinet Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment who committed to calling for a high-level meeting on the issue. The Minister informed Parliament that he had started consultations with states on amendments to the SC/ST Act and would bring the required amendments once the process was complete. NCDHR furthermore drafted and sent out a note on the role of MPs and Members

**"Understanding untouchability is crucial to ending untouchability. Dalits face untouchability in every aspect of their lives. By lifting the veil of ignorance we have no excuse not to end it."** Martin Macwan, founder, Navsarjan Trust, 2010

of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) for making District and State Level Vigilance and Monitoring Committees and organised state level consultations for MLAs on the topic.

Following meetings between NCDHR and the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes the committee took up the review of the SC/ST Act as a subject matter for 2010-2011. NCDHR also lobbied the National Advisory Council to provide legislative input to Government for strengthening the SC/ST Act and the council subsequently included NCDHR in the Drafting Committee on the new Communal and Targeted Violence Bill – due to be completed in 2011.

In 2010 NCDHR filed two Public Interest Litigations (PILs) and followed up on the PILs they filed in 2009. One of the PILs filed in 2010 concerned implementation of the SC/ST Act in a much publicised case where a whole village in Mirchpur was burnt down and an 18 year old Dalit girl and her father were burnt alive.

Another focus area for NCDHR in 2010 has been strengthening Dalit economic rights. State level budget research centres were established and all state coordinators were given training on the budget tracking process – with a particular focus on provisions for scheduled castes. NCDHR also decided to work with NGOs in five states on budgetary issues.

The platform organised activist capacitating workshops on the national and state level to provide skills in dealing with budgets and public finance and to equip participants to play an active role in the state budget making processes. Furthermore, analysis of current budgets were undertaken in Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and meetings with MPs and MLAs at the state level on budgetary issues were held.

Discrimination against Dalits in disaster situations and relief work was another key concern in 2010. NCDHR continued its work on the National Dalit Watch (NDW), which has evolved from the experiences of discrimination against Dalits in the relief activities of Tsunami-affected areas in 2005 and Bihar flood-affected areas in 2007-2008.

This year the NDW launched a special survey on the issue

**"If India does not achieve the MDGs, the world will not achieve the MDGs; and if Dalits and tribals do not achieve the MDGs, India will not achieve the MDGs. So we need to get our priorities straight."** Ashok Barti, National Convenor of IDSN Associate NACDOR, September 2010

## Untouchability still rife in modern India

- In January 2010 a ground-breaking study on caste discrimination in the state of Gujarat showed that the practice of 'untouchability' is still prevalent. The report also made clear that the Indian legal system is failing to address the issue. 'Understanding Untouchability' was released by the Dalit rights organisation Navsarjan Trust in cooperation with the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights (RFK Center).
- Based on research carried out across 1589 villages in Gujarat, it outlines a pattern of persistent discrimination against Dalits affecting access to education and medical facilities and imposing restrictions on housing and the kind of work Dalits can carry out. The report lists 98 forms of discrimination by non-Dalits against Dalits. The numbers speak a very clear language: In 98.4 percent of the villages surveyed, inter-caste marriages are prohibited and would often be met with violence. In almost as many cases, Dalits cannot rent a house in a non-Dalit community; they must not touch the water pots or utensils of non-Dalits; and Dalit religious leaders are never asked to celebrate a religious ceremony in a non-Dalit area.
- The study also refutes the traditionally held belief that caste discrimination is limited to remote and economically underdeveloped corners of India. According to its authors, the report's findings should be used to "demonstrate the Government of India's continued ignorance about the depth of the problem and its legal obligations in regard to the abolition of untouchability."

of exclusion of Dalits in the flood affected areas in Andhra Pradesh. The objective of this study is to monitor the Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation package announced by the government: to bring out the issues of exclusion practiced in its implementation; to submit representations and petitions to all concerned authorities of the individual cases of the denial of entitlement from relief and rehabilitation, either fully or partially; and to create awareness about the package. Several other surveys on this issue in other states were also conducted in 2010.

A National Consultation on "Exclusion of Dalits in Disaster Risk Reduction Interventions – Effective Civil Monitoring" was held in June. The consultation brought together civil society organisations, international NGOs and senior government officials, leading to a strategic partnership with Oxfam India and Sphere India on the issue. Deliberations with national disaster management authorities and UN officials on the issue of combating the exclusion of Dalits from disaster related interventions were also held.

To promote Dalit women leadership and political participation, NCDHR worked to strengthen the All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM). Dalit women equipped with knowledge and capacities have the potential to challenge caste and gender barriers. In their report on



Dalits of Nepal are hopeful that the Government and the international community will come together to support the struggle to end caste discrimination and ensure equal rights and equal access for Dalits. If action is taken, perhaps Dalit children will grow up in a truly 'untouchability free state' and be afforded opportunities that the generations before them could only dream of.

**"The Indian constitution is good. But the level of impunity is incredibly high, law enforcement biased and implementation much too weak."** Manjula Pradeep, Director, Navsarjan Trust, India

maternal health care, Human Rights Watch exemplify one such barrier for Dalit women in India stating that "access to healthcare is particularly difficult for Dalit and tribal communities," they are often not admitted to government health facilities and complaints are ignored. AIDMAM operates in three states to promote networks of Dalit Women Elected Representatives, to give Dalit women more influence over their lives and the opportunities available to them.

National Dalit organisations organised a consultation to collect input from Dalit activists for the Planning Commission of India's paper for the country's 12th five-year plan. The Planning commission has now started drafting this paper including input from the National Dalit Consultation.

A national ecumenical consultation on caste discrimination in New Delhi in October was organised by the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI). The consultation was a follow-up to a global conference on 'Justice for Dalits' in Bangkok in 2009. The event concluded with a proclamation, which stated that "casteism is a sin" and called upon all churches in India to banish discrimination.

In December, a 'Regional Seminar on Social Exclusion and Minority Issues' was organised by NCDHR and the Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN. The UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Gay McDougall, participated and was the keynote speaker at the seminar.

Several international media covered caste discrimination in India in 2010 and numerous books and documentary films on caste issues including temple prostitution, Dalit women empowerment and manual scavenging, were also released. On the national level, a media debate took place on whether or not caste should be 'internationalised'. This debate, spurred on by the pending decision to outlaw caste discrimination in the UK, still continues.

**"We need a concerted effort to bring about a social change which can weaken these divisive forces, strengthen unity and accelerate our march for national progress."** Meira Kumar, the Speaker of India's Lower House (Lok Sabha), speaking on caste discrimination

### Dalit NGO Federation – Nepal (DNF)

Dalits constitute an estimated 20 percent of Nepal's population and are subjected to as many as 205 different forms of discriminatory practices. They are religiously, culturally, socially, economically and historically oppressed, excluded and treated as 'untouchables'. Many become victims of caste related violence, e.g. when attempting to enter inter-caste marriages. Crimes against Dalits are more often than not committed with impunity.

Following a protracted civil war and the downfall of the monarchy, Dalit civil society actors in Nepal have actively tried to seize the historic opportunity to secure their rights in the country's new constitution. The long-drawn-out constitution making process is still ongoing and was one of the focus areas of the work of the Dalit NGO Federation (DNF) in 2010 – along with other legislative measures to support Dalit rights and facilitate access to justice.

Many important civil society actors, including DNF, Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO) and Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organisation (NNDSWO), also took part

### Statement issued voicing concern over the drafting of Nepal's 'Untouchability Bill'

**On December 10th, the National Dalit Commission (NDC) and Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal (OHCHR- Nepal) issued a statement identifying crucial gaps in current legislation that must be bridged to, "ensure effective prosecution of criminal offense based on caste-based discrimination and untouchability and compensation for the victims." They add that, "if the current gaps are corrected, the proposed law could become a key tool to curb the deep-rooted practice of caste based discrimination and practices of untouchability in Nepal."**

### Report analyses gaps in Nepal's draft constitution

**A report by the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ) at the New York University School of Law urged the CA to address critical gaps in proposals for its new constitution – and called for consultations with Dalits. "The voices of Dalits and other marginalized groups have been silenced for far too long. It is crucial that Dalits, particularly Dalit women, be included in the constitutional drafting process and in the governance of their country," said CHRGJ director Smita Narula upon the release of the report in February.**



**"It is positive that Nepal supports the work of the UN – but an expression of support is not sufficient. Action is required as well. We are applying pressure to the political leadership, but the unstable political situation at the moment makes this difficult."** Bhakta Bishwakarma, President of NNDSWO, September 2010

The Asian Legal Resource Center (ALRC) has also noted that access to justice in Nepal, "remains a remote perspective for disadvantaged groups, including Dalits." The current political deadlock in Nepal has, according to DNF, furthermore fostered an increase in the impunity rate for discrimination and atrocities committed against Dalits.

To change this, DNF has collected the views of more than 30,000 people in four districts on the Constituent Assembly (CA) Thematic Committee draft constitution. DNF also organised a series of meetings with Nepal Dalit civil society groups to analyse the CA Thematic Committee draft, and intervene in the constitution building process, to ensure that Dalit rights are on the agenda. Five organisations campaigning for Dalit rights in Nepal, including IDS, have written to the Constitutional Committee and the High Level Taskforce in Nepal, urging them to include measures to combat caste discrimination in the constitution.

In order to prevent discrimination against Dalits in Nepal and invoke measures to support Dalits to assert their rights, it is important that they are registered in Nepal's upcoming 2011 national census. DNF therefore organised an interaction programme on this topic and gave feedback and suggestions to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) in charge of the census, on how to develop the essential formats for disaggregated data on Dalits. DNF also recommended that Dalit human resources be included in the census process and demanded a modification of the questionnaire to reflect Dalit sub castes.

A Dalit civil society technical team was formed to identify the major areas of improvement and 12 demands were submitted to the National Planning Commission to make the census process more inclusive and reliable. A position paper on the 2011 census reflecting this was jointly submitted by 33 DNF members, sister organisations, CA members, other Dalit NGOs, journalists, the NDC and the Dalit Development Committee.

DNF campaigned in 2010 on the issue of Dalit citizenship. Particularly in the Terai region of Nepal, there are significant problems with Dalits who do not have Nepali citizenship and DNF worked to raise awareness of how to obtain citizenship and offered support for this process.

in these activities and contributed significantly to IDS's international advocacy work. The preparation process for the examination of Nepal's human rights record by the UN's Universal Periodic Review Mechanism (UPR) became an important part of civil society advocacy efforts – nationally as well as internationally – during the year preceding the January 2011 review.

A coalition of NGOs and a number of national human rights bodies, including the National Dalit Commission, submitted reports prior to the UPR session. Important observations on caste discrimination in these reports included the prevalence of discriminatory provisions in Nepalese legislation; inadequate efforts by the state to fulfil its human rights obligations; weak implementation of laws; a dramatic underrepresentation of Dalits in the civil service; and their low literacy rate.

Several international human rights organisations, including Amnesty International and the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), have raised concern over impunity for caste related crimes persisting in Nepal.

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal (OHCHR-Nepal) has urged the government to act immediately to ensure access to justice for victims of caste and gender discrimination and has furthermore raised concern over shortcomings in planned legislation in their analysis of the draft untouchability bill, in cooperation with the National Dalit Commission (NDC).





Another key concern for Dalits in Nepal is the position of Dalits in a federal context. Dalits are among the most marginalized in Nepal and do not have a majority population in any region. Therefore discussions on the concept and model of federalism are being organised by DNF.

DNF also conducted the project "improved access to socio-economic opportunities for poor Dalits" in cooperation with the Enabling State Programme (ESP/DFID), to benefit Dalits in ten districts, and successfully completed its 4th General Convention in June, where a 31 member executive body was elected under the leadership of Mr Gajadhar Sunar.

A delegation from the European Parliament visited Nepal in late May. The group was led by Jean Lambert, Chair of the Parliament's Delegation on South Asia. During the visit, she and other MEPs met civil society groups, including Dalit representatives. A number of concerns were raised during the meeting, including the participation of Dalits in the constitution-building process and the socio-economic condition of Nepal's Dalit population. The activists urged the EU to intensify its work on caste discrimination.

Finally, in December, Dalit leaders from Nepal took part in the third UN Forum on Minority Issues in Geneva, providing them with a welcome opportunity to share their experiences with like-minded activists from many countries.

### **Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM)**

Solidarity, growth and action are the keywords that characterise the work of BDERM in 2010. Inspirational actions of solidarity across the country saw Dalit activists travelling to support others in standing up for their rights through peaceful protests, human chains and other demonstrations of resistance. The platform is growing in strength and expanding, and BDERM played a key role this year in the formation of The Dalit and Excluded Women's Federation. This new national platform for Dalit women brings together 11 Dalit women's organizations from across the country. The rapid growth and flourish of activity reflects the desperation many Dalits in Bangladesh face.

The Dalits of Bangladesh, an estimated 5 million people, continue to be discriminated against on the basis of caste and considered 'untouchable'. It is therefore encouraging to note the growing mobilisation of Dalit human rights defenders across the country, building awareness of rights in the communities, tackling cases of atrocities and seeking justice for victims of caste discrimination.

Dalits in Bangladesh need protection by law. The constitutional provisions against discrimination clearly prohibit caste discrimination. Despite this provision,

Dalit women in Bangladesh gained a new platform in 2010 with the formation of The Dalit and Excluded Women's Federation. DSN-UK member One World Action (OWA) organised an exhibition at the Department for International Development (DFID) in the UK featuring this and other photos of Dalits in Bangladesh. OWA also presented an award to the Dalit Women's Forum in Dhaka, for its tireless struggle against gender and caste discrimination.

discrimination against Dalits is rampant, suggesting a need for additional legislation and other measures.

BDERM has therefore lobbied the Review Committee for Constitutional change to include anti-discriminatory legislation focusing on Dalits. The Co-Chairman of the Committee in the Parliament responded positively to a recent meeting and a memorandum on specific anti-discrimination legislation has been submitted to all 340 MPs. BDERM also organised a press conference to demand legal action be taken in three separate incidents of murder of people belonging to the Dalit community in the southern part of the country.

BDERM has called for political action with regards to housing. The platform lobbied for the provision of water and sanitation to Dalit communities with some success, especially in one Dalit colony in Dhaka. A memorandum was also submitted to the Finance Minister and the Dhaka City Mayor demanding special allocation in the National Budget for housing development for Dalit communities.

At a press conference organised by a forum of 13 organisations that will monitor the National Budget, BDERM presented a charter demanding special allocation of resources towards the basic rights of Dalit communities in education, special safety nets, protection of employment, housing facilities and health care services.

Development actors and donor partners to Bangladesh, including bilateral and multilateral agencies, increasingly seek to understand and assume a joint responsibility to address the situation of Dalits. With a view to take steps to promote targeted policies, ensure inclusion of Dalits in sector programmes and improve their living conditions, many donors now invite policy recommendations.

To help inform government and stakeholder policies BDERM held a seminar discussion on the Draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the elimination of caste discrimination. These Principles and Guidelines have been translated into Bangla by BDERM, and it is recommended that the Government of Bangladesh and other key stakeholders in the country use them as the principal guiding framework to address caste-based discrimination in Bangladesh.

BDERM platform members took part in an international conference in Nepal where they made a presentation on 'Promotion and Protection of Dalit Rights in Bangladesh'. The platform also participated in the IDSAN Annual Council Meeting in Geneva.

On the national level Dalit students participated in the National Youth Parliament meeting and BDERM members participated in a Citizen Rights Fair where they presented educational material on Dalit rights, with the aim of raising awareness about the activities of the platform.

## Census in Bangladesh

- There is a critical need for more statistics and data to inform policy and development programmes, and to understand more about caste identity in Bangladesh. The importance of securing accurate and disaggregated data on Dalits and excluded communities affected by caste discrimination cannot be underestimated.
- The 2011 Census provides an historic and unprecedented opportunity to provide this data at a national level. Including categories related to caste discrimination in this Census will provide the Bangladesh Government and multilateral and bilateral agencies with specific information so that for the first time this form of discrimination can be better identified and understood. It will ensure an inclusive and progressive process, in line with international best practices.
- If this does not happen it will further contribute to the invisibility, marginalisation and disempowerment of these communities and prevent not only the gathering of national disaggregated data but also Dalit and excluded communities' claim for special measures, representation or participation in policy making, development, employment and equality of access to basic services.
- This census could become a milestone in the process of Bangladesh understanding and addressing the rights of Dalit and excluded communities across the country.
- "National and local governments should conduct regular surveys and other appropriate research ... The surveys and research should present information on the situation of those affected by discrimination based on work and descent, and a review of the effectiveness of existing measures and proposals for the elimination of such discrimination." Draft UN Principles and Guidelines, 2009

Other awareness raising activities included organising human chains and rallies in connection with World Dignity Day and the International Human Rights Day, to protest against the discriminatory behaviour of school teachers, water privatisation, and to demand special provisions in the Constitution for Dalit rights and dignity. The platform also published and distributed a regular newsletter, a brochure on Dalits in Bangladesh, a summary report of the 1st National Dalit Conference in Bangladesh, and a desk calendar and greeting cards to raise awareness of the caste issue. They also produced a slideshow about Dalits in Bangladesh.

BDERM is now becoming a member based people's organisation with convening committees formed in 38 districts. In November BDERM held its annual meeting, which was also attended by influential Bangladeshi supporters of the Dalit cause, as well as Manjula Pradeep, Navsarjan Trust; Rikke Nöhrind, IDSAN Coordinator and One World Action representative Bethan Copley. The latter three took part in BDERM's strategic planning meeting for 2011.

In December, IDSAN, BDERM and OWA jointly took the initiative to ensure the inclusion of data on caste issues in the upcoming Bangladesh population census<sup>16</sup>.



## Caste discrimination in disaster relief efforts

- Caste discrimination in the relief efforts following the 2010 flooding in Pakistan is yet another example of a disturbing trend. Similar situations have been documented in other parts of South Asia, for example in India's Bihar floods and post tsunami relief work. Dalits are particularly vulnerable when natural disasters strike as dominant castes are often responsible for the distribution of aid and discriminate against Dalits in the process. In India, to combat this discrimination, NCDHR have set up the National Dalit Watch, to monitor relief delivery and provide recommendations on how to combat caste discrimination in relief efforts.
- IDSN continue to urge the international community to incorporate measures against caste discrimination in disaster relief operations and development programmes. The first comprehensive international framework to address caste discrimination, the UN Principles and Guidelines for the effective elimination of discrimination based on work and descent, contain recommendations for governments to adopt special measures to tackle discrimination in such programmes<sup>17</sup>. IDSN have also recommended ten minimum requirements for disaster mitigation, relief and rehabilitation assistance<sup>18</sup>.

### Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN)

The disastrous floods that ravaged Pakistan in 2010, affecting more than 20 million people, hit Dalits hard. The flooding started in July 2010 but continued until late September in Sindh province, where more than seven million people have been affected.

Thousands of Dalit families faced caste discrimination in relief efforts, hampering their access to necessary help. There is only limited disaggregated data available about the affected population. The estimated number of Dalits affected is 500,000, mostly in the Sindh province. The information collected by PDSN and its member organisations suggests there was severe discrimination against Dalits during emergency rescue and relief work. Media, both printed and electronic, have also reported that scheduled caste Hindus were discriminated in distribution of food and denied shelter.

PDSN took up the issue of discrimination in relief work with the government by writing letters and also through holding meetings with local officials. The issue was also highlighted during civil society meetings across the country. Following the PDSN letters and media reports, the President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, ordered an inquiry into the matter but the results of the inquiry are yet to be published.

In September 2010, the President stated that relief work in his country should not be influenced by considerations of caste, creed or ethnicity. A spokesman for the President said that such discrimination would reflect poorly on the country's image and adversely impact on national unity. The President also called for action against officials found to be involved in discrimination in relief and rehabilitation work.

Residents of Jamshoro's temporary tent camp, Sindh Province, Pakistan, carry rations provided by the UN World Food Programme (WFP). Those living in the tent camp are among more than 21 million Pakistanis who have been displaced by countrywide flooding in 2010.

As a result of the President and media highlighting the caste discrimination issue, civil society organisations paid more attention to the Dalit population and provided immediate relief in some cases. PDSN provided food and warm clothes to 500 displaced Dalit families.

Besides this direct intervention key PDSN members, Pakistan Institute of Labour and Research (PILER), Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP), and Pakistan Fisher Folk Forum (PFF) are actively engaged in flood relief and rehabilitation work and have incorporated specific relief activities for Dalits into their programmes.

IDSN issued a statement on the case of Pakistan urging the international community to incorporate measures against caste discrimination in disaster relief operations as well as development programmes.

To ascertain the losses of livelihood and impact of floods on Dalits, PDSN, through its members PILER and UMID (Upgrade Minorities in Development) conducted a detailed survey of 500 Dalit families affected by floods. Final results of the report, which will be shared with policy makers and the government, are yet to be made public; although initial data suggests that Dalits sustained substantial losses and specific measures must be taken.

In collaboration with other NGOs, the PDSN secretariat started a series of advocacy activities for the early recovery and rehabilitation of flood-affected people. Dalit issues are part of this effort and Dalit communities are provided opportunities to raise their issues. In a flood related conference held on November 11-12 in Karachi, two Dalit representatives shared their views on the discrimination against them in relief camps. Over 100 delegates, including high government officials, representatives of civil society organisations and ministers, attended the conference.

PDSN and its key members also remained active in a number of other important areas. A national census was due in Pakistan in November 2010. PDSN organised two consultations where participants raised the issue that many Dalits were not counted in the previous census. It was decided that PDSN and its member organisations should launch a campaign during the census period and establish district level facilitation centres. The Government of Pakistan later postponed the census to March 2011. PDSN

**"Humanitarian agencies, whether multilateral, governmental or non-governmental must accept the responsibility to ensure that Dalits are not discriminated against and left out in relief and rehabilitation operations."** IDSN 2010 Statement<sup>19</sup>



furthermore participated in a workshop organised by the Census Commission of Pakistan and gave its feedback for revising census forms to include a caste column so that the actual number of Dalits can be ascertained.

A recurring issue in Pakistan is the religious tensions between the dominant Muslim population and the minority Hindu and Christian population. In 2010 a number of cases of rape, forced conversion and migration of Dalit communities were reported in Pakistan. In one particular case a 15-year old Dalit girl was kidnapped and forced to convert to Islam and marry her Muslim landlord. The case caused uproar among Dalits in Sindh province and made 71 Dalit families leave their ancestral village. PDSN member TRDP played a key role in highlighting this issue.

The Green Rural Development Organization (GRDO), another key member of PDSN, also took up a similar case and is still leading a campaign for the rehabilitation of 86 Dalit families, expelled from Tharparkar district by influential landlords.

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) also received information that a Muslim mob attacked a Dalit village in Sindh province following allegations of blasphemy. Houses were burnt and villagers forced to leave their homes. The village in Mirpurkhas district has been populated by a Dalit Meghwar community for a century.

To lobby for the general rights and welfare of the Dalits of Pakistan, a PDSN delegation led by Mr. Zulfiqar Shah, visited Islamabad in May 2010. The delegation met several members of parliament both in the National Assembly and Senate of Pakistan. The PDSN delegation shared a 2007 study with them on the plight of scheduled castes and argued that there has been no change in the socio-economic conditions of Dalits. Some made commitments to take up the issue and follow-up activities are now required.

The Scheduled Castes Rights Movement (SCRM), a newly formed Dalit organisation, also organised several conferences and workshops in which the issues of scheduled castes were highlighted. As a result of these efforts the Hindu marriage registration draft bill was submitted to the Ministry of Minority Rights and it is expected that the bill will be presented in the National Assembly next year for legislation.

2010 also became the first year that a Dalit activist was given the highest civil award in Pakistan "Sitara-e-Imtiaz". Dr. Sono Khangharani, Chief Executive Officer of Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) received this award in recognition of his services to social development in rural Pakistan. This was an encouraging sign to all those fighting for the rights of marginalised communities in Pakistan.



## Developments in European countries

The European Dalit solidarity networks continued work to raise awareness about caste discrimination and put pressure on politicians, corporations and ordinary citizens to do more to support Dalits in their struggle. Significant milestones were achieved when DSN-UK and other groups successfully lobbied for the inclusion of caste in the UK's Single Equalities Bill and a government commissioned study found evidence of caste discrimination in the UK. In the Netherlands, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs spoke out against caste discrimination and after the participation of a DNN member in the ISO26000 working group – an expanded section on caste discrimination was included in the ISO26000 Corporate Social Responsibility standard. The following network sections will describe these and other main initiatives and developments in more detail.

### Dalit Solidarity Network UK (DSN-UK)

Over the past three years, DSN-UK and other UK Dalit organisations have continued to campaign for the inclusion of 'caste' as a discriminatory factor in the UK's Single Equalities Bill, because without legal provision against discrimination on the basis of caste, there is no recourse for the victims.

In 2010, over 20 national and community Dalit organisations representing over one million people in the UK came together with one voice and called on the Government to outlaw Caste Discrimination, in the same way as other forms of discrimination. Caste discrimination provisions were not in the original draft of the bill, and Hindu leaders had claimed that caste discrimination was not a problem in Britain despite substantial evidence to the contrary.

In February, an historic and unprecedented meeting took place at the House of Lords where DSN-UK was represented. As a result of this meeting, an amendment is now included in the Equality Act 2010 allowing for the introduction of secondary legislation as soon as evidence of caste discrimination was produced.

In December 2010, this evidence came when the government commissioned study on caste discrimination in the UK<sup>20</sup> was released by the National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR), finding evidence of caste discrimination in the UK in work, provision of services, education, and harassment and violence as a result of caste discrimination. Caste discrimination, found amongst the five percent of the British population with roots in the Indian sub-continent, was found to have extensive economic and social consequences for the victims.

The study recommendations are that the Government could tackle caste discrimination and harassment through extending anti-discrimination legislation to cover caste (i.e. using the power in the Equality Act 2010 to make caste an aspect of race) as well as through educative routes. The findings in this study and the issue of caste discrimination in the UK have generated a significant amount of media coverage in 2010 and DSN-UK has worked to gain coverage and provide input and interviews to interested journalists.

DSN-UK also engaged in many other awareness raising activities in the UK parliament including adjournment debates, Early Day Motions and Parliamentary Questions. A significant milestone was achieved in October 2010, with the formal registration of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Dalits. The secretariat for the group will be at DSN-UK with Director Meena Varma as the group's formal coordinator. DSN-UK will continue to press for action to be taken in terms of legislative measures to end caste discrimination in the UK, including the Government enactment of the clause on Caste contained in the Equality Act 2010.

DSN-UK's campaign 'Foul Play' – to end Manual Scavenging by October 2010, in solidarity with the Safai Karmachari Andolan's (SKA), became the focus of several activities before the Commonwealth Games (CWG) took place in Delhi.

The Commonwealth Foundation had awarded a small grant to PhotoVoice, a UK participatory photo organisation, in conjunction with DSN-UK and SKA to highlight the Foul Play campaign, to deliver a skills-based participatory photo training programme to SKA campaigners and former manual scavengers. This took place in February 2010 and the images may be used across the IDS N network and by SKA and PhotoVoice families as postcards, leaflets, newsletters and in exhibitions.

The campaign is ongoing since the completion of the Games in October 2010, when it became evident that in order to meet budgetary shortfalls for the Games, £38 Million earmarked specifically to aid the poorest in India was diverted to cover CWG related expenditures.

DSN-UK continues to support and contribute to the campaign of the Safai Karmachari Andolan (SKA), the Manual Scavengers Movement in India, and on an international level, calling for an end to manual scavenging. Meena Varma called for and chaired a meeting with a number of other NGOs on the release of the report 'Whose wealth? Whose Commons?' by the Housing and Land Rights Network-India.

DSN-UK lobbied for the issue being raised in the UK Parliament and parliamentary questions about the diversion of funds and the UK response to this were in fact asked.

Meena Varma also took part in a panel debate along with the Vice Chair of WaterAid, at the Channel 4 screening of 'The Worst Job in the World'. Media awareness of manual scavenging in the UK increased and during a visit to India, the UK Secretary of State for International Development, Mr Andrew Mitchell, met former manual scavengers in a village in Madhya Pradesh.

Raising awareness of caste discrimination on a general level was a significant element of the network's work and DSN-UK network member, One World Action, organised a photo exhibition<sup>21</sup>, a seminar on Dalit rights and the presentation of an award to the Dalit Women's Forum in Dhaka, in the UK. The exhibition was featured at the Department for International Development (DFID) in December. It was concluded with a seminar on 'Dalit Rights in Action', supported by DSN-UK. Moni Rani Das, Director of the Dalit Women's Forum in Dhaka, Bangladesh, gave a powerful presentation and DFID provided a video link with DFID in Bangladesh.

DSN-UK network member, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, also staged a groundbreaking photography exhibition entitled 'Being Untouchable' at a high profile gallery in central London. The exhibition presented a rare and intimate series of portraits of the lives of Indian Dalits.

Another important aspect of DSN-UKs work continued to be the work to end caste discrimination in the private sector. DSN-UK leads on the private sector work – increasingly through the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) to address caste discrimination in employment and with ETI member companies in the UK. Meena Varma was elected to the Board of the ETI in January 2010.

DSN-UK is the lead NGO of the ETI 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 for those working in stone quarries and the stone industry in general. The first full meeting of the ETI Stone Group took place with participation from both the UK and the Netherlands, who already have a well established working group on sustainable natural stone and are working on a European labelling proposal. The ETI Stone Group company members mostly quarry stone in Rajasthan where there are high incidences of bonded and forced labour – especially of children. Working through the Stone Group DSN-UK has introduced new southern partners who are experts on stone quarries as well as Dalit rights.

Caste discrimination has also been an issue that has hovered around the edges of the British churches for some time but has never been addressed in a focused manner. In 2010 a new group came together on the issue of justice for Dalits, that may become a 'Churches' Dalit Support Group'

and the second Sunday of December was designated Dalit Liberation Sunday by the UK Churches Group.

As part of the Executive Group of the International Dalit Solidarity Network, DSN-UK plays a key role in the lobbying, campaigning and decision-making activities of the work internationally. As a follow-up to IDS N's letter to Baroness Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative, along with key recommendations, DSN-UK circulated this information to the UK Secretaries of State and Ministers as well as key civil servants in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development (DFID). DSN-UK and its member One World Action, also sent a joint letter and petition to key MEPs dealing with India and South Asia issues asking for the issue of caste discrimination to be raised at all meetings with India and other caste-affected countries.

### Dalit Network Netherlands (DNN)

Lobbying politicians and working to end caste discrimination in the private sector were the two key focal points for the Dalit Network Netherlands in 2010.

DNN developed excellent contacts and held very constructive consultations, especially with the human rights department of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry has made the Dalit issue an even higher priority. A meeting was held in Copenhagen with five EU countries, as part of a Dutch – Danish initiative seeking to put caste-based discrimination firmly on the European agenda. The annual Human Rights Report of the Ministry had a number of references to the Dalit issue.

At the international level, the Dutch Foreign Minister at the time, Mr Maxime Verhagen, made a strong statement on caste discrimination at the 13th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva where he said that the Council's agenda needs to reflect discrimination on the basis of work and descent, from which approximately 260 million people in the world suffer.

In the Dutch Parliament, a series of questions on caste discrimination were triggered by the report 'Understanding Untouchability', published by the Indian Dalit rights NGO, Navsarjan, and the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights. This ground-breaking study confirms that caste discrimination is rife in modern India – and that the legal system is failing to address the issue. In his answers to the questions, the Dutch Foreign Minister stated that the Dutch Government is addressing caste discrimination in its bilateral dialogues with India and through EU channels noting that, "even though the rights of Dalits seem to be guaranteed on paper, the implementation at the local level is mostly lacking."



Dalits are particularly vulnerable to child labour. It adversely impacts their education and general welfare. The use of child labourers in cotton production in India, such as the young girl in this photo, is an issue that is a focal point of DNN network member, the India Committee of The Netherlands.

After the coming to power of a new right-wing government in the second half of 2010, DNN wrote letters to and followed up on contacts with the new Minister of Foreign Affairs (cc Economic Affairs) as well as the Parliament in the run-up to the Foreign Affairs (FA) budget session. In response to the letter to the Minister a high-level official stated that the Dutch government would continue to raise the Dalit issue, including – via the Ambedkar Principles and Dalit Discrimination Check – in the economic realm. The Dalit issue was also raised by two political parties in the FA budget session in Parliament. In line with one of the suggestions by DNN, a motion was tabled and accepted by the majority in Parliament on the EU-India Free Trade Agreement which is presently being negotiated. The Dalit issue was explicitly mentioned, including with a reference that the new EU-India FTA aim at “the improvement of the position of Dalits.”

Strengthening co-operation with Dutch MEPs of the European Parliament was also an important aspect of DNN work in 2010. A member of the delegation on India has made the Dalit issue and the child labour issue a priority in his work, and he raised the issue during the visit of the European Parliament’s Delegation to India. Questions were also raised about the policy of the European Commission regarding Dalits engaged in child labour after contact with DNN member, the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN), in follow up to a speech by EU High Representative Ashton during her visit to India, and finally in an urgency question on the EU-India FTA.

A very important achievement in the work to end caste discrimination in the private sector came when, through its participation in the ISO 26000 working group, ICN was able to keep and expand a section in the ISO 26000 standard in which discrimination on the basis of caste is specifically recognised and in which people discriminated on the basis of caste have been specifically mentioned.

The ISO 26000 Standard has been approved by 93% of all voting members of ISO, but unfortunately not by India. Nevertheless the impact of this worldwide norm on social responsibility, mentioning and calling for action against caste discrimination, will be significant and relevant for all organisations that operate in India and other caste-affected countries. Preparations for a study on Dalits in the Indian leather and leather apparel industry have also been started.

ICN was also invited to speak to the around 30 participants of a Dutch trade delegation to India. Caste-based discrimination was an important issue. Participants were also provided with further background documentation. DNN are also in touch with the Ministry of Economic Affairs on a developing co-operation between The Netherlands and India on CSR. The new Dutch folder on Dalits and

CSR, is available at the government agency informing companies on India. The Ambedkar Principles and the Dalit Discrimination Check are on their website.

DNN also produced a 24 page full colour booklet called ‘Untouchable?’ with a petition card for 11 signatures. Around 4,400 copies have been distributed to a range of individuals and organisations and sent to all members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Dutch Parliament as well as officials of several government departments. A few hundred additional signatures to the petition have also been received this year. The network furthermore produced the English leaflet ‘End caste discrimination – Support the Dalits’. Finally, in December 2010, work started on the Dutch version of the IDSN exhibition ‘We are not Untouchable – 260 million reasons to act’. In addition a small portable exhibition will also be made.

Throughout the year DNN also supported IDSN in international lobby activities, and the co-ordinator of DNN has been re-elected to the Executive Group of IDSN but is no longer serving as co-chair.

#### **Dalit Solidarity Network – Denmark (DSN-DK)**

The main focus of the Danish Network has been on contacts and exchanging information with the Government, officials and parliamentarians, with the purpose of maintaining and enhancing the Danish Government emphasis on the fight against caste discrimination in its international relations. Denmark continues to be in the forefront of countries fighting against caste discrimination and has actively supported the issue in EU and UN contexts.

At a meeting with a delegation of Dalit leaders, the Minister for Development Cooperation, Søren Pind, confirmed that caste discrimination is an important issue for Denmark, and that the Government will continue to support the rights of Dalits in international fora as well as in development assistance.

A number of meetings were held with parliamentarians, and a member of the Parliament’s foreign affairs committee, Kirsten Brosbøll, raised two questions to the Minister of Foreign Affairs concerning Denmark’s prioritising of the issue of caste discrimination. In her reply, the Minister affirms that Denmark considers caste discrimination a serious issue and promotes international action through the UN and EU as well as in bilateral cooperation with caste affected countries.

During an official visit to India, the Foreign Minister, Lene Espersen, brought up the question of caste discrimination in her talks with the Indian Foreign Minister, Somanahalli Malliah Krishna. She furthermore highlighted caste discrimination as an issue to be addressed in Danish-Indian



business cooperation during her interactions with corporate representatives from both countries.

DSN-DK maintained a continued and fruitful dialogue with Danish officials and diplomats and widely distributed the IDSN letter sent to EU High Representative Catherine Ashton, which prompted a positive response from a number of national and European Parliamentarians. Denmark has maintained a high profile on the caste issue in the EU and in UN fora, as well as in development cooperation with Nepal.

In connection with the presentation of the new Danish strategy for development assistance, DSN-DK submitted a hearing statement which stressed the importance of a specific focus on Dalit human rights within the group of marginalised populations.

DSN-DK has also engaged in ad hoc communication with private companies and CSR actors, and has provided input to a number of researchers and journalists on caste discrimination.

There are indications of an increasing level of awareness of caste discrimination, demonstrated in a growing number of journalists, researchers and students contacting DSN-DK for assistance with information and contacts in caste-affected countries. Likewise, certain sections of the business

community now recognise the need to include caste discrimination as an aspect of their CSR policies.

Several media articles on caste discrimination have been published, some with a focus on caste discrimination as a barrier for reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

The outdated DSN-DK website was re-designed by intern Tina Søndergård Madsen. The new site gives better options for publishing news stories and other key information, such as research papers and submissions made by DSN-DK.

#### **Dalit Solidarität in Deutschland – Germany (DSiD)**

In 2010, the Dalit Solidarity network in Germany (DSiD), worked on a political, cultural and social level to end caste discrimination and urge German politicians and civilians to support Dalits in their struggle.

DSiD worked to mobilise the German Government to take action on the UN Principles and Guidelines (UN P&Gs). They spoke to senior officials at the Office of the Chancellor and the South Asia Division and held meetings with other staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and members of the Human Rights Committee of the German Parliament. The IDSN Coordinator and Manjula Pradeep (IDSN Executive Group member) attended these meetings.





The idea of having a hearing within the German Parliament on the situation of human rights in India, with a particular emphasis on the situation of Dalits, was explored and is currently being debated among three members of the Human Rights Committee of the Parliament. A member of the CDU (Conservatives) has meanwhile launched a request ("Kleine Anfrage") to the German Government, regarding its activities to address the issue of caste discrimination including in its dialogue with the Government of India.

The Ministry for Development Cooperation invited civil society organisations to discuss the ministry's country-paper on India on two occasions. As is usual practice, following consultations between the two Governments, the common strategy paper was adopted. It was, however, felt by DSiD that the document had lost some very important references to caste discrimination during the consultation process; topics still remaining include areas related to addressing economic rights of the Dalits.

The DSiD-coordinator also related to the India- and South-Asia Desk-officers of the APRODEV resource organisations in order to explore how the communication in these organisations and their regional offices about their involvement in the Dalit related issues, particularly in India and Bangladesh, could be improved.

The German network furthermore worked to support the Safai Karmachari Andolan (SKA) campaign to end Manual Scavenging in India. In co-operation with a DSiD member-organisation, DSiD produced a photo-exhibition on the manual scavengers, sewage-workers and sweepers of Mumbai. The photos, taken by an Indian photographer, are accompanied by a leaflet for the visitors of the exhibition, in which the plight of the Dalits in India and the aims of DSiD and IDS N are outlined. This travelling exhibition will be offered to groups and schools all over Germany. DSiD also took steps towards a signature campaign in Germany on manual scavenging.

To influence the private sector to incorporate measures to combat caste discrimination into Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies DSiD held meetings with German companies and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

The network also took part in arranging a racism exposure tour in northern Germany where Paul Divakar from the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights – India (NCDHR) took part as an expert. Professor Sukhadeo Thorat, an expert on Dalit issues, was also invited to address about 200 scholars from all over the world, participating in the "European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies."

Intercaste marriage is often perceived as a sin in Nepal. Following years of attacks by Manisha's non-Dalit family, Jakhondra and Manisha did the unthinkable and ran away and got married. Manisha's family has rejected her, but they were lucky. Young 'mixed caste' couples sometimes pay with their lives as non-Dalit families can resort to murder to avoid 'pollution' of their family. Their story and photo, along with seven other photos of Dalits in South Asia, were featured in a ten page article on caste discrimination in South Asia, written by DSNFI's Press Officer Kaisa Raittila and featured in a leading Finnish magazine.

DSiD furthermore took part in organising a seminar in Bad Boll, India, on the topic, "The exodus of the 'Broken People' – The religions in India and the Liberation of Dalits," to explore the opportunities available for Dalits in the many religions in India. The outcome will be published in a small booklet. DSiD also developed and presented a role play at the Ecumenical Kirchentag (Church Convention) in Germany. Here visitors were invited to visit an "Indian Village" in pairs – one as a Dalit and the other as an upper caste person. They were treated differently due to their caste status and many visitors were shocked about the effect of caste discrimination and asked if this really still existed.

DSiD took part in a "National Ecumenical Conference on Justice for Dalits," organised by the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) in co-operation with the World Council of Churches (WCC) held in Delhi and also engaged in a number of India based initiatives including the Campaign for Electoral Reforms in India (CERI), the National Dalit Election Watch Campaign (NDEW), and a campaign on land rights for Dalits.

DSiD also engaged in an activity under the Kyoto agreement 'Clean Development Mechanism' concerning plans to provide 60,000 Dalit houses with solar panels, batteries and bulbs with a view to save money and carbon emissions. The respective credits will then be sold to get the required funding for the scheme. This scheme has also proved a good way to raise awareness of the Dalit issue – showing how even the poorest of the poor are prepared to do something to prevent global warming. Finally, DSiD supported an initiative with street sweepers in Hyderabad who formed a cooperative and engaged themselves in Solid Waste Management in cooperation with the municipality and companies, and plan to build their own business.

In order to further engage DSiD's member in the work of the network relations with some members who were in the process of revising their India programme and make it more 'Dalit sensitive', were intensified. The DSiD Coordinator will continue to be involved in this process. The German Dalit Freedom Network (DFN-Germany) also joined DSiD as an observing member and possibilities to work together will be further explored in the coming year.

#### **Solidarité Dalits Belgique – Belgium (SDB)**

During the year 2010, Solidarité Dalits Belgique (SDB) has participated in several IDS N activities and developed its own initiatives. It has also responded to requests by national level press, some of which were facilitated through IDS N.

Contacts have been established and consolidated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Belgian members involved in EU COHOM meetings, particularly during the Belgian presidency of the EU during the last six months

of the year. Several letters have also been sent to Belgian politicians and MEPs, requesting them to take up the issue of Dalit discrimination in their respective tasks.

At the occasion of the Asia-Europe Meeting in early October in Brussels, SDB was involved in co-organising and coordinating a workshop highlighting the particular situation of manual scavengers in South Asia. In close cooperation with the IDS N Secretariat and member organisations, this workshop presented an opportunity for Dalits from South Asia to express their concerns to European and Asian members of civil society present at the Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF).

2010 has also seen three new issues of SDB's electronic magazine "Flash Dalit", the only regular update on Dalit issues in French. SDB has stressed the international character of the Dalit issue, focused its attention on the specific situation of tea plantation workers in Sri Lanka and analysed the discrimination and plight of manual scavengers in India. This publication will in future now also be made available on the IDS N website – for a wider French speaking audience.

#### **Dalit Solidarity Network in Finland (DSNFI)**

DSNFI was officially formed as a solidarity network in May 2010 after being welcomed at the IDS N council meeting in Geneva in March. The network has spent much of the year strategising, drawing in members and establishing itself.

Tentative bylaws for the association were established and a board of five members elected of whom Mikko Malkavaara was elected as chairperson. The board nominated Tiinamari Mällinen as secretary, Anu Vasamies-Hackenbruch as treasurer, Kaisa Raittila as press officer and responsible for awareness-raising and Timo Lappalainen as responsible for political advocacy work. The network's emphasis will be on advocacy work and on awareness-raising.

DSNFI has supported IDS N in contacting and sending a letter to EU high representative Catherine Ashton with own recommendations to Finnish MEPs, especially Heidi Hautala, chairwoman of European Parliament subcommittee on Human Rights, and the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The network has continued its work giving presentations on Dalit issues and has published news and newspaper material especially through social media. The leading Finnish magazine Suomen Kuvalehti published Kaisa Raittila's 10-page reportage on Dalits with photos by Jakob Carlsen.

In December Timo Lappalainen came to Copenhagen to meet with IDS N secretariat staff where he presented DSNFI's advocacy plan and discussed possibilities for action and further support to IDS N's lobby work. The network has come off to a blazing start and is already a great asset to IDS N.



## Organisation, administration and finance

### Council

IDSN held its 8th Council meeting on 9-10 March in Geneva, bringing together 33 members, associates and resource persons to review IDSN's work and strategies and plan for future interventions. Key concerns included the slow process of gaining momentum for the final adoption of the UN Principles and Guidelines for the Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent, as well as possible effects of the looming funding crisis for IDSN. With reservations for funding availability, a key decision made was the scheduling of an international consultation on best practises to combat caste discrimination to be held towards the end of 2011 in Nepal.

The Council adopted new bylaws to secure Dalit women representation in its governing structures at all times. The Council also welcomed new associates, Feminist Dalit Organisation-Nepal (FEDO), NACDOR-India and National Federation of Dalit Women-India (NFDW) and decided to extend invitations to India-based Navsarjan Trust and People's Watch-Tamil Nadu for association.

In connection with the Council meeting, IDSN celebrated its ten years of existence as a network. Many of the people who attended the Council meeting were part of the group that in the year 2000 initiated IDSN as an informal network, which was formally registered in 2003. A statement by South African human rights campaigner and Nobel Prize laureate Desmond Tutu reiterating his support for the Dalit struggle and calling on India to endorse international efforts to end the practice of 'untouchability', was a great encouragement.

### Executive group

The Executive Group met on 8 March in Geneva and again on 9 September in Copenhagen, on which occasion IDSN hosted a 10th anniversary reception with participation of diplomats, ministry officials and human rights and development actors. IDSN leadership also met with the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation, Søren Pind, along with senior officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Minister confirmed the Danish Government's commitment to support the Dalit struggle through international cooperation as well as national level interventions.

### ECOSOC

At the UN NGO Committee's session held in New York in January, IDSN defended its application for ECOSOC consultative status which has been pending since 2007. As the only government in the Committee blocking the

#### The current members of the Executive Group are:

##### Manjula Pradeep

Navsarjan Trust, India – Co-convenor

##### Meena Varma

Dalit Solidarity Network, UK – Co-convenor

##### Durga Sob

Feminist Dalit Organisation, Nepal

##### Vijay Parmar

National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, India

##### Gerard Oonk

Dalit Network Netherlands

##### Bijo Francis

Asian Human Rights Commission, Hong Kong

##### Rikke Nöhrind

IDSN, Ex-officio member

way for IDSN's ECOSOC status, India again raised a series of questions, which were answered on the podium by the IDSN coordinator and immediately thereafter also in writing. At the Committee's June session, India also raised a set of questions many of which had been answered before. The total number of questions posed to IDSN now amount to 48. The application has been acknowledged by the secretariat of the Committee as complying fully with the criteria and procedures and IDSN has carefully provided answers to all questions raised.

IDSN will continue to approach the NGO Committee, set up to enable NGO contribution to the work of the United Nations' core objectives of securing human rights and development, raising its concern that one country can effectively block an NGO application without reasonable grounds.

The coordinator's participation in the NGO Committee in New York in January also offered the opportunity to meet with US based organisations, including the Soros Foundation and Human Rights Watch.

### Office

In March, IDSN moved to new offices at Fælledvej 12, Copenhagen, at premises leased from MS/Action Aid, also a member of DSN-DK. The move entails complete independence from the hosting organisation; the setting up of our own new IT, financial and other administrative

**"We are not fighting against the Indian Government; we are fighting for our rights."**

Manjula Pradeep, Director, Navsarjan Trust

systems, as well as purchase of office equipment and furniture. The systems and files can be accessed from anywhere in the world and generally these on-line solutions are working well. Moving offices has increased the administrative costs of IDSN in 2010 for purchases and initial establishing of systems. The move also adds slightly to the administrative tasks and requirements of the secretariat, however, it has increased the office space and number of working desks, which will allow us to have more volunteers and interns.

### Staff

Gitte Dyrhagen, UN Programme Officer, went on maternity leave in April and will return to IDSN in March 2011. Due to budgetary constraints, IDSN had no official replacement for the UN programme officer until Maria Brink Schleimann, Communication Officer, returned from her maternity leave in mid-October. Kim Wiesener, who has been with IDSN since September 2009, has covered as Communications Officer and since April partly also as UN officer. Volunteer Nikita Junagade finished her internship with IDSN in June. She has been a great help in upgrading the website and preparing issue papers.

Most staff travel in connection with lobby and networking, and lobby interventions usually also involve IDSN members or associates from South Asia. The coordinator undertook extensive travelling during the year with lobby visits to Brussels (4), Geneva (3), Berlin (1), country visits to Bangladesh and Nepal, in addition to the aforementioned trip to New York.

### Finances, fundraising and perspectives for 2011-2013

The year opened with a bleak outlook on the funding situation without full financial coverage for the core programme. A minimum budget, which did not include a replacement for the UN programme officer during her maternity leave and meant significant reductions under the programme activities, was applied.

IDSN's fundraising efforts paid off towards the end of the year, when contracts were signed with FinnChurchAid (2010-2012), Open Society Institute (2010-2011) and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2010), all of whom are committed to working for Dalit issues at different levels. The relations thus provide opportunities for broader and long term cooperation. We are grateful for the support of these three new donors, which allowed us to get the much needed maternity leave cover for the latter part of the UN Programme Officer's maternity leave and to carry out UN programme activities at the desired level with participation of Dalits in key events.

Longstanding valued partnerships with DanChurchAid, Danida, ICCO, CCFD and Cordaid continued in 2010 with contributions and engagements that went beyond the financial support. At the time of writing, ICCO, Danida, FinnChurchAid, CCFD and DanChurchAid have pledged continued support in 2011.

In December, a grant application to the European Commission was approved for the project "Ending 'untouchability': European action to eliminate caste discrimination" starting January 2011, which will be an important contribution to IDSN's financial sustainability over the next three years. The project, granted under the call for "Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development: Coordination, cooperation and networking activities among European organisations," offers excellent opportunities for strengthening IDSN European level work and also provides the basis for an International Consultation on strategies and good practices to eliminate caste discrimination in 2011. DanChurchAid engaged as the co-financing partner for the EU project.

Thus IDSN enters 2011 with a better perspective for the financial situation than in 2010, although the level of commitment from donors does not yet provide full coverage for the operational budget. We are extremely grateful for the contributions by all donor agencies and for their tireless efforts to secure both financial support and political space to pursue the joint cause to end caste discrimination.

The perspectives for the coming years are exciting as well as demanding. IDSN is already covering considerable ground within its current programmes and an ever increasing engagement with multiple actors. The challenges for the network relate not only to its ability to deliver on its political objectives and secure continued progress in its work for an effective UN framework for elimination of caste discrimination but also simultaneously to enhance capacity and activities in other areas in order, for example, to contribute even more effectively to human rights and development dialogues in affected countries as a collective and to increase awareness of the issue more generally.

Project provisions for the next years allow for implementation of new and long desired important projects, such as the above mentioned international consultation, production of a new introductory video on caste discrimination, as well as enhanced engagement by the IDSN secretariat and the Dalit Solidarity Networks in Europe with decision makers and the public.

We are hopeful that many more allies will join us in the cause in the coming years.



## Financial statements 2010

|  | DKK  | EURO | DKK  |
|--|------|------|------|
|  | 2010 | 2010 | 2009 |

## Profit and loss

|                                    |              |            |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Opening balance                    | 267,324.84   | 35,861.83  | 1,814,078.68 |
| Income                             |              |            |              |
| DanChurchAid                       | 252,909.13   | 33,927.95  | 187,501.09   |
| DanChurchAid (received for DSN-DK) | 147,090.87   | 19,732.35  | 152,498.91   |
| Membership fees recd. for DSN-DK   | 8,000.00     | 1,073.21   | 13,600.00    |
| Danida                             | 1,000,000.00 | 134,150.76 | 700,000.00   |
| Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs  | 260,477.00   | 34,943.19  | 0            |
| CCFD                               | 163,444.60   | 21,926.22  | 163,592.00   |
| ICCO                               | 892,656.00   | 119,750.48 | 0            |
| Cordaaid                           | 743,377.60   | 99,724.67  | 743,346.00   |
| FinnChurchAid                      | 148,754.00   | 19,955.46  | 0            |
| Open Society Institute             | 218,044.00   | 29,250.77  | 0            |
| Christian Aid                      | 0            | 0          | 77,976.95    |
| European Commission                | 1,139,410.56 | 152,852.79 | 0            |
| Other Income                       | 4,100.01     | 550.02     | 0            |
| Interest                           | 1,196.45     | 160.50     | 5,948.76     |
| Total                              | 4,979,460.22 | 667,998.37 | 2,044,463.71 |
| Expenditure                        | 3,158,918.61 | 423,771.33 | 3,591,217.55 |
| Balance                            | 2,087,866.45 | 280,088.87 | 267,324.84   |

## Balance statement

| Assets                          |              |            |             |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Cash at bank at 31.12 *         | 2,245,543.10 | 301,241.31 | 540,008.95  |
| Rent deposit                    | 24,000.00    | 3,219.62   | 0           |
| Petty cash                      | 5,792.54     | 777.07     | 5,681.57    |
| Outstanding accounts            | 70,777.15    | 9,494.81   | 19,551.24   |
|                                 | 2,346,112.79 | 314,732.81 | 565,241.76  |
| Liabilities                     |              |            |             |
| Balance Master Card account     | 0            | 0          | -8,493.80   |
| Compulsory holiday payment fund | -250,506.60  | -33,605.65 | -215,292.63 |
| Outstanding accounts            | -7,739.74    | -1,038.29  | -74,130.49  |
|                                 | -258,246.34  | -34,643.94 | -297,916.92 |
| Balance carried forward         | 2,087,866.45 | 280,088.87 | 267,324.84  |

The financial statements are presented in Danish kroner.

For reasons of comparison, amounts in Euro are presented, using a fixed exchange rate as of 31.12.2010: 7.4543

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

| * Cash at bank include                                   | DKK          |
|--|--------------|
| European Commission project grant for 2011               | 1,139,410.56 |
| Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs grant recd. 27-12-2010 | 260,477.00   |
| ICCO grant for use in 2011-12                            | 521,101.00   |
| Released earmarked funds from closed PS project          | 173,477.00   |
| DSN-DK membership fees                                   | 17,724.00    |
|  | 2,112,189.56 |

## Expenditure 2010

|  | Budget | Expenditure | Budget | Expenditure |
|--|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|
|  | DKK    | DKK         | EUR    | EUR         |
|  | 2010   | 2010        | 2010   | 2010        |

## Networking and Coordination

## General staff expenses

|                                       |         |         |         |         |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Staff training                        | 5,000   | 13,256  | 671     | 1,778   |
| Insurance                             | 7,000   | 12,463  | 939     | 1,672   |
| Other staff expenses                  | 10,000  | 9,436   | 1,342   | 1,266   |
| Holiday allowance                     | 0       | 36,362  | 0       | 4,878   |
| Communications officer                | 568,000 | 501,471 | 76,198  | 67,273  |
| Finance officer                       | 75,000  | 61,618  | 10,061  | 8,266   |
| Maternity leave payment for CO and PO | 120,000 | 132,998 | 16,098  | 17,842  |
|                                       | 785,000 | 767,605 | 105,308 | 102,975 |

## Office costs

|                         |         |         |        |        |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| Rent                    | 133,200 | 109,236 | 17,869 | 14,654 |
| Office supplies         | 15,000  | 6,989   | 2,012  | 938    |
| Postage and freight     | 10,500  | 7,502   | 1,409  | 1,006  |
| Hospitality expenses    | 3,000   | 5,802   | 402    | 778    |
| Communication           | 30,000  | 14,132  | 4,025  | 1,896  |
| Materials/memberships   | 2,000   | 1,419   | 268    | 190    |
| Equipment               | 10,000  | 9,593   | 1,342  | 1,287  |
| Office cleaning         | 13,750  | 16,000  | 1,845  | 2,146  |
| Salaries administration | 6,336   | 7,458   | 850    | 1,001  |
| Moving expenses         | 33,000  | 37,254  | 4,427  | 4,998  |
| Audit                   | 17,750  | 22,750  | 2,381  | 3,052  |
|                         | 274,536 | 238,134 | 36,829 | 31,946 |

## Information Technology

|                              |         |         |        |        |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| Website                      | 8,497   | 11,583  | 1,140  | 1,554  |
| Tech. Assistance website     | 35,000  | 35,000  | 4,695  | 4,695  |
| Norriq Netpartner IT servers | 55,000  | 50,469  | 7,378  | 6,770  |
| MS IT service                | 32,523  | 23,657  | 4,363  | 3,174  |
| Software license             | 20,987  | 23,874  | 2,815  | 3,203  |
|                              | 152,007 | 144,583 | 20,392 | 19,396 |

## Publicity and publications

|                               |        |        |       |       |
|-------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| Publicity and publications    | 42,350 | 49,944 | 5,681 | 6,700 |
| Bank                          | 12,300 | 12,131 | 1,650 | 1,627 |
| Travelling                    | 28,000 | 30,528 | 3,756 | 4,095 |
| Campaign and activity support | 0      | 1,126  | 0     | 151   |

## Governing bodies

|   |           |           |         |         |
|---|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Executive group meetings, travel        | 50,000    | 25,083    | 6,708   | 3,365   |
| Executive group meetings, venue/lodging | 15,000    | 25,414    | 2,012   | 3,409   |
| Council meetings, travel                | 65,000    | 65,032    | 8,720   | 8,724   |
| Council meetings, venue/lodging         | 90,290    | 90,212    | 12,112  | 12,102  |
|   | 220,290   | 205,741   | 29,552  | 27,600  |
| Programme management and implementation | 385,516   | 409,101   | 51,717  | 54,881  |
| Total Networking and Coordination       | 1,899,999 | 1,858,893 | 254,886 | 249,372 |

|  | Budget | Expenditure | Budget | Expenditure |
|--|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|
|  | DKK    | DKK         | EUR    | EUR         |
|  | 2010   | 2010        | 2010   | 2010        |

## UN Programme

## UN Human Rights Council

|   |         |         |        |        |
|---|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| Interventions at Council sessions             |         |         |        |        |
| Travel, affected country reps                 | 18,000  | 21,747  | 2,415  | 2,917  |
| Travel, secretariat                           | 17,000  | 18,293  | 2,281  | 2,454  |
| Food  | 10,000  | 13,041  | 1,342  | 1,749  |
| Accommodation                                 | 30,000  | 24,388  | 4,025  | 3,272  |
|   | 75,000  | 77,469  | 10,061 | 10,393 |
| Operationalisation of principles & guidelines | 20,000  | 0       | 2,683  | 0      |
| Special Procedures                            |         |         |        |        |
| International travel                          | 9,000   | 10,659  | 1,207  | 1,430  |
| Accommodation                                 | 4,000   | 8,594   | 537    | 1,153  |
| Food/consumption                              | 5,000   | 2,841   | 671    | 381    |
|   | 18,000  | 22,094  | 2,415  | 2,964  |
| UN Treaty Bodies                              |         |         |        |        |
| Travel, affected country reps                 | 9,000   | 0       | 1,207  | 0      |
| Travel, secretariat                           | 2,000   | 0       | 268    | 0      |
| Food  | 3,000   | 0       | 402    | 0      |
| Accommodation                                 | 4,000   | 0       | 537    | 0      |
|   | 18,000  | 0       | 2,415  | 0      |
| ECOSOC application                            | 13,994  | 13,994  | 1,877  | 1,877  |
| Programme management and implementation       | 353,583 | 415,979 | 47,433 | 55,804 |
| Total UN Programme                            | 498,577 | 529,536 | 66,884 | 71,038 |

## EU Programme

## Lobby interventions

|   |         |         |        |        |
|---|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| Travel, affected country reps           | 8,000   | 7,445   | 1,073  | 999    |
| Travel, secretariat                     | 8,000   | 15,880  | 1,073  | 2,130  |
| Food                                    | 11,000  | 5,879   | 1,476  | 789    |
| Accommodation                           | 15,000  | 8,327   | 2,012  | 1,117  |
|   | 42,000  | 37,530  | 5,634  | 5,035  |
| Programme management and implementation | 369,964 | 394,130 | 49,631 | 52,873 |
| Total EU Programme                      | 411,964 | 431,661 | 55,265 | 57,908 |

## Private Sector Programme

## Training/consultancies

|   |         |         |        |        |
|---|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| Travel                                    | 10,000  | 1,096   | 1,342  | 147    |
| Subtotal                                  | 10,000  | 1,096   | 1,342  | 147    |
| Programme management and implementation   | 120,236 | 121,801 | 16,130 | 16,340 |
| Total Private Sector                      | 130,236 | 122,897 | 17,471 | 16,487 |
| Transfer to Danida from closed PS project |         | 68,842  |        | 9,235  |

## Summary expenditure

|   |           |           |         |         |
|---|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Networking and Coordination               | 1,899,999 | 1,858,893 | 254,886 | 249,372 |
| UN Programme                              | 498,577   | 529,536   | 66,884  | 71,038  |
| EU Programme                              | 411,964   | 431,661   | 55,265  | 57,908  |
| Private Sector Programme                  | 130,236   | 122,897   | 17,471  | 16,487  |
| Transfer to Danida from closed PS project |           | 68,842    |         | 9,235   |
| Total IDSN programmes                     | 2,940,776 | 3,011,828 | 394,507 | 404,039 |

## DSN-DK (funded by DanChurchAid)

|   |           |           |         |         |
|---|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Programme management and implementation | 145,495   | 147,091   | 19,518  | 19,732  |
| Grand total                             | 3,086,271 | 3,158,919 | 414,026 | 423,771 |



## Endnotes

- 1) Draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent: <http://goo.gl/fSs4Z>
- 2) IDSN Briefing Paper on Caste Discrimination in Humanitarian Assistance – The Case of Pakistan: <http://goo.gl/2Xdp7>
- 3) Briefing paper and recommendations on the situation of Dalits in Bangladesh: <http://goo.gl/7byE4>
- 4) IDSN position paper on Caste/Race: <http://goo.gl/G7Er6>
- 5) See note 3
- 6) IDSN's compilation of UN Special Procedures Referencenes to caste discrimination: <http://goo.gl/hfrVO>
- 7) IDSN's comprehensive overview of UN treaty body recommendations on caste discrimination (1996-2010): <http://goo.gl/LHpXX>
- 8) IDSN draft of EU Policy Framework for the Elimination of Caste Discrimination: <http://goo.gl/xAKMX>
- 9) A study requested by the European Parliament's Development Committee, was conducted in 2010 to address the anti-discrimination policies of the EC development cooperation: <http://goo.gl/VLV2K>
- 10) Urgent request to include data on citizens discriminated against on the basis of Work and Descent – Bangladesh Census: <http://goo.gl/8DIQD>
- 11) Analysis by India CSR: <http://goo.gl/nDC5t>
- 12) Ambedkar Principles: <http://goo.gl/KdqVn>
- 13) The Dalit Discrimination Check: <http://goo.gl/ejpkR>
- 14) IDSN Statement – Speak Up! Stop Caste Discrimination: <http://goo.gl/hJ9eX>
- 15) Samata Foundation Conference in Nepal - Concluding Remarks: <http://goo.gl/XXjDO>
- 16) See note 10
- 17) UN P&Gs Special Measures – Disaster and Development: <http://goo.gl/S0mLK>
- 18) IDSNs ten minimum requirements for disaster mitigation, relief and rehabilitation assistance: <http://goo.gl/yynnAA>
- 19) See note 2
- 20) The NIESR study on caste discrimination in the UK: <http://goo.gl/VzWul>
- 21) The OWA photo exhibition is available here: <http://goo.gl/hDmWx>

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## List of Abbreviations

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>AEPF</b>      | Asia Europe People's Forum   |
| <b>AI</b>        | Amnesty International  |
| <b>AP</b>        | Ambedkar Principles  |
| <b>ASEM</b>      | Asia-Europe Meeting  |
| <b>AHRC</b>      | Asian Human Rights Commission  |
| <b>ALRC</b>      | Asian Legal Resource Centre  |
| <b>BDERM</b>     | Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement  |
| <b>CA</b>        | Constituent Assembly   |
| <b>CCFD</b>      | Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement (UN) Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination |
| <b>CERD</b>      | Campaign for Electoral Reforms in India  |
| <b>CERI</b>      | (UN) Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights   |
| <b>CESCR</b>     | Center for Human Rights and Global Justice   |
| <b>CHRGJ</b>     | Confederation of Indian Industry   |
| <b>CII</b>       | (EU) Working Party on Human Rights   |
| <b>COHOM</b>     | Corporate Social Responsibility  |
| <b>CSR</b>       | Danish International Development Agency  |
| <b>DANIDA</b>    | Dalit Discrimination Check   |
| <b>DDC</b>       | (EP) Committee on Development  |
| <b>DEVE</b>      | (UK) Department for International Development  |
| <b>DFID</b>      | Dalit NGO Federation   |
| <b>DNF</b>       | Dalit Network Netherlands  |
| <b>DNN</b>       | Dalit Solidarität in Deutschland   |
| <b>DSID</b>      | Dalit Solidarity Network   |
| <b>DSN</b>       | Dalit Solidarity Network Denmark   |
| <b>DSN-DK</b>    | Dalit Solidarity Network Finland   |
| <b>DSN-FI</b>    | Dalit Solidarity Network UK  |
| <b>DSN-UK</b>    | (EU) European Commission   |
| <b>EC</b>        | (UN) Economic and Social Council   |
| <b>ECOSOC</b>    | (EU) European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department   |
| <b>ECHO</b>      | (EU) European External Action Service  |
| <b>EEAS</b>      | Executive Group  |
| <b>EG</b>        | (EU) European Parliament   |
| <b>EP</b>        | Ethical Trading Initiatives  |
| <b>ETI</b>       | European Union   |
| <b>EU</b>        | EU Development Agency  |
| <b>EuropeAid</b> | Feminist Dalit Organization  |
| <b>FEDO</b>      | Free Trade Agreement   |
| <b>FTA</b>       | (UN) Human Rights Council  |
| <b>HRC</b>       | Human Rights Watch   |
| <b>HRW</b>       | Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation   |
| <b>ICCO</b>      | International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination   |
| <b>ICERD</b>     | International Dalit Solidarity Network   |
| <b>IDSN</b>      | International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism  |
| <b>IMADR</b>     | International Organisation for Standardisation   |
| <b>ISO</b>       | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender   |
| <b>LGBT</b>      | Lutheran World Federation  |
| <b>LWF</b>       | (EU) Member of European Parliament   |
| <b>MEP</b>       | Member of Legislative Assembly   |
| <b>MLA</b>       | National Conference of Dalit Organisations   |
| <b>NACDOR</b>    | National Council of Churches in India  |
| <b>NCCI</b>      | National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights  |
| <b>NCDHR</b>     | National Dalit Commission  |
| <b>NDC</b>       | National Dalit Election Watch  |
| <b>NDEW</b>      | National Dalit Watch   |
| <b>NDW</b>       | National Federation of Dalit Women   |
| <b>NFDW</b>      | Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization   |
| <b>NNDSWO</b>    | (UN) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  |
| <b>OHCHR</b>     | One World Action   |
| <b>OWA</b>       | Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network  |
| <b>PDSN</b>      | Public Interest Litigation   |
| <b>PIL</b>       | Pakistan Institute of Labour Research  |
| <b>PILER</b>     | Scheduled Castes   |
| <b>SC</b>        | Special Component Plan   |
| <b>SCP</b>       | Solidarité Dalits Belgium  |
| <b>SDB</b>       | Safai Karmachari Andolan   |
| <b>SKA</b>       | Thardeep Rural Development Programme   |
| <b>TDRP</b>      | United Nations   |
| <b>UN</b>        | United Nations Population Fund   |
| <b>UNFPA</b>     | UN High Commissioner for Human Rights  |
| <b>UNHCHR</b>    | (UN) Universal Periodic Review   |
| <b>UPR</b>       | World Council of Churches  |
| <b>WCC</b>       | Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN  |
| <b>WGHR</b>      |  |

## Appendix



IDSN celebrated its 10th anniversary in Geneva in March 2010. Pictured are network members, associates and staff who were present. The IDSN Coordinator stresses that, "IDSN can only make progress and reach new milestones through the commitment, interaction and contributions of all network members and associates."

## Ten years of Dalit solidarity

Extracts from speeches made by IDSN Coordinator Rikke Nöhrind on the occasion of IDSN's tenth anniversary in 2010.

In March 2000, a small group of people from human rights and development organisations got together in London with Dalit leaders from India to discuss ways of internationalising the struggle against caste discrimination.

A few years earlier, a new and remarkable platform in India, the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights had formed. It insisted on internationalising the Dalit human rights cause. The in-depth research report on caste discrimination in India, 'Broken People', authored by Smita Narula, had been published by Human Rights Watch. Dalit solidarity networks were emerging, and development agencies were becoming aware of the issue.

We had a burning platform then – the unbearable discrimination and exclusion of Dalits, and the gross human rights violations committed against them – and a conviction that caste discrimination should not remain hidden and unaddressed. This was the solid foundation and the commitment upon which IDSN was established – first as an informal network, later as an international NGO.

Since 2000 we have been building and adding bricks to our advocacy efforts, meant to be stepping stones to eventually "tear down the wall of caste" – to quote UN High Commissioner Navi Pillay. So many different people have been involved in the cause over the years and contributed so much. Many from the early days are still with us – with their commitment, ideas and hard work. New friends and committed activists have joined – in the early days from Nepal and Sri Lanka, and later from Pakistan and Bangladesh, as well as European countries.

At times we have felt like a family, an extended community, and we still do. We share a history and moments remembered so vividly, including late hours in conference rooms with most of us sleeping – sitting on the floor with our backs against the wall, waiting for the breakthrough.

From that meeting in March 2000 till today much has happened, and I can truly say that we have achieved a lot:

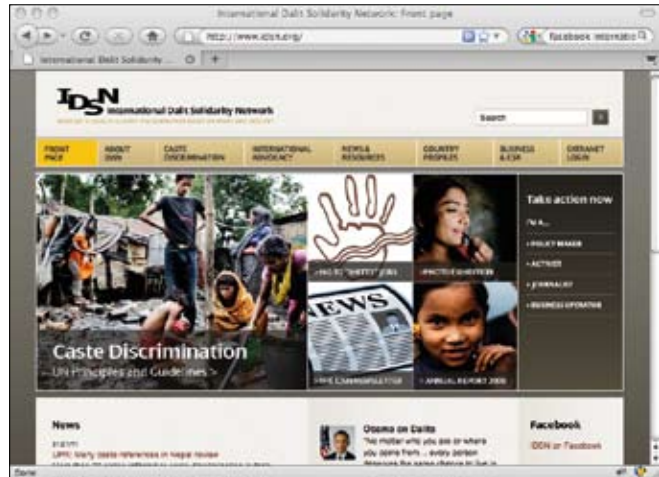
- Caste discrimination has been recognised as a human rights issue by the international community and UN human rights bodies. Before 2000, there were hardly any references to this issue in the UN; now it is an issue of critical concern to most of the UN human rights treaty bodies and UN Special Procedures.
- IDSN has been instrumental in a process which has led to the draft "UN Principles and Guidelines", the first UN framework to address caste discrimination in a comprehensive manner.
- As IDSN, we have organised or co-organised countless hearings, consultations, briefings and side-events in many places: Geneva, Brussels, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.
- Collectively, the network has produced a huge amount of documentation on numerous aspects of caste discrimination – from practices of 'untouchability', the non-enforcement of laws to protect Dalits, to diversion of Dalit development budgets to the Commonwealth Games in India.
- IDSN has also developed a website, which we are quite proud of, as it is the most comprehensive online resource on caste discrimination. The website – along with our monthly newsletter – is serving a large number of Dalit activists, decision makers, media, and researchers.
- Engagement with the European Union institutions and key member states has led to an increased commitment by the EU to pursue the issue at different levels.
- A major success and a huge encouragement to the Dalit movement was the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' strong public stance on caste discrimination expressed in an opinion piece published in 2009.
- Leadership and engagement by an increasing number of states, at the highest political level, is critically important, and this form of leadership is slowly beginning to show.





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The IDSN website is a unique source of information for global news, resources and background on caste discrimination.

### IDSN 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

#### Dalit Solidarity Networks:

- The Dalit Solidarity Network – UK
- Dalit Solidarität in Deutschland – Germany
- The Dalit Network – Netherlands
- The Dalit Solidarity Network – Denmark
- The Dalit Solidarity Network – Finland
- The Dalit Solidarity Network – Sweden
- Solidarité Dalits Belgique – Belgium

### IDSN associates

#### Associated organisations:

- National Conference of Dalit Organisations (NACDOR) – India
- Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO) – Nepal
- National Federation of Dalit Women – India
- Navsarjan Trust – India
- People's Watch – India
- RAFTO Foundation – Norway

#### 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
- Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
- The World Council of Churches
- The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
- Asian Centre for Human Rights

#### Research associates:

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

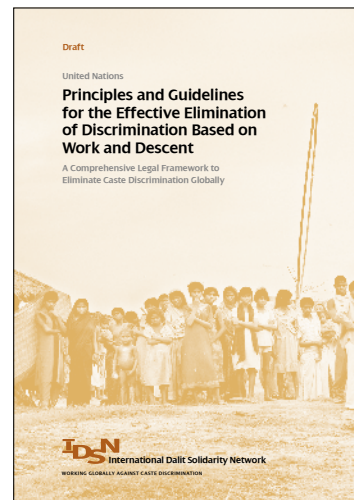


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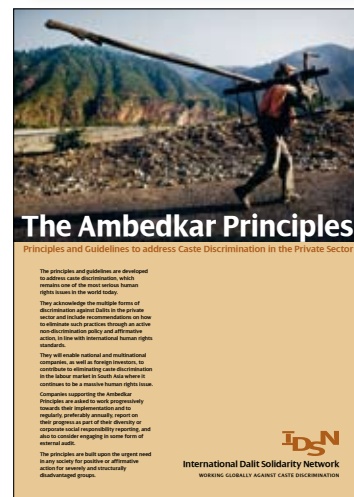


You can register to receive the monthly  
IDSN newsletter on [www.idsn.org](http://www.idsn.org)

### Publications



The draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the elimination of caste discrimination is a significant document which IDSN 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 more than 200 companies in Europe.