



IDSN

International Dalit Solidarity Network

WORKING GLOBALLY AGAINST CASTE-BASED DISCRIMINATION

2015
annual report



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Caste discrimination

There are an estimated 260 million Dalits worldwide, often born into an 'untouchable' status in highly stratified caste systems. Caste systems are found in South Asia, in communities migrated from South Asia across the globe and in other caste-stratified countries in Africa and Asia.

Caste-based discrimination involves massive violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Caste systems divide people into unequal and hierarchical social groups. Those at the bottom are considered

'lesser human beings', 'impure' and 'polluting' to other caste groups.

Those in the lowest of castes, known as Dalits in South Asia, are often considered 'untouchable' and subjected to so-called 'untouchability practices' in both public and private spheres. Dalits may be forced to do the most dirty and hazardous jobs, and subjected to modern slavery. Due to exclusion practiced by both state and non-state actors, Dalits have limited access to resources, services and development, keeping many in severe poverty.

Dalits are often de facto excluded from decision-making and meaningful participation in public and civil life.

Lack of special legislation banning caste-based discrimination or lack of implementation of legislation, due to dysfunctional systems of justice, lack of state responsibility and caste-bias, have largely left Dalits without protection.

Despite policy development and new legislation in some countries, fundamental challenges still remain in all caste-affected countries.

Cover: This young Dalit girl works in child labour in Pakistan. Dalits in South Asia are particularly vulnerable to exploitation in child labour and modern slavery practices. Discrimination leaves them with few or no alternatives. Photo by Jakob Carlsen.

Left: This Dalit woman lives in a sweepers colony in Bangladesh where Dalits live in marginalisation from the rest of the population. In 2015 the struggle to eliminate caste-based discrimination continued amidst violence and atrocities against Dalits and intimidation of Dalit human rights defenders, especially in South Asia. Photo by Abir Abdullah.

Executive Summary

In 2015, the key themes of IDS*N*'s work have been atrocities and access to criminal justice, the rights struggle of Dalit women, forced and bonded labour, and caste discrimination in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Global media outlets reported on caste discrimination responding to themes and input from IDS*N* including LA Times, Huffington Post, the Guardian, Reuters and Mashable. Humanitarian portals such as Reliefweb reported on caste discrimination in relief taking up IDS*N* urgent appeals released after the earthquake in Nepal. The appeals were communicated to hundreds of stakeholders and key members of the media.

Visibility in the United Nations also increased. UN High level officials made a number of significant statements on caste discrimination as well as caste references in reports, noting caste discrimination on par with other prohibited grounds of discrimination.

However, the issue of caste continued to be under rug swept by states at important UN fora because powerful elements do not wish to address it at an international level. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 were thus adopted without a reference to 260 million people impoverished and excluded due to caste discrimination. Many IDS*N* members had worked hard to secure recognition of caste-based inequality in the SDGs.

Also in 2015, IDS*N* presented a number of joint submissions to the UN human rights bodies and closely monitored UN referencing to caste issues.

UN Special Procedures discussed caste discrimination at a parallel meeting at the Annual Meeting of the mandate holders in June and seven thematic mandates made references to caste in their reports to the Human Rights Council in 2015.

Close cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UN Special Rapporteurs continued with regular information sharing and dialogues, and submission of thematic contributions by IDS*N* and its members.

Backed by the OHCHR, IDS*N* co-organised a side-event on 'Caste- and gender-based forced and bonded labour' at the 29th session of the Human Rights Council.

Highlights in 2015

- ↑ **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN General Secretary make significant statements on caste**
- ↑ **UN Special Procedures discuss caste discrimination at Annual Meeting; Seven mandate holders mention caste in their reports**
- ↑ **OHCHR Technical Consultation on UN Guidance tool on discrimination based on work and descent**
- ↑ **Dalit human rights defenders speak at the UN Minority Forum and 50th Anniversary of ICERD**
- ↑ **IDS*N* delegation exchange views with COHOM and the European External Action Service**
- ↑ **European Parliament adopts resolutions with recommendations on caste**
- ↑ **IDS*N* HRC holds side-event on Caste- and gender-based forced and bonded labour**
- ↑ **IDS*N* launches new website, a unique global resource documenting caste-based discrimination**
- ↑ **IDS*N* raises awareness on caste discrimination in relief following the Nepal earthquake and flooding in Tamil Nadu**
- ↓ **Sustainable Development Goals 2030 adopted without reference to 260 million people impoverished and excluded due to caste discrimination**
- ↓ **IDS*N* Application for ECOSOC consultative status the longest pending – now 8 years**

Keynote speakers included the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, and ILO Senior Specialist, Coen Compier. Central to the debate was the need for multidimensional approaches to address the lack of implementation of legislation and policies in caste-affected countries.

Marking an important milestone in work to find new and effective ways to combat caste-based discrimination, the OHCHR organised a two day technical consultation on a draft UN Guidance tool on discrimination based on work and descent in October. IDS*N* supported participation of Dalit representatives at the consultation, and at Human Rights Council sessions, the Forum on Minority Issues and other UN events.

In statements at the Forum and at the 50th Anniversary of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), Dalit leaders highlighted the dismal state of access to criminal justice for Dalits and - again called for action by their governments and the international community.

The Universal Periodic Review of Nepal, which took place in November, provided a unique occasion for Dalit organisations to review the situation of Dalits in the country and with the support of IDS*N* to present findings and recommendations to UN member states and the Government.

IDS*N* shared information on UN developments and outcomes related to caste discrimination widely with decision makers, UN and EU agencies and affected groups. IDS*N* also continued to make specific recommendations to various institutional stakeholders and Governments, and promoted the endorsement and use of the draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent noting the need also for cross cutting UN monitoring on progress.

During the year, IDS*N* made submissions and shared briefing notes and information on caste discrimination with EU officials and members of the European Parliament. In June, an IDS*N* delegation was invited for formal exchanges with the EU Human Rights Working Group (COHOM) and the European External Action Service, resulting in constructive dialogues on core issues and recommendations, including on caste-based discrimination as a serious impediment to ensuring equality in disaster relief and rehabilitation.

The European Parliament adopted several resolutions with clauses on caste discrimination and strong recommendations for speeding up EU action to fight this form of discrimination. Encouragingly, the EU have started mentioning "caste" alongside other grounds of discrimination, and Action Plans for the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) now integrate the rights of persons affected by caste-based discrimination as a cross-cutting concern.

In 2015, IDS*N* launched a new website, which offers great new features such as a searchable cross-referenced documentation database and integration of IDS*N*'s social media channels. The IDS*N* website is a unique global resource on caste discrimination with a steadily increasing user engagement. IDS*N* web statistics for 2015 show that 160 universities and research institutions worldwide use

IDS*N* ICERD Anniversary Statement

From paper tigers to action

"The determination to eliminate racial discrimination throughout the world in all its forms and manifestations, as set out in the pre-amble of ICERD, should be brought to the fore to end caste discrimination. The international community must speak out loudly and clearly, and commit to action.

We call on states, UN institutions and people, and those who stood behind the anti-apartheid movement, to align themselves for an equally important human rights cause. We thank the Committee and all the institutions and people across the world who have taken action and spoken out against caste discrimination and hope that this commitment to eliminating caste discrimination will find increased global support in years to come".

From IDS*N*'s statement at the 50th Anniversary of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)

the website. IDS*N* also registered a 95% increase in Twitter followers compared to 2014; and an increase in subscribers to our monthly email newsletters and social media channels.

While the programmatic outcomes overall have been commendable in 2015, IDS*N* faced financial constraints due to the unexpected withdrawal of a major funding commitment for 2015 and 2016. IDS*N* was able to reduce budgets and operations, and with the generous support of an existing funder ensure that sufficient funding sustained the organisation through the year.

I wish to acknowledge and give big thanks to everyone who collaborated, supported and contributed to IDS*N*'s work in 2015.



Rikke Nöhrind

Executive Director

These Dalit girls in Pakistan are free to dance. Their parents were freed from bonded labour and live in a camp established for former bonded labourers. Had their parents not been freed, these girls would have grown up in slavery. In June, IDSN highlighted caste- and gender-based forced and bonded labour at a side-event at the UN Human Rights Council. Speakers included the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery and Dalit leaders from India, Pakistan and Nepal. Photo by Jakob Carlsen



United Nations

UN high-level officials¹ made a number of significant statements on caste discrimination as well as caste references in reports in 2015.

In June, IDSN co-organised a side-event on Caste- and gender-based forced and bonded labour at the 29th session of the Human Rights Council. Keynote speakers included the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, and ILO Senior Specialist, Coen Compier.

Close cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN Special Rapporteurs continued with regular information sharing and dialogues, and thematic contributions by IDSN.

A technical consultation on a draft UN Guidance tool on discrimination based on work and descent organised by the OHCHR marked an important milestone in work to find new and effective ways to combat caste-based discrimination.

IDSN supported representation of Dalit Human rights defenders at Human Rights Council sessions, the Forum on Minority Issues and other UN events. Dalit leaders highlighted core issues in statements at the Forum and the 50th Anniversary of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

Along with its members, IDSN presented a number of joint submissions to the UN human rights bodies in 2015 and continued a close monitoring of UN referencing to caste issues. The Universal Periodic Review of Nepal provided a unique occasion for Dalit organisations to review the situation of Dalits in the country and with the support of IDSN to present the findings and recommendations to UN member states and the Government.

Information on UN developments related to caste discrimination was shared widely with decision makers, UN and EU agencies and affected groups. IDSN furthermore continued to promote the draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent, and the idea of a cross cutting UN monitoring mechanism.

Human Rights Council

Several thematic mandates, intergovernmental working groups and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights made references to caste discrimination in their reports to the UN Human Rights Council sessions in 2015. IDSN produced documents containing [caste extracts](#)² from reports presented at the 28th, 29th and 30th sessions of the HRC, and disseminated the references and recommendations on caste-based discrimination to States for consideration in the

UN Highlights in 2015

- OHCHR backed IDSN side-event on Caste- and gender-based forced and bonded labour at 29th session of the Human Rights Council
- UN High level officials, High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN General Secretary make significant statements on caste
- UN Special Procedures discuss caste discrimination at Annual Meeting; Seven mandate holders mention caste in their reports
- OHCHR Technical Consultation on UN Guidance tool on discrimination based on work and descent
- Dalit human rights defenders speak at the UN Minority Forum and 50th Anniversary of ICERD
- IDSN application for ECOSOC Accreditation blocked by India for the 8th year: Joint letter to US Secretary of State, John Kerry, by 14 international organizations



UN Special Rapporteur on Slavery

In her key note presentation at the IDSN side-event on Caste- and gender-based forced and bonded labour at the 29th session of the Human Rights Council, Urmila Bhoola, UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery noted:

“Successful fight against stigmatisation and deeply entrenched discrimination necessitates the involvement of all, which is only possible by means of broad awareness raising, increased social consciousness and denouncing of continued discrimination based on caste, gender and other factors that undermine human dignity and violate human rights. Events such as this one are an important part of it.”⁵

interactive dialogues³. IDSN also continuously updated its Compilation on UN references to caste discrimination⁴.

On 18 June, IDSN co-organised a well-attended HRC side-event on Caste- and gender-based forced and bonded labour. The event, moderated by Laura Dolci-Kanaan, Secretary of the Humanitarian Funds for Victims of Torture and Victims of Slavery of the OHCHR, highlighted the strong links between caste and slavery and uncovered recommendations for ways forward both within the United Nations framework and beyond. Central to the debate was the need for multidimensional approaches to address the lack of implementation of legislation and policies in caste-affected countries.

“Caste-based discrimination is globally the most neglected form of discrimination, which seems to be accepted by countries and the UN through a lenient approach of cultural relativism instead of a firm stand against a most devious way of discrimination.”

Coen Kompier, Senior Specialist, ILO - speaking at the event.

Speakers from South Asia highlighted the intersection of caste and gender in forced prostitution, manual scavenging, work in construction and textile industries, and agricultural work. Dolci-Kanaan pointed out that, if the underlying stigmatization and discrimination is not addressed, Dalits will continue to be forced into these inhumane labour

conditions.

The event was co-sponsored by Human Rights Watch, the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR), Minority Rights Group (MRG), Anti-Slavery International, and Franciscans International (FI). IDSN produced a [report from the side-event](#) ⁵

UPR Nepal

Seventeen United Nations member states raised their concerns and recommendations on caste discrimination⁶ at the United Nation’s Periodic Review of Nepal, urging the Government, in particular, to ensure effective implementation of the Caste-Based Discrimination and Untouchability Act of 2011⁷. States also recommended engaging and addressing the needs of vulnerable communities, including Dalits, in earthquake relief and securing equal opportunities in education for the communities.

In advance of the review, held on 5 November, the Dalit Civil Society Organizations’ Coalition for UPR, Nepal and IDSN submitted a parallel report entitled “[Human Rights Situation of the Dalit Community in Nepal](#)”⁸. A [summary note with recommendations](#) was shared widely with UN member states, and the core content discussed with diplomatic missions⁹.

Nine recommendations made it into the [final report](#)¹⁰.

Nepal UPR - Deputy Foreign Minister

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kamal Thapa pointed to the “zero tolerance against discrimination” guaranteed with the newly adopted Constitution (adopted on 20 September 2015). He underlined that all forms of discrimination based on caste, religion and gender are punishable by law. He recognized that these social practices continue, but emphasized that with strong legislation and infrastructure in place he believed “the social evil will come to an end”.

Though the Government accepted the recommendations related to caste, all of the 9 recommendations were categorized by the government as “already implemented or in the process of implementation”. This raises a critical question on future accountability and progress monitoring on state obligations to eliminate caste discrimination, and underlines the need for a national action plan.

Speaking on behalf of the Dalit delegation in Geneva, Bhakta Bishwakarma, President of Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSSWO), acknowledged the Government’s strides over the past years to ensure Dalit rights through legislative measures, and called for a national action plan to eliminate caste discrimination and effective coordinating mechanism to oversee its implementation¹¹. State led public campaigns and institutional reform to secure inclusion were also strongly recommended.

Highlighting the status of Dalit women in Nepal, Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO) with IDSN input prepared a briefing for the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The organizations also supported Dalit women participation in the session. FEDO (Nepal) report for CSW59 on Dalit Women, March 2015, reveals an appalling literacy rate for Dalit women at 34.8%; that 80% of Dalit women in Nepal live below the poverty line, and that access to higher education for Dalit women is 11.8% as compared to 54.5% of the total population of women in Nepal¹².

IDSN continued to enjoy invaluable support from and cooperation with international associates, including for UN side-events and accreditation to UN events. IDSN co-sponsored a Joint Statement with Franciscans International in the HRC28 Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on religion and belief and an Anti-Slavery and SR slavery side-event on the subject of the Special Rapporteur on slavery’s HRC30 report on contemporary forms of slavery in supply chains at HRC30 on 16 June. IDSN also co-sponsored Franciscans International’s handbook “Making Human Rights Work for People Living in Extreme Poverty”¹³.

UN Special Procedures

IDSN continued its close dialogue with UN Special Procedures mandate holders in 2015. Furthermore, input was given to mandate holders in 2015 for 2016 reports.

Caste discrimination was discussed at the Annual Meeting of the UN Special Procedures mandate holders in June. Mandates on slavery, minorities, older persons, water and sanitation, arbitrary executions, the Working Group on people of African descent, and the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, made references to caste in their reports to the Human Rights Council in 2015.

Navsarjan Trust and IDSN submitted a joint alternative NGO report in August, as input to the HRC32 Report on health and safety of the UN Working Group on discrimination against women in law and practice¹⁴. The report focused on caste- and gender-based discrimination with regards to the right to health and safety, noting the many references on the topic made already by the Working Group, Special Rapporteurs, Treaty Bodies, UN agencies, and major NGOs. The barriers and human rights violations highlighted in the report, revolve around lack of access to health service, persistent practice of manual scavenging and violence committed against Dalit women with impunity.

“Minority women may face multiple stigmas in relation to their ethnic or religious background, their sex, and the nature of the crime of which they were the victim. In India, for instance, Dalit women subjected to violence reportedly face unnecessary delays and pressure to drop charges, which are linked to a combination of their gender and minority status”. Special Rapporteur on minority issues - Ms. Rita Izsák-Ndiaye - report A/HRC/30/35

In her country report on Mauritius, the Special Rapporteur on older people notes that protected grounds of discrimination under the law include caste, ethnic origin and impairment¹⁵. She refers to concerns previously raised by CERD (2013) including “the persistence of hierarchical structures in society, particularly relating to the caste system, which are a source of exclusion. Although law does not recognize the caste system, it is deeply rooted in Mauritian tradition.”

The Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Mr. Christof Heyns presented a follow up report on his mission to India (A/HRC/29/37/Add.3)¹⁶. In his report, the Special Rapporteur analyzes the steps taken by India to implement the recommendations

contained in the report made following his visit to the country from 19 to 30 March 2012.

The Special Rapporteur reiterated his recommendation to review existing criminal legislation to ensure that perpetrators of killings against members of lower castes or tribes receive higher sentences (see A/HRC/23/47/Add.1, para. 105)¹⁷. The Special Rapporteur also noted with concern that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989 did not incorporate Dalit Muslims and Christians into the definition of scheduled castes and tribes. A recommendation was made that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act should be reviewed with the aim of extending its scope to Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians.

The Special Rapporteur noted a 2014 observation by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, that Dalit women were particularly vulnerable as they faced multiple forms of discrimination presenting barriers to justice and that poor implementation of the Act was of concern¹⁸. Heyns restated the importance of ensuring the protection of all marginalized communities in practice through effective implementation of the related legislation, as well as the conduct of relevant education and awareness-raising campaigns reaching out to all communities, the Special Rapporteur welcomed the introduction of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill of 2014, and noted that effective implementation of this legislation remains essential.

UN Forum on Minority Issues

This year’s Forum on Minority Issues, held on 24 and 25 November, focused on “Minorities in the Criminal Justice System”¹⁹. UN Forum on Minority Issues - webpage on page 38. Three Dalit human rights defenders presented their experiences at the Forum. Panellist Durga Sob from Nepal noted “a lack of accountability for law enforcement when it comes to Dalits” and called for Dalit representation in all justice sector institutions²⁰.

Manjula Pradeep and Ramesh Nathan from India delivered statements on the dismal state of access to justice for Dalits and the maltreatment of Dalits in the criminal justice system. Dalits in India are not only impaired from accessing mechanisms of justice but also often the main victims of police torture and custodial death, due to deeply ingrained caste discrimination. IDSN made a submission with input for the draft recommendations from the forum.

The IDSN team in Geneva for the Forum and the ICERD 50th Anniversary met with representatives of diplomatic missions and the OHCHR - as part of continuous efforts to engage the international community in the struggle to end caste discrimination.

UN Human Rights bodies & caste

List of countries where caste discrimination has been noted as a concern by UN Human Rights bodies

 India	 Senegal
 Nepal	 Chad
 Pakistan	 Mali
 Bangladesh	 Ethiopia
 Japan	 Ghana
 United Kingdom	 Burkina Faso
 Yemen	 Mauritius
 Sri Lanka	 Micronesia
 Nigeria	 Suriname
 Mauritania	 Niger
 Madagascar	

Treaty Bodies

The total number of caste-affected countries examined by UN human rights bodies reached 21 in 2015. The total number of treaty body reviews, noting caste discrimination as a concern, according to regions are composed as follows: Africa (17); Middle East (9); Europe (2); The Americas (1); and Asia (45).

In its review of Suriname the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination notes, that although the caste system is not institutionalised in Suriname, the Committee is concerned about reports on the persistence of such a system in certain communities of Indian origin living in the State party²¹. The Committee, recalling its General Recommendation No. 29 (2002) on discrimination based on descent, recommends the State party to take steps to identify the specific communities and persons who may suffer from such practices and if applicable, to adopt specific measures to combat and eradicate such discriminatory practices²².

IDSN and the Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN) submitted a joint alternative report on Scheduled Caste Children in Pakistan for the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) PSWG review of Pakistan and the CRC review of Pakistan in 2016²³. Key issues include lack of education and economic exploitation, and child labour.

IDSN also prepared a brief submission to the CRC review of Bangladesh²⁴. In its concluding observations, the Committee reiterates its previous concern on discrimination against certain groups of children, particularly girls, and Dalit and indigenous children, who face discrimination and violence, and lack access to quality education²⁵.

UN General-Secretary**Millions of Dalits still face discrimination - we must continue battle for equality**

“He [Gandhi] confronted many forms of injustice, including against people who were then called “untouchables”. His struggle led to the historic resolution banning discrimination based on caste. Today India has laws that not only enshrine equality, but also take positive steps to address past discrimination. But millions of Dalits, Tribals and others still face discrimination, especially the women and girls. In too many communities, religious minorities also suffer. We must continue Gandhi’s battle for equality.” Ban Ki-moon - keynote speech at the Indian Council of World Affairs. Photo: UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

50th Anniversary of ICERD

Statements by the International Movement Against all forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) and IDSN brought caste discrimination to the fore as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination celebrated the ICERD convention’s 50th anniversary on 26 November²⁶.

Caste discrimination was given solid attention during the day, as the issue was highlighted by panel speakers and raised by states and civil society from the floor during the interactive discussions. The two written NGO contributions available on the OHCHR [web page](#) for the event, both related to caste-based discrimination²⁷.

IDSN urged the Committee to pursue the idea of regular joint review process on status and follow up on concluding observations and recommendations on caste discrimination by UN Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures and UPRs. IDSN board member, Manjula Pradeep, presented the IDSN statement ‘50 years of ICERD – from paper tigers to global action at the anniversary event’²⁸.

UN High Level Officials and OHCHR

In October, the OHCHR organised a two-day technical consultation on a draft UN Guidance tool on discrimination based on work and descent. Participants included UN experts, UN agencies (including members of UN country teams), academics, representatives from affected communities and international NGOs. The preparation of guidance for the UN system on key challenges, priorities and strategic approaches to combat discrimination based on work and descent was envisaged in the Action Plan 2014 of the UN Network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities for the implementation of the [Secretary General’s Guidance Note](#)²⁹. IDSN and members engaged in this landmark consultation and commend the OHCHR for its work and priority on caste discrimination. On several occasions during the year, OHCHR officials met with Dalit representatives and IDSN staff.

UN high-level officials³⁰ made a number of significant statements on caste discrimination as well as references in reports. In his [opening Statement](#) to the 28th session of the Human Rights Council, the High Commissioner Mr. Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein highlighted that the majority of victims of human rights abuses around the world share two characteristics: Deprivation, and discrimination – based on, among others, caste.

The UN Secretary-General has spoken out on caste and Dalits on several occasions, including in his keynote speech at the Indian Council of World Affairs on 14 January.

ECOSOC

The now 8-year deferral of IDSN’s application continued due to questions in the NGO Committee posed by India. By 2015 IDSN has received 69 written questions. As pointed out by the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of assembly and association in the General Assembly already in October 2014, the [continued questioning and deferral](#) are “clearly unacceptable, wrong and unfair”. IDSN’s application is now the longest pending with the Committee.

In March, in a [joint open letter to the US Secretary of State](#), Mr. John Kerry, fifteen leading civil society organisations urged the US to take leadership in supporting IDSN’s application for UN consultative status³¹. The organisations called on the United States to “use its position as a member of the United Nations Committee on NGOs to support IDSN to obtain special consultative status with the UN and thus protect its right to express its views regarding the elimination of caste-based discrimination.”

In April, the International Service on Human Rights (ISHR) released a new handbook on NGO access to the UN and the UN Committee on NGOs: [A Practical Guide to the UN Committee on NGOs](#)³². The case of IDSN is featured [several places](#) in the handbook and as a case study in chapter 5.

The IDSN Executive Director spoke on panels at launches of the ISHR handbook hosted by the Permanent Mission of Australia to the UN in Geneva, and New York³³.

“After seven years of waiting, IDSN deserves to receive a definitive response to its request for UN consultative status ... We call on the United States to take a leadership role in the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs to ensure this happens,”³⁴ Michelle Evans of the International Service for Human Rights said at the event.

IDSN Executive Director attended the two sessions of the NGO Committee held in 2015. At the June session, the Chair of the NGO committee urged members to reach a conclusion on the application³⁵.

UN Secretary-General’s report

IDSN prepared a submission to the UN Secretary-General [General Assembly 2015 Report on “Elimination of Racism”](#) Recommendations in relation to the implementation of General Assembly resolution A/RES/69/162 of 18 December 2014³⁶. The submission includes recommendations to the UN General Assembly to promote and endorse specific measures to address caste discrimination and to include caste “in any review, framework and action plans on racial discrimination as well as in its follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and upon commemorating the fifteenth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action”. The IDSN contribution was featured in the summary of stakeholders information for [the report](#)³⁷.

SDGs – No mention of 260 million affected by caste discrimination

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were adopted at the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly in October 2015. The final document calls for a reduction of inequality under the slogan of “Leave No One Behind”. However, it fails to give any recognition to caste discrimination as a major structural factor underlying poverty, and as a root cause of inequalities. This despite continuous contributions to the SDG processes by Asia Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF) and other rights groups on the topic.

IDSN endorsed and promoted the ADRF [appeal](#) for the inclusion of caste-affected communities and recognition of caste-based exclusion in the post-2015 SDGs, which also contains suggestions for inclusion of caste in the indicators³⁸.

Accordingly, IDSN called for indicators to include disaggregated data on caste and targeted budgeting to end poverty, based on the Multiple Dimension Index (MDI) inclusive of age, sex, disability, race, caste, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or other status and rural-urban divide.

UN Guidelines**Benchmarking the draft UN Principles and Guidelines**⁴⁰

Three comprehensive country studies were conducted under the Asia Dalit Rights Forum for Bangladesh⁴¹, Nepal⁴² and India⁴³ in 2014. In the reports published online in 2015, Dalit NGOs set out country level status of implementation of measures outlined in the UN Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent.

IDSN provided inputs through rights institutions for the inclusion of caste in the Reference Paper on SDG Data, Indicators and Mechanisms linked to the open consultation of the Inter Agency Expert Group providing recommendations on selected indicators for implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals.

IDSN will further assist its members in lobbying for the inclusion of caste in the country reports produced for the national reviews and focus on the indicators for implementation of the adopted agenda.

World Bank

IDSN provided input to the 1st and 2nd draft of World Bank Safeguard Policies (World Bank Environmental and Social Framework) issued in March and July. IDSN recommended that the World Bank supports the development and implementation of inclusive and appropriate policies, that enable the effective targeting of marginalised and excluded groups in World Bank projects, especially caste-affected groups. Among other recommendations the World Bank is encouraged to adhere to a common approach to addressing caste-based discrimination in projects and operations³⁹.

These children in Nepal practice earthquake procedures. Following the 2015 Nepal earthquake IDS^N distributed information on caste discrimination in relief efforts to key humanitarian stakeholders including EU officials and MEPs. In June, the European Parliament adopted an Urgency Resolution raising concern over caste discrimination hampering aid efforts in Nepal. Photo by Jim Holmes/AusAID - [Creative Commons](#).



European Union

In 2015, the European Parliament adopted several resolutions with clauses on caste discrimination and strong recommendations for speeding up EU action to fight this form of discrimination. Encouragingly, the EU has started mentioning “caste” alongside other grounds of discrimination, and Action Plans for the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) integrate the rights of persons affected by caste-based discrimination as a cross-cutting concern. IDS^N was invited for formal exchanges with the EU Human Rights Working Group (COHOM) and the European External Action Service in June. Through the year, IDS^N made submissions, shared briefing notes and new information on caste discrimination with EU officials and members of the European Parliament.

EU advocacy, dialogue and input

The year offered several excellent opportunities for dialogue and input to EU institutions and processes. Importantly, the EU revised its [Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan](#)⁴⁴ to which IDS^N submitted recommendations. Despite the relevance, caste discrimination was not among the thematic priorities of this human rights agenda, which commits EU institutions and member states to deliver on human rights as “the silver thread running through all EU policies and actions”. However, the development of an “EU Handbook on Anti-discrimination” with tools for anti-discrimination measures against all forms of discrimination, including multiple discrimination, may be among the practical means for the EU to focus explicitly on caste.

IDS^N staff and members met with EU officials and MEPs in Brussels on several occasions and maintained regular communication. Many EU officials and MEPs receive IDS^N's newsletter and targeted information.

In April, letters were addressed to EU high-level officials, i.e. the High Representative for Foreign Relations, Federica Mogherini, Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, and EEAS Director for Human Rights and Democracy Silvio Gonzato, reiterating IDS^N's call for an EU policy on the elimination of caste-based discrimination, and high level EU public diplomacy on the issue.

IDS^N also provided submissions and briefings related to caste, human rights and development in country situations, including a submission on Bangladesh to the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) staff and an EP delegation, before their visit to the country. IDS^N furthermore facilitated information and recommendations on caste related issues for the Universal Periodic Review of Nepal in November.

Briefing papers shared with EU officials and MEPs include

IDS^N recommendations for relevant inter-active dialogues of the Human Rights Council sessions; IDS^N submissions to UN human rights bodies, e.g. to the Commission on the Status of Women on the situation of Dalit women; and the [report](#)⁴⁵ from the OHCHR backed IDS^N side-event on Caste- and gender-based forced and bonded labour held at the 29th session of the Human Rights Council. IDS^N also shared information on the Nepal earthquake disaster and caste discrimination in relief to MEPs and EU officials, including EU's humanitarian arm ECHO, who took a considerable interest in the topic.

On 16 June, IDS^N had [exchanges](#)⁴⁶ with the EU Human Rights Working Group (COHOM) of the Council of the EU and the European External Action Service. IDS^N board members and the Executive Director presented current thematic challenges and recommendations, urging the adoption of an EU policy on the prevention and elimination of caste-based discrimination, EU high-level public diplomacy on caste-based discrimination and support to initiatives at the multilateral level. EU officials noted issues related to the exclusion of caste in the process leading to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Universal Period Review of Nepal and call for non-discrimination in relief and reconstruction in Nepal. Country situations were presented by Paul Divakar (NCDHR, India), Manjula Pradeep (Navsarjan Trust, India), Durga Sob (FEDO, Nepal) and Sandra Petersen (IDS^N-Norway) on behalf of Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network.

On several occasions, the IDS^N Executive Director met EU officials and member state representatives in New York to discuss support of IDS^N's stalled [application for ECOSOC accreditation](#)⁴⁷.

In September, the EU delegation in New York hosted a meeting for EU member states with civil society representatives and parliamentarians from South Asia. The meeting, prompted by the Asia Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF) in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, addressed concerns over leaving out Dalits and other caste-affected people from the world's foremost considerations on reducing inequalities.

EIDHR - Increased focus on caste

Over the past years, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) funding for civil society action to eliminate caste discrimination has been considerable. It has paved the way for innovative projects and approaches, and included support to regional activities.

The 2015 EIDHR Action Plan integrated the rights of persons affected by caste-based discrimination as a cross-cutting concern. It made specific mention of persons affected by caste discrimination in action documents on support to civil society; in its actions to support protection and promotion of human rights, human rights defenders, universities for

aimed at directing action for the elimination of caste-based discrimination and to include policy objectives on caste-based discrimination in its new EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy.

In June, a European Parliament [urgency resolution](#)⁵⁰ on the situation in Nepal after the earthquake raised concern over caste discrimination inhibiting the aid efforts.

On 17 December 2015, the European Parliament adopted [resolution \(2015/2229\(INI\)\)](#)⁵¹ on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2014. The parliament took note of its resolution of 10 October 2013 on caste discrimination; and condemned in the strongest terms all forms of discrimination, including those based on caste. The Parliament urged the EU to intensify its efforts to eradicate all types of discrimination, through human rights and political dialogue, the work of the EU Delegations and public diplomacy.

Specifically, the Parliament notes “with great concern the scale and consequences of caste-based discrimination and recommends the mainstreaming of the topic in the EEAS and Commission guidelines and action plans, in particular in the EU fight against all forms of discrimination, and in efforts to combat violence against women and girls and all forms of discrimination against them”.

As a member of the Brussels-based Human Rights and Development Network (HRDN), IDS^N supported the network's campaign on Human Rights Defenders and call for stronger EU leadership on human rights. The HRDN Troika meet occasionally with COHOM; in a December briefing the Troika with a point of departure in the principle of the SDGs - “No one left behind” – stated “the need to address the rights of people, who are most severely discriminated against – 260 million caste-affected people – and noted IDS^N's call for “promotion of supportive initiatives at multilateral level and for mainstreaming of the issue as part of the EU's pledge to fight all forms of discrimination”.

Encouragingly, EU made several statements at the UN, pointing to, inter alia, its concern of “repeated efforts by some to undermine the principle of universality with cultural relativism,” and noting that human rights protection is not afforded to groups, beliefs or ideologies but to human beings – whatever their race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, caste or migration status”.

human rights and democracy postgraduate education and in supporting key international actors, including the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In the course of the year, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights released several global calls for proposals relevant for organisations working at the grassroots level for Dalit rights.

The commitment of the EU institutions to integrate caste-based discrimination and people affected by caste discrimination is noteworthy and reflected in the EIDHR Action documents for supporting human rights priorities and Global Calls 2016-2017. The documents address a number of key issues of caste-affected people and outlines a range of actions, that can be pursued under the priorities for EIDHR global calls.

European Parliament

Over the course of the year, several MEPs, including former Finnish Minister of Development Heidi Hautala, posed [questions](#)⁴⁸ on caste discrimination to Commissioners and challenged follow up to the resolution of 10 October 2013 on caste discrimination. IDS^N maintained contact and submitted input to MEPs across political groups.

On 12 March 2015, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the [Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2013](#)⁴⁹. For the first time, a separate section on caste-based discrimination was included in the annual resolution, calling for the EU to adopt a policy


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IDSN

International Dalit Solidarity Network

WORKING GLOBALLY AGAINST CASTE-BASED DISCRIMINATION

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Communication & Networking

Raising awareness of the injustice and severe discrimination faced by victims of caste discrimination and collecting and communicating the input from Dalit organisations in caste-affected countries, has been the cornerstone of IDSN's communications work in 2015. Key themes of IDSN's communications and press work in 2015 have been atrocities and access to justice, the rights struggle of Dalit women, forced and bonded labour and caste discrimination in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Promoting Dalit rights initiatives and campaigns

Reports, articles, videos, information on news and initiatives were sourced by IDSN from caste-affected countries and transformed into news articles, database entries, press advisories or social media updates and promoted through the website, social media, media contacts and newsletter.

The many campaigns in South Asia and abroad of the

Dalit women's rights movement have been especially in focus. IDSN has published articles and spread awareness through all its digital communication channels using #dalitwomenfight, and done press work to alert media to the campaigns. Work to raise awareness of the rising crimes and atrocities against Dalits and IDSN members' work to bring amendments to the Prevention of Atrocities Act in India, have received much exposure through IDSN's channels. IDSN has also acted quickly to disseminate news of new reports, events, injustice and appeals that members and associates have wished to expose to a global audience.

Urgent action in the face of disaster

For example, IDSN responded immediately when members in Nepal sent reports through of caste discrimination in relief efforts following the massive Nepal earthquake in May 2015 and its aftershocks. A briefing on the situation was prepared and distributed to key humanitarian actors, UN

In 2015, IDSN launched its new website on www.idsn.org with new features including a searchable cross-referenced documentation database on caste discrimination, with more than 1800 entries and full integration of IDSN's social media channels.

and EU officials, decision makers and network members. An [urgent appeal](#)⁵² was also released, distributed and directly communicated to hundreds of stakeholders and to key members of the media. Several global media outlets reported on the discrimination including the [LA Times](#)⁵³, [Huffington Post](#)⁵⁴, [Mashable](#)⁵⁵. Humanitarian portals [ReliefWeb](#)⁵⁶ and the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS⁵⁷) also reported on the IDSN appeal.

When floods hit Tamil Nadu in November 2015, IDSN received an assessment report finding caste discrimination in relief efforts, from IDSN member National Dalit Watch-NCDHR, and immediately released a [news article](#)⁵⁸, distributed the report to relevant stakeholders and pitched the news to key media contacts. Subsequently [ReliefWeb](#)⁵⁹ reported IDSN's news and [Reuters made a news article](#)⁶⁰ based on the news, carried by media outlets worldwide.

Raising awareness through the global media

Throughout 2015 IDSN has urged key global media and journalist contacts to cover Dalit rights violations and the work of the Dalit rights activists. Beyond the press work mentioned following the Nepal earthquake and Tamil Nadu flooding, IDSN has continuously facilitated contacts between members of the press and Dalit activists and when relevant also gave interviews in media such as [VICE](#)⁶¹, [Mashable](#)⁶², [OZY](#)⁶³ and made appearances on Danish national television stations.

The IDSN Op-Ed "[Diluting India's child labour law will trap families in cycle of poverty](#)"⁶⁴ was published by The Guardian in May 2015 and was shared via their website more than 800 times. The Guardian was also a top referrer of traffic to the IDSN website with more than 500 visits to the IDSN website in 2015 coming from articles in the Guardian.

In connection with the UN Universal Periodic Review of Nepal IDSN issued the joint press release "[UN Members deeply concerned about caste discrimination and untouchability](#)"⁶⁵ and distributed it widely.

New IDSN website – a unique global resource

A key resource for spreading awareness on caste discrimination is the IDSN website. The website has been comprehensively updated in 2015 and now offers fantastic new features including a searchable cross-referenced [documentation database](#)⁶⁶ on caste discrimination, with more than 1800 entries and full integration of IDSN's social media channels. The entries can be filtered by theme, country, documentation type and year.

The new website is also optimised for mobile devices to meet the needs of the many users accessing the site via smartphones and tablets. The website features enhanced security and stability, a greatly improved design and the

Dalit women

IDSN articles on key #dalitwomenfight campaigns in 2015

- [Dalit women tour Germany and the US to raise awareness of caste violence](#)⁶⁷
- [Dalit and Adivasi women's march for self-respect meets violence, injustice and police negligence](#)⁶⁸
- [Dalit leaders awarded for their work defending human rights](#)⁶⁹
- [Dalit women go viral to tell the world their story](#)⁷⁰

possibility for integrating IDSN's resource database into other sites.

User engagement with the IDSN website is rising steadily and in 2015 there was a 17% increase in both visits and unique users of the website with over 35,000 unique users, 47,500 visits and over 90,000 page views. The users of the IDSN website are spread across the world with 40% of visits coming from caste-affected countries in South Asia and 60% from other countries topped by the United States, Denmark, United Kingdom, Canada, Netherlands, Australia and Germany. The website is a valuable tool for policy makers, researchers and activists. For example, IDSN web statistics show 160 different universities and research institutions worldwide accounting for more than 3000 visits.

Many referrals to the IDSN website came from search engines, global news websites, international human rights organisations and key research institutions. The statistics also show a 200% rise in referrals from social media to the IDSN website compared to 2014.

Rising engagement with IDSN on social media

Social media is an increasingly important part of IDSN's communications work in public outreach but also internally between network members. Facebook continues to be a very popular communication channel with IDSN's total number of Facebook fans on both our Facebook pages rising to over 12,000 in 2015.

IDSN's Twitter channel @idsnupdates tweeted out more than 1200 tweets in 2015 and registered a 95% increase in Twitter followers compared to 2014. IDSN tweets are often retweeted and liked by followers. The IDSN Twitter channel is increasingly a key communication channel within the IDSN network, as more members join the service and share

These Dalit women in India are taking a self-defense class. In 2015, Dalit women continued to fight against the violence and oppression they face in India. IDSN promoted Dalit women rights through the UN, EU and in communications work. Photo by [Sambhali Trust](#).



their news on Twitter. Followers include prominent UN and EU officials, journalists, and leading rights activists.

Views of IDSN's online introductory videos on caste discrimination and on Dalit women, rose by over 75% compared to last year and to a total of more than 78,000 views. IDSN's older intro video 'I'm Dalit How Are You?' also continues to gather views now at 192,000. IDSN also maintains an online video playlist library on [YouTube](#)⁷¹.

News articles and the IDSN newsletter

IDSN published 36 news articles in 2015 and sent out monthly, or at times bi-monthly, newsletters including these articles and other information as well as relevant press clippings. The news articles published by IDSN were made on the basis of developments and activities in caste-affected countries, IDSN activities and new reports, events and information sourced from the network.

For example, IDSN made an [article](#)⁷² summing up an otherwise underreported UNICEF study on discrimination against the Muhammasheen (Al Akhdam) in Yemen, this article was subsequently published by [ReliefWeb](#)⁷³ and distributed widely. IDSN also summarised findings of key reports in news overviews such as on the NCDHR report on [access to justice](#)⁷⁴ and collated information, reports and statistics on key issues into analysis pieces such as the IDSN article on [rising caste violence in India](#)⁷⁵.

The IDSN newsletter was redesigned in 2015 with enhanced social media integration and alignment with the new website. Subscribers to the IDSN newsletter increased by 10% from 2014 figures and represent a wide range of policy makers, activists and researchers

IDSN publications and programmatic work

IDSN communications and networking work in 2015 also included publishing briefing materials on thematic and country situations and producing a comprehensive [report](#)⁷⁶ on the IDSN UN side-event on Caste and Gender-based forced and bonded labour. IDSN also published the statement '50 years of ICERD – from paper tigers to global action'⁷⁷ in connection with the 50th anniversary of the UN Slavery Convention and distributed this statement widely.

At the beginning of the year the production and distribution of the IDSN annual report⁷⁸ was undertaken and a designed version of the new [IDSN strategy 2015-2018](#)⁷⁹ was also produced and disseminated.

Caste-affected countries

IDSN's members include a range of Dalit rights and human rights organisations in South Asia. While IDSN does not make financial grants to national level activities or member organisations, the following country chapters are based on submissions from members to IDSN both through regular interaction through the year and through the end of year member reports.

The country chapters on India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh offer brief analysis of the current situation as well as insight into a few of the key activities undertaken by IDSN and IDSN members at the national level. A few developments in relation to other caste affected countries including Yemen, Mauritania and Japan are also included in a separate section.

India

Rampant caste discrimination continued to plague India in 2015, with violence against Dalits rising and the space for civil society shrinking. As documented in reports released in 2015 by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the US State Department⁸⁰, as well as by human rights NGOs in India, equal access to justice, services, education and opportunity is still only a dream and the situation remains grave. Even in the delivery of disaster relief, caste discrimination prevailed. Positive developments in the struggle against caste discrimination include the adoption of the amendment to India's key anti-caste legislation as well as the continued efforts of strong Dalit movements fighting for justice, equality and basic human rights.

Historic amendment of India's caste legislation

In a victory for the Dalit movement in India, a [historic act](#) amending the 'Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities – PoA Act) legislation⁸¹ was passed in parliament on 21 December, 2015. The National Coalition for Strengthening PoA Act (NCSPA), which includes several of IDSN's members, has struggled for six years to ensure amendments to this act. The act strengthens the rights of the victims and witnesses, improves access to justice and introduces preventative measures. While Dalit organisations and networks are celebrating this milestone achievement, they are also aware that focused actions to ensure implementation of this act remain key precursors for the amendments to have the desired effect.

“The amendments if implemented in full spirit will make justice accessible to the Dalit and Adivasi victims, which have been denied to them in absence of political will and inadequate legal mechanisms and machinery.” National Convenor of the National Coalition for Strengthening PoA Act (NCSPA), Ramesh Nathan

Access to criminal justice and rising violence against Dalits

Earlier in the year, the 2015 Equity Watch report “[Access to Justice for Dalits in India](#)”⁸² was released on the failure of the administration of justice to protect Dalits in India. The report, released by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), supported by Christian Aid and the European Union, finds that violence and atrocities against Dalits are rising in India and there is an urgent need to step up efforts to ensure justice for victims. According to National Crimes Statistics presented in the report there has been a 19.4% increase in crimes against Dalits from the previous year. The number of cases registered under the PoA Act has also risen every year since 2011, taking a leap in 2014 to 47,064 cases against 13,975 cases in 2013.

The report concluded that dominant castes in India are using violence against Dalits to reinforce the hierarchical caste related power structures and suppress Dalit rights assertions and claims. The violence and atrocities are often directly related to Dalit assertion of basic rights including

land rights, freedom of expression, access to justice, access to education, water, food, decent work and other services and equal participation in cultural and religious activities.

The brutality of the crimes against Dalits is also reported to be getting worse. For example, in October 2015, the [burning to death of two small Dalit children](#)⁸³, asleep in their house in Faridabad, grabbed international headlines. The children were reportedly victims of a dispute between Dalits and members of the dominant caste. In this case and many others, IDSN members in India carried out fact finding missions and pushed for justice and IDSN have raised awareness through the international network.

Even seemingly minor signs of Dalit resistance in 2015 have resulted in brutal retaliation by the dominant castes such as a Dalit boy's wrist being chopped off because he was wearing a watch; another was [killed](#)⁸⁴ as he had a song on

“India is witnessing an unprecedented rise in crimes against Dalits since 2014 ... What is shocking is the barbaric nature of the crimes. Practices of untouchability and caste discrimination have changed in terms of their form and nature and these new tools of violence have been unleashed in such a way that the perpetrators feel that they have a newfound license to oppress.” PL Puniya, chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)

(social reformer) B.R. Ambedkar as his ringtone; and a Dalit child was beaten and Dalits attacked by 50 men⁸⁵ after the child's ball fell into an RSS (right wing dominant caste group) campus. Human rights defenders working on these types of cases report that it is very difficult to get the police to cooperate with them and that they often have to resort to protests to even get a charge sheet filed.

In October 2015, a young Dalit boy died while in police custody⁸⁶, police torture is blamed. His crime was allegedly stealing two pigeons from dominant castes. A Dalit family including three small children were also stripped and put in jail⁸⁷ for allegedly encroaching on the land of dominant castes and five policemen were suspended following the custodial death of a Dalit youth⁸⁸ in Agra. These are again not lone incidents of police negligence in India, but everyday tales of the utter disregard for justice when it comes to Dalits.

On the international level, joining an IDS N team at the UN Forum on Minority Issues⁸⁹ in November 2015, Dalit leaders from India delivered strong statements on the dismal state of access to justice for Dalits and the maltreatment of Dalits in the criminal justice system. General Secretary of the National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ) Ramesh Nathan delivered a [statement](#)⁹⁰ under the session on "Minorities and the exercise of police powers", while Navsarjan Director, Manjula Pradeep, gave a [statement](#)⁹¹ on "Addressing the root causes of discrimination in the administration of justice".

"Lawlessness and impunity when it comes to Dalits generates a lack of faith in the justice system."

Manjula Pradeep, Director of Navsarjan, speaking at the UN Forum on Minority Issues in 2015

At the national level IDS N members in India have been comprehensively addressing the access to justice issue. The National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ) – NCDHR, has been organising legal clinics and have continued to work through the "Atrocity Tracking and Monitoring (ATM) System" tool that was launched in 2014. The movement also organised a National Tribunal on Caste Atrocities hearing cases from victims from all over India, on the occasion of Human Rights Day on 10 December 2015. They furthermore trained young Dalit human rights defenders in several states and offered capacity building workshops and seminars.

IDS N member Navsarjan Trust continued its work in 2015 on taking up legal cases of atrocities against Dalits and bringing them to justice as well as awareness raising in communities and in educational institutions. IDS N members Navsarjan, National Federation on Dalit Women, Jan Sahas

Dalit women

2015 examples of rape and violence against Dalit women

- [Dalit woman killed over land dispute in Haryana](#)
- [Amnesty International: Dalit sisters ordered to be raped and paraded naked by village council](#)
- [Dalit women stripped, beaten, paraded naked in UP village](#)
- [Teenage Dalit girl raped, body found hanging from tree](#)
- [Torture of Dalit woman who refused to withdraw case](#)
- [Dalit severely beaten - her shadow falls on high caste man](#)

and the women's movement of NCDHR, AIDMAM, as well as IDS N associate NACDOR, have throughout 2015 worked specifically on access to justice for Dalit women, who are especially marginalised due to intersectional discrimination on the grounds of both caste and gender. Dalit women often bear the brunt of violence, as they are used as a way to punish Dalit communities. Statistics cited in the [2015 Equity Watch report](#)⁹² also show that according to official national crime statistics, rape cases registered against Dalit women have increased with over 47% since the previous decade.

Dalit women take the struggle for justice to the streets, abroad and online

National marches to stop violence and atrocities against Dalit women and bring perpetrators to justice were organised by both AIDMAM and Navsarjan in 2015.

In Gujarat, where Navsarjan is based, a campaign was organised to end violence against women where more than 40,000 people participated. A documentary film is being made, documenting this march. Navsarjan's Executive Director, Manjula Pradeep, participated in the International Conference on Gender Equality held in Kerala and made a presentation on exclusion of caste in the UN agenda. Several references to caste were made in the outcome document from the conference.

Following on from the previous Dalit Women Self-Respect marches in Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Maharashtra states in 2014, AIDMAM organised a march in Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh and a [march joining together Dalit and Adivasi women to fight for justice in the state of Odisha](#)⁹³ in 2015. Protesters found women being beaten, raped, stripped naked and paraded through their villages and a rape case as barbaric as the 2012 Nirbhaya case.

"In a recent chilling and inhuman crime, no headway has been made to apprehend perpetrators of the alleged rape and murder of a 15-year-old girl in Sargipally village of Bolangir district. The rape was as barbaric as the Nirbhaya case in New Delhi. But the police are silent and soft on perpetrators of caste-based violence." Asha Kowtal, General Secretary of AIDMAM, speaking at the Dalit women's self-respect march in Odisha

Following the Odisha march The General Secretary of AIDMAM, Asha Kowtal, stated that she had witnessed violence against Dalit and Adivasi women amidst wilful negligence from the side of the police and judiciary.

In order to increase awareness of the violence and injustice faced by Dalit women in India AIDMAM organised [marches in Germany and an extensive North American tour](#)⁹⁴ where Dalit women from India spoke at events and seminars and held protests across key American cities. In Germany Asha Kowtal also spoke at an Amnesty Germany event. The global events received significant media coverage in North America and it is hoped that the events will create lasting solidarity.

The movement also staged several very [successful digital events and online campaigns](#)⁹⁵ under the banner of #dalitwomenfight, which IDS N promoted on all its channels. The events included live streaming, hackathons, radio shows, flashmobs, a Facebook and Twitter campaign and an interactive online timeline charting Dalit history, curated by Dalits and driven by Dalit women to highlight [Dalit History Month](#)⁹⁶ in April.

"A girl who was never considered to speak at any of the platforms in her hometown... speaks to the whole world on AL JAZEERA today," tweeted Dalit woman human rights defender, Sanghapali Aruna Kornana, after appearing on the [Al Jazeera STREAM online and broadcast news show](#)⁹⁷, talking about the Dalit history month project and Dalit resistance and one of the slogans of the campaign, "We are Dalit women. We are not flowers. We are flames of resistance!!" was also shared on [Twitter](#)⁹⁸.

In April two Dalit women received prestigious awards for their work on defending the rights of Dalits in India. Manjula Pradeep, Navsarjan Trust, received the Femina Women 2015 Social Impact Award and Beena J. Pallical of NCDHR received the Dr. Ambedkar Award 2015 for her work.

Information on the situation of Dalit women in India featured prominently in IDS N communications work and across all IDS N input to the UN and the EU throughout 2015 and was specifically the focus of the [IDS N input](#)⁹⁹ on Dalit women in relation to the 59th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. In addition to themes such as violence against Dalit women, lack of access to

Global media

Global media headlines on Dalit women fighting back

- [The modern horrors of India's ancient injustice: How a government has abandoned millions—and they are fighting back](#)
- [Meet the Indian women trying to take down "Caste Apartheid"](#)
- [Why India's "Untouchable" women are the targets of rape & how they are fighting back](#)
- [Fighting the Dalit women's fight with art and activism](#)

education and economic disempowerment, the paper focused on Dalit women in modern slavery in India.

Combating forced and bonded labour in India

Caste and gender based forced and bonded labour were also the focus of the 2015 [IDS N UN side-event](#)¹⁰⁰ at the 29th session of the UN human rights council. Manjula Pradeep presented on the situation in India explaining how Dalit women continue to be forced into prostitution under the caste-based Devadasi practice and into manual scavenging. The event included a keynote [video address](#)¹⁰¹ by the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, Ms. Urmila Bhoola, and allowed for a constructive dialogue as well as a sharing of information and recommendations between UN agencies, civil society and States.

"Men would shuffle in and out of my room at night as if I had no right over my body, only they did. It broke me down completely." 27-year-old Dalit woman, forced to serve as a 'temple slave' in South India portrayed in an [IPS article](#)

Other speakers also gave examples of the intersection of caste and gender in construction work, textile industries, and agricultural work in India. Meena Varma, of the Dalit Solidarity Network in the UK spoke about Dalit girls working in forced labour under the Sumangali scheme in India's textile industry. The event was documented by IDS N in a [comprehensive report](#)¹⁰².

Speaking at the event from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in India was Coen Compier who highlighted the ILO's work to document the Devadasi practice as well as its continued work to combat manual scavenging in India, with reference to the [ILO Resource Handbook for ending manual scavenging](#)¹⁰³. He also covered the extensive work of IDS N member in India, Jan Sahas, as Director Ashif Sheikh was unable to attend the event at the last minute.

Government data released in 2015 (from the 2011 census) found that 180,657 households were engaged in manual

This little girl's home was destroyed by flooding in Tamil Nadu in November 2015. Reports found that Dalits were discriminated against in disaster relief following the floods. IDSN distributed the findings widely and pushed for action from humanitarian stakeholders to address this issue. Photo by SASY/National Dalit Watch



scavenging. According to Jan Sahas the figure is higher.

Jan Sahas organised a panel discussion on "Ending Manual Scavenging: Time for Action" in India in 2015 in collaboration with UN Women and Human Rights Watch. The panel brought together practitioners, policy makers and UN representatives to deliberate on ways to accelerate implementation of "The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013" and strengthen initiatives by national and state governments for identification, rehabilitation and empowerment of manual scavengers. Jan Sahas furthermore took part in important meetings with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment – Central Monitoring and organized a State level consultation to share the experiences of people from the Manual Scavenging community in Bihar in June 2015.

There were numerous stories in 2015 of the death of manual scavengers, especially those who died from poisonous gases in manholes where they were submerged with no protective gear. Forced and bonded labour also continued to include great risks for those involved both due to the health hazards of the work but also if the workers tried to escape, with cases of limbs being chopped off or retaliation violence.

A National Consultation on ending forced labour in the garment sector was organized by Rights Education and Development (READ) and the Dalit Solidarity Network-UK, and supported by NCDHR. The consultation took place in May, addressed the problem of forced labour in the textile mills in a local, national and international context – and heard from grassroots activists, national campaigners and international Trade Unions, NGOs and businesses. A report¹⁰⁴ was published summing up the challenges presented and the ways forward.

Dalit children and child labour

Dalit children also continued to be especially at risk of child labour and child slavery in India. In 2015, the report 'Cotton's Forgotten Children'¹⁰⁵, was released by the Stop Child Labour Campaign and the India Committee on the Netherlands (ICN) finding that Dalit children were engaged in child labour in India's cottonseed industry, are not in school and are subjected to hazardous work and harmful chemicals. ICN also released the report 'Rock Bottom'¹⁰⁶ – Modern Slavery and Child Labour in India Granite Quarries and the report *Soiled Seeds*¹⁰⁷ - Child Labour and Underpayment of Women in Vegetable Seed Production in India. The reports found that Dalits, low castes and minorities were the majority of those engaged in child labour in these industries also.

In May 2015 experts warned¹⁰⁸ that the amendments being

adopted to India's child labour law, allowing children under 14 to work in 'family industries', will push even more Dalit children out of an education and into child labour. The term 'family enterprises' is widely interpreted and a common euphemism for industries such as carpet-weaving, beedi-rolling, gem-polishing, lock-making and matchbox-making.

In response to this IDSN and the India Committee on the Netherlands had an Op-ed published in the Guardian entitled 'Diluting India's child labour law will trap families in cycle of poverty'¹⁰⁹ and the Guardian also ran the Op-Ed 'India's child labour 'reforms' could make it a dangerous place to invest'¹¹⁰ by the Director of IDSN associate Anti-Slavery International, Aidan McQuade. Both argued that opening up for child labour of any kind is going to make already weak implementation of child labour laws even weaker and underlined how caste discrimination makes Dalits very vulnerable to child labour as their educational opportunities are limited.

Discrimination in education

Discrimination against Dalits in the educational system remained a widespread problem in India. Alienation, social exclusion, and physical abuse transcended all levels of education, from primary education to university. Illiteracy and drop-out rates among Dalits are very high due to a number of social and physical factors. Legislation and measures that have been taken to combat this continued to be inadequately implemented.

The forms of structural discrimination and abuse that Dalit children faced in schools were often so stigmatising

that they were forced to drop out of school. One of the main issues is the discriminatory practices conducted by teachers, which may include corporal punishment, denial of access to school water supplies, segregation in classrooms and Dalits being made to eat separately, or forced to clean school toilets. 2015 was abound with new examples of this.

In addition, Dalit children face discriminatory attitudes from fellow students and the community as a whole, in particular from dominant caste members who perceive education for Dalits as a threat to village hierarchies and power relations. Intolerance, prejudice and harassment towards Dalits was also prevalent in institutions of higher education where discrimination is practiced by dominant caste students, teachers, and administrations. The caste bias manifested itself in the way teachers ignored Dalit students and unjustly failed them in exams, in social exclusion and physical abuse, and in the unwillingness of the university administration to assist Dalits and support them.

In response to this, the National Dalit Movement for Justice – NCDHR, initiated a Campaign towards Zero Discrimination in School Education Institutions in 2015. A National Public Hearing was organized on 19 May to visibilise the torture children are subjected to due to their caste, ethnicity or religion. The goal was to push for a strong policy and law on Zero discrimination and violence against children in educational institutions. A coalition was also formed to draft guidelines on the mechanisms required for enabling discrimination and violence free school education. Other IDSN members also continued to work on this issue.

Disaster relief and caste discrimination

Another area of work for NCDHR, was drawing attention to caste discrimination in relief operations following natural disasters. In January 2015, National Dalit Watch – NCDHR, held a National Convention on Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction in New Delhi. The convention was attended by experts from across the country who had been on the frontline of disaster responses. Their tales revealed a shocking and consistent pattern of discrimination and exclusion faced by vulnerable communities in disaster response, mitigation and risk reduction. Participants strategized on how to combat this type of discrimination through political advocacy for legislative amendments and through on the ground policy and practice.

In November 2015, devastating floods in Tamil Nadu saw this issue brought to the fore again. An assessment report of the situation in Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu, following the devastating floods, found that Dalit households were not receiving relief from the Government, despite non-Dalits having received such relief. Statistics in the Cuddalore report reveal that 95% of the houses surveyed that were found damaged due to the flooding, were Dalit houses, while Dalits have not received any shelter relief from the Government. The report documenting discrimination, "No Respite for Dalits in Disaster Response, Tamil Nadu"¹¹¹, was released by National Dalit Watch and Social Awareness Society for Youth – Tamil Nadu.

IDS

Education

2015 examples of discrimination in education

- **Teacher Jailed for forcing Dalit boy to clean faeces**
- **Report: School authorities in Rajasthan use Dalit children to clean the toilets**
- **In a Rajasthan village, Dalit Children are afraid to go to school**
- **Teacher beats up Dalit boy for touching non-Dalits' meal, held**
- **Shame! Dalit girl set on fire for pursuing education**
- **Millions of Indian children are being denied school education due to discrimination**

this to key humanitarian actors, the EU, UN and media contacts including Reuters. Reuters picked up on the story and released the article [Scant aid for low-caste villagers hit by Tamil Nadu floods](#)¹¹³, which was carried by media across the world. In December National Dalit Watch released the comprehensive report [“State Level Assessment on Monitoring Responses towards Affected Dalit Communities in Tamil Nadu Floods 2015”](#)¹¹⁴. The organization READ also released a brief report on “Forced discrimination and betrayal of rights and dignity” finding that the clean-up after the flooding in Chennai was being forced upon Dalits of the Arundhati caste.

Inclusive budgets and diversion of allocations

2015 saw devastating cuts made to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes sub-plans (SCSP & TSP). The budget cuts made to the SCSP & TSP amount to a 60% cut in allocations for Dalits and a 53% cut in allocations for Adivasis¹¹⁵, according to the NCDHR. The cuts were made despite several meetings held between NACSTL, a coalition working to further the rights of Dalits and Adivasis and secure the budget components set out for them, and the Ministry of Finance. The sub-plans are meant to ensure that Dalits and Adivasis who suffer discrimination limiting their access to general budget resources are secured allocations. Beyond budgets being cut, IDSN members reported that funds budgeted for Dalits and Adivasis by the state were often diverted to unrelated posts. The NACSTL coalition intensified work throughout 2015 to counter further budget cuts in 2016 and to demand the proper allocations of the SCSP & TSP budgets.

“Pursuing unabashedly and openly a pro-rich policy, the Modi Budget outlines a corporate vision of India that unashamedly eats into the budgetary allocations meant for the millions of its poorest and neediest citizens, the Dalits and Adivasis,”

Paul Divakar, General Secretary of NCDHR

Protests following the January cuts resulted in that Dalit leader Paul Divakar from NCDHR and 29 other activists were arrested following a peaceful gathering of over 500 students gathered in front of the Indian parliament. This type of clampdown on voices of dissent has been widespread in India in 2015.

Shrinking space for civil society & censorship

IDSN members and associates report that space for civil society in India is shrinking with tight regulations of foreign contributions for organisations working on Dalit rights

UN and World Bank Chiefs

UN and World Bank chiefs: The need for inclusive growth in India

Speaking at the Indian Council of World Affairs in January 2015 UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed the need for inclusive growth for shared prosperity saying that, “millions of Dalits, Tribals and others still face discrimination, especially the women and girls.” On a visit to Gujarat the World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, similarly cautioned that while India was an accelerating economy, “Indian society has an enduring exclusion that is based, among other things, on caste identities. This bias can impede shared prosperity, serving as a basis for discrimination in many spheres, including in employment and other markets, as well as in public services.”

and the harassment of Dalit human rights activists. This includes false charges and torture. Some Dalit organisations have faced having their funding frozen, without just cause. Censorship of films dealing with the issue of caste discrimination and blocking of Dalit events have also been witnessed.

In November, a Dalit folk singer was arrested¹¹⁶ and kept in custody and charged with sedition solely on the grounds of singing songs with a message to close down state owned liquor stores. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch called for global public support for his release. He was later granted bail.

A documentary on the caste system and eating habits was withdrawn from a film festival in New Delhi. According to the BBC¹¹⁷, the documentary “Caste on the Menu Card” was the only film among the 35 sent to India’s information and broadcasting ministry to be refused clearance. These incidents are just a few in a wave of oppression of voices of dissent by the Indian Government and can be seen as expressions of the growing political intolerance in the country. In response to what is seen as a widespread clampdown on the freedom of expression dozens of prominent Indian scholars, artists, writers and filmmakers have returned their National awards in protest¹¹⁸. As documented earlier in this chapter, police torture and harassment of Dalit human rights defenders are also seen as attempts to silence their resistance.

Nepal

The struggle to end caste discrimination in Nepal in 2015 was dominated by the 2015 Nepal earthquake and the relief efforts that followed, as well as by the long awaited adoption of a new constitution in Nepal. Following reports of discrimination in earthquake relief efforts in Nepal, IDSN issued an urgent appeal to stop caste discrimination in relief delivery and rehabilitation, that was sent to key humanitarian actors, the media and policy makers. IDSN raised awareness of Dalit demands in the lead up to the adoption of the constitution and monitored developments in Nepal as the political situation in the country worsened and a blockade, stopping essential fuel and food supplies from India to Nepal, became a humanitarian disaster.

In 2015, IDSN was joined by three new full members in Nepal, the Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organisation (NNDSWO), Jagaran Media Center (JMC) and the Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO). IDSN’s members worked hard to raise awareness, within the Dalit and non-Dalit communities, of Nepal’s ‘Untouchability Bill’, which is still far from being adequately implemented across the country. With the lack of implementation of key legislation combined with the ingrained discriminatory attitudes that continue to dominate Nepal, caste discrimination remained a major human rights issue in Nepal.

These issues were all raised at the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Nepal in November, to which IDSN and key Dalit NGOs in Nepal had submitted a report. IDSN members from Nepal also participated throughout the year in IDSN teams at UN events, including the IDSN side-event on caste and gender based forced and bonded labour at the 29th session of the Human Rights Council, the UPR Nepal Review and the Minority Forum.

The vulnerable situation of Dalit women, suffering multiple discrimination in Nepal, also continued to be a key focal point of IDSN and members in Nepal.

Earthquake relief – urgent action

On the 25 April disaster struck Nepal in the form of giant earthquake destroying over 500,000 homes, causing over 8500 deaths and injuring more than 20,000 people. Infrastructure in Nepal was damaged, roads blocked and in the aftermath of the earthquake people suffered from lack of food, clean water, shelter and medical care. While all those affected struggled, Dalits were found to be particularly disadvantaged as reports came in that ingrained caste discrimination was leaving them out of relief efforts.

“We have not received relief because we are Dalits ... only big people know when the relief is coming ... first they distribute it among their near and dear ones and the leftovers will be distributed to Dalits,”

Dalit woman interviewed by the team

In May the [Waiting for Justice in Response – Caste discrimination in aid delivery following the 2015 Nepal Earthquake](#)¹¹⁹ report was released by IDSN members in collaboration with the Asian Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF) and National Dalit Watch in India (NDW). The report covered 37 villages, in the ten worst affected districts in Nepal.

The report uncovered that sixty percent of Dalits interviewed felt there has been willful negligence due to caste prejudice and that they experienced discrimination in relief and rescue services when compared with members of the dominant castes. Sixty-five percent believed that authorities had wilfully ignored bringing rescue and relief efforts to Dalit locations. The assessment team found discrimination in access to shelter, food aid, health and water and sanitation. Immediate needs for Dalit families were outlined in the report. On the basis of this report IDSN issued an [urgent appeal to combat caste discrimination in Nepal earthquake relief efforts](#)¹²⁰ on the 3 June and distributed this widely to key humanitarian stakeholders, funders, policy-makers at the EU and the UN, other International human rights organisations and the media.

A European Parliament [urgency resolution](#)¹²¹ on the situation in Nepal after the earthquake was issued on the 11 June – highlighting caste discrimination. Amnesty International also raised concern over caste discrimination in relief work in Nepal in their report [“Earthquake recovery must safeguard human rights”](#)¹²², based on among other things meetings with IDSN member the Feminist Dalit Organisation in Nepal.

National and global media reported on the issue of caste discrimination in earthquake relief efforts including [Huffington Post](#)¹²³, [LA Times](#)¹²⁴ and [Mashable](#)¹²⁵, the latter of which interviewed IDSN on the issue. All of IDSN’s members in Nepal were heavily engaged in relief work, mapping and advocacy in relation to earthquake recovery efforts in Nepal. The setting up of an efficient and inclusive government mechanism for recovery and reconstruction efforts was not concluded in 2015, which seriously hampered delivery of relief to affected communities, including the most vulnerable groups such as Dalits.



New constitution and Nepal-India blockade

The after-effects of the earthquake have been devastating for Nepal, exacerbated by a politically unstable situation. In the midst of dealing with a humanitarian disaster the long pending Nepal Constitution was to be negotiated and adopted. IDS members, alongside many other organisations in Nepal, put much effort into lobbying for the inclusion of measures to ensure Dalit rights and proportional representation to be included in the constitution document.

A scheduled and broadcasted protest rally on 4 August in Kathmandu, organized by the Joint Dalit Struggle Committee, ended in a violent altercation with the police. The Dalit activists were calling for Dalit rights to be secured in the new draft Constitution. During the rally, police were reported to have used excessive force against protesters and Durga Sob, President of the Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO) and a number of other Dalit activists. IDS also helped raise awareness of the Dalit movement in Nepal's demands to be incorporated into the constitution¹²⁶ and raised alarm when Dalit protesters were attacked by Police.

Some important changes were made to the final constitution text¹²⁷ adopted on 20 September – including a provision for the proportional representation of Dalits. Proportional inclusive principles include employment in the civil service, police and the army. While it is anticipated that amendments on Dalit inclusion will be added to the Constitution in the near future, the Dalit movement

tentatively celebrated the adoption. Special provisions have also been made in the Constitution on socio-economic rights for Dalits, i.e. in education, health, social security, land and housing “in accordance with” or “as provided by law”. Dalit civil society has noted the urgency of passing new legislation in these areas to match and specify the constitutional provisions.

There were, however, other groups in Nepal that were not pleased with the final constitution, particularly Madhesi groups along the border with India who felt that their concerns had not been met. A protest at the border between Nepal and India turned into a full blown blockade, which many believe to be supported by India. The blockade, stopping fuel and other necessary imports from coming into the landlocked country from India, has exacerbated an already critical humanitarian situation in Nepal.

Caste discrimination in the face of disaster, the India-Nepal blockade and the lack of implementation of key anti-caste legislation were all issues that were also raised at the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Nepal in November.

Caste in Nepal discussed at the UN

The UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Nepal took place on 5 November. The Dalit Civil Society Organizations' Coalition for UPR Nepal and IDS prepared and submitted a parallel report entitled “Human Rights Situation of the Dalit Community in Nepal”¹²⁸.

Nepal has been devastated by a massive earthquake as well as a blockade on fuel and other goods. The population is suffering and Dalits are particularly marginalised and vulnerable to exploitation, starvation and human rights violations, as they are discriminated against on multiple levels in Nepal. Photo by Jakob Carlsen.

“We acknowledge that the Government has taken strides over the past years to ensure Dalit rights through legislative measures. However, we are demanding a national action plan to eliminate caste discrimination and an effective coordinating mechanism to oversee its implementation. There is also a need for state led public campaigns and institutional reform, as we have noted with deep concern that the state is yet to fulfil its strong commitment for inclusive and non-discriminatory institutions.” Bhakta Bishwakarma, National President of Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNSWO) commenting on the UN Nepal UPR review

A summary note with recommendations¹²⁹ was shared widely with UN member states, and the core content discussed with diplomatic missions.

Seventeen United Nations member states raised their concerns and recommendations on caste discrimination¹³⁰ at the review, urging the Government, in particular, to ensure effective implementation of the Caste-Based Discrimination and Untouchability Act of 2011. States also recommended engaging and addressing the needs of vulnerable communities, including Dalits, in earthquake relief and securing equal opportunities in education for the communities.

Representatives from Dalit NGOs in Nepal including IDS members JMC and NNSWO took part in the review and lobby meetings arranged by IDS ahead of the review. IDS, JMC, FEDO and NNSWO prepared the [press release](#) ‘Nepal - UN Members deeply concerned about caste discrimination and untouchability’ and distributed this widely.

The [final UPR report](#) included nine recommendations related to caste discrimination. The Government accepted the recommendations, but categorized them as “already implemented or in the process of implementation”. This raised widespread concern among the Dalit NGO's as it is widely known that currently the legislation is very far from implemented, and underlines the need for a national action plan. The lack of access to justice and implementation of legislation to protect Dalits in Nepal was also brought to the fore at the [UN Minority Forum](#)¹³² in late November.

Durga Sob, President of the Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO) [spoke on the panel](#)¹³³ of the forum and explained to participants that there is a “lack of accountability for law enforcement when it comes to Dalits.” Sob reiterated the recommendations given at the UPR of Nepal, endorsing

the national obligations regarding access to justice and a need to strengthen the criminal justice system of Nepal in favour of Dalits and Dalit women in particular, by ensuring Dalit equal representation in all justice sector institutions. In addition to the general situation for Dalits in relation to systems of justice in Nepal Ms. Sob also raised the specific vulnerability of Dalit women, a theme that has been a significant part of all IDS members' work in Nepal.

Access to justice

Lack of access to justice highlighted in key reports

In its 2015 Annual Report¹³⁴, Amnesty International highlights, in line with IDS and its members, that caste and other discrimination remained rife in Nepal and that, “victims were subject to exclusion and ill-treatment, and torture including rape and other sexual violence.” It was furthermore found that,

“The Caste-based Discrimination and Untouchability Act of 2011, was applied in only a handful of criminal cases due to a lack of awareness about the Act and victims' fears of reporting attacks. Rape laws continued to be inadequate and to reflect discriminatory attitudes towards women.”

Likewise, the Nepal country profile of the US State Department report¹³⁵ states that, “despite passage of the Caste Discrimination and Untouchability Act in 2011, a rigid caste system continued to operate throughout the country in many areas of religious, professional, and daily life. Societal discrimination against lower castes, women, and persons with disabilities remained common, especially in rural areas...”

The Asian Legal Resource Centre & Jagaran Media Center (JMC) report for the Nepal 2015 UPR furthermore states that, “Dalits' limited access to justice has three main causes: widespread lack of awareness of anti-discrimination law, ingrained indifference in the authorities—who refuse to register police reports, investigate cases, or prosecute those who practice ‘untouchability’—and the fear in victims of making a report when they suffer caste-based violence and discrimination. But, it is a reality that the police officials ignore or force the dismissal of cases concerning caste discrimination. Some police officers are also involved in the practice and promotion of caste-based discrimination violations.”

Multiple discrimination against Dalit women

Highlighting the status of Dalit women in Nepal, the Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO), with IDS^N input, prepared a report for the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women¹³⁶. The organizations also supported Dalit women participation in the session. The report reveals an appalling literacy rate for Dalit women at 34.8%; that 80% of Dalit women in Nepal live below the poverty line, and that access to higher education for Dalit women is 11.8% as compared to 54.5% of the total population of women in Nepal.

Rape, violence, forced prostitution and violence following inter-caste marriages continued to be key issues faced by Dalit women in Nepal due to their marginalisation along both caste and gender lines. This also leaves them at high risk of labour exploitation including forced and bonded labour.

Durga Sob from FEDO took part in the IDS^N UN side-event on Caste and Gender-based forced and bonded labour¹³⁷ in June 2015, speaking on the panel, where she outlined particular forms of forced and bonded labour that Dalit women were subjected to in Nepal. She explained that despite being outlawed, over 60,000 people are still engaged in Haliya bonded labour in Nepal, most of them Dalits. The issue of caste-based prostitution in Nepal and domestic slavery of Dalit women was also raised.

Dalit women also participated in lobbying for the inclusion of explicit mention of caste discrimination in the UN sustainable development goals, where a team of Dalit representatives from Nepal including from FEDO, NNDSWO and JMC took part in protests and meetings in New York and Washington DC as part of a programme arranged by the Asian Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF).

Pakistan

In 2015 Dalits in Pakistan continued to suffer severe discrimination including in education, access to the labour market, access to justice and other basic human rights. Key issues that IDS^N and member the Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN) have addressed throughout the year are the particular vulnerability of Dalit children and women, forced and bonded labour, political participation and land rights. Again this year drought in the Thar desert hit Dalits hard and PDSN worked to alert authorities to the urgent need for immediate humanitarian assistance and prevention.

The space for civil society in Pakistan continues to shrink and organisations working on minority rights are finding it increasingly difficult to operate in the country. In a positive development however, political participation of Dalits in Pakistan has been reported to be increasing with several Dalit candidates winning political seats in local elections in 2015. Member organizations of PDSN also organized awareness raising sessions, trainings, and workshops on human rights and interfaith harmony as well as securing articles on Dalit rights in key media outlets.

UN child rights review of Pakistan

In July 2015 IDS^N and PDSN submitted an alternative report¹³⁸ to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) review of Pakistan, to take place in May 2016. The report highlighted persistent discrimination of Dalit children in school, with teachers and non-Dalit students often excluding Dalits from equal participation and physically and verbally abusing Dalit children. The curriculum's emphasis on Islam also serving to further alienate Dalit children.

This exclusion results in low enrolment rates of Dalit children and high drop out rates. The lack of education in turn results in Dalit children being extremely vulnerable to forced and bonded labour and other forms of exploitation. Furthermore the need for preventative action in relation to natural disaster such as drought, that has killed more than 100 Dalit children in the past years, were also addressed in the report. Forced conversions and abductions of Dalits was also a key focus of the report.

Forced conversion, rape and abduction

Throughout 2015 PDSN reported on dozens of forced conversions, rape, murder and sexual abuse of Dalit girls. In their work to combat the abuse of Dalit girls, PDSN activists were met with threats and harassment. In a much needed move, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said¹³⁹ that as part of the National Action Plan against Terrorism, the Government

Forced conversion

11 year old Dalit girl forcefully converted to Islam

In 2015 an 11 year old Dalit Girl, Seema Oad, was kidnapped, forcefully converted to Islam and married to a Muslim boy. Civil society organisations, including PDSN, Child Rights Advocacy Network and the Pakistan Hindu Sewa raised Selma's case in the media and in court but the case is still pending. In the meantime Selma remains in a shelter home in Karachi, awaiting her fate. This is but one of the examples of abduction and conversion in 2015 in Pakistan.

will make forced marriage of young girls from minority communities a punishable offence. Mr. Sharif said, "This is religious persecution, which is unacceptable."

Forced and Bonded labour of Dalits in Pakistan

Forced and bonded labour of Dalit men, women and children in Pakistan continued to be a massive problem in 2015 and a key focus area for the work of PDSN and IDS^N. In June 2015 IDS^N held a UN side-event on Caste-based forced and bonded labour with case examples from India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh and speakers from the UN as well as IDS^N members. Zulfiqar Shah from the Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network was scheduled to attend the event, but was unable to travel to Geneva, his statement was instead read out by the IDS^N Executive Director.

"There is a clear link between bondage and caste in the case of Pakistan. The majority of bonded labourers are located in the agricultural sector mainly in rural Sindh and in brick kilns throughout Punjab. More than 90% of those released from bondage during the last ten years through court orders in Sindh were from the scheduled castes."
Zulfiqar Shah, PDSN, Statement at UN side-event.

In the statement Mr. Shah pointed out that while the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act in 1992 declared bonded labour outlawed, and provided fines and imprisonments for violators, there is weak or no implementation of the law. The National Policy and Plan of Action 2001, a time bound plan that also created a substantial fund for the release and rehabilitation of bonded labourers, was also not implemented. All dates set out in the plan expired without any concrete results achieved or outlined actions taken, the statement read. These failures continue despite Pakistan having EU's GSP+ status, which requires Pakistan to bring bonded labour and caste discrimination to an end as the incentive scheme is binding to the effective implementation of 27 conventions including core Human Rights and Labour Conventions.

Despite failing on implementation of national legislation Mr. Shah also pointed out that the state has failed in bringing in any fundamental changes in the economy or landholding, or to bring in a comprehensive labour policy to protect labour from exploitation. There is a lack of understanding of the linkage between caste and bondage, he stated, and no serious attention is paid to these concerns by the international community. He also offered recommendations on ways to combat caste-based bonded labour in Pakistan at the event. His statement and recommendation were also reflected in the report¹⁴⁰ from the event.

Job quotas and land rights

In order to create opportunities for Dalits to leave bonded labour and escape poverty PDSN worked in 2015 to lobby for land rights for Dalits and job quotas or reservations earmarked for Dalits and minorities in Pakistan.

In follow up to a 19 June 2014 Supreme Court judgement, for the rights of minorities in Pakistan, various organizations including PDSN members had lobby meetings for the implementation of a 5 percent job quota for minorities. This included a push for the Government of Sindh province to take action to implement this quota, which would be of particular benefit to the Dalit communities. The Sindh Government also decided to recruit 2000 Hindu and Christian officers¹⁴¹ for the protection of temples and churches, after a Hindu temple in Sindh was attacked and burned earlier in the year.

PDSN member organisations were active in lobbying for residential land rights for Dalits in Pakistan and a protest for Residential Land Rights for Scheduled Caste community was held in the front of Punjab assembly. A PDSN member also facilitated that 47 Dalit student received Government scholarships.

Shrinking space for civil society but political participation of Dalits rises

While the space for civil society in Pakistan became ever more restricted in 2015, with Dalit human rights defenders receiving threats and experiencing many difficulties in carrying out their work, political participation at the local level was reported to be on the rise. Two Hindu minority politicians were elected into the state Senate in 2015 and a large number of Dalits won seats in local elections in districts of Sindh and Punjab. PDSN reports that this represents a drastic change in the current political scenario and history and that the inclusion of Dalits in local government could help resolve Dalit concerns at the district level and change ingrained perceptions.



The Bangladesh Dalit Women Federation and Nagorik Uddyog jointly organised a human chain on 9th December to form part of the global campaign 'Orange the World: End Violence against Women and Girls', launched by UN Women. The organisations put specific focus on the situation of Dalit women and girls in 2015. Photo by BDERM.

Bangladesh

While important advances have been made in Bangladesh in terms of visibility of Dalit issues, much remains to be done. Dalits continue to live an extremely marginalised existence, with Dalit women particularly at a disadvantage.

IDSN's work in 2015 on Dalit issues in Bangladesh focused on gaining global exposure to the problems faced by Dalits in Bangladesh, reporting on the rights of Dalit children to the United Nations, and expanding the IDSIN network with new members in Bangladesh.

IDSN members in Bangladesh continued to lobby for the enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Act, Dalit women's rights, and equal access to education, health, housing and water and sanitation. Members also worked to take up cases of atrocities and other human rights violations against Dalits and fight for justice. Important new reports and briefing materials were also published this year.

International advocacy and networking

In August, IDSIN and the Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights movement (BDERM) submitted the report "Dalit Children in Bangladesh"¹⁴¹ to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) examination of Bangladesh. The report examines the current situation of Dalit children in Bangladesh and provides information about the implementation gaps in the enforcement of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, and makes recommendations for the Committee's

examination. The observations in the report were based on independent studies and reports, case documentation, and recommendations by other UN human rights bodies sourced from members and compiled by IDSIN. The CRC Concluding observations subsequently raised concern over discrimination and violence against Dalit children in particular, and lack of access to education for them.

In September, The IDSIN Executive Director visited Bangladesh and participated in dialogue meetings with a wide range of Dalit rights organisations, UNDP, parliamentarians and other key stakeholders. Following the visit the Dalit rights organisations Network of Non-Mainstreamed Marginalized Communities (NNMC¹⁴³) joined IDSIN as a member. The visit gave significant new input to IDSIN on the situation in Bangladesh, raised awareness among key stakeholders and opened doors for new collaborative partnerships.

In November IDSIN member, the Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM) organised the 3rd regional meeting of the Asia Parliamentarians Forum on Dalit Concerns (APFDC), held in Dhaka. Nineteen parliamentarians from India, Nepal and Bangladesh participated in the meeting aimed at creating lasting policy change and collaboration in the region.

Throughout the year IDSIN also facilitated global exposure to the plight of Dalits in Bangladesh, for example, in the article "A tragedy of dignity: life as one of Bangladesh's 'untouchables'"¹⁴⁴ by global news outlet VICE, and through

IDSIN newsletters. IDSIN also published and distributed an IDSIN briefing note on Bangladesh¹⁴⁵ and an overview¹⁴⁶ of references to caste-based discrimination in Bangladesh in reviews and reports of UN human rights mechanisms. In thematic submissions to the UN and other actors IDSIN also continued to bring up caste discrimination in Bangladesh and specifically the situation of Dalit women in Bangladesh.

Advocacy for Dalit rights at the national level

Some of the specific challenges highlighted by IDSIN members in Bangladesh in 2015 include effective implementation of existing policies and laws, lack of awareness among the key policy makers and authorities, lack of disaggregated data, and lack of good governance practices at local government level, resulting in Dalits being deprived of the resources allocated to them.

IDSIN members in Bangladesh, BDERM and NNMC, continued to lobby for the enactment of the anti-discrimination act. They highlighted the need for the implementation of legislation addressing caste discrimination specifically and held meetings with key officials. They also organised workshops and awareness raising events with the aim of ensuring that the law becomes a reality. International Dignity Day was held by several Dalit NGOs, including NNMC, where more than 800 Dalits participated and the Speaker of the National Parliament committed to pursuing the Anti-Discrimination Act.

Other demands advocated for in 2015 by members in Bangladesh included education quotas and separate budgets for Dalits. NNMC submitted a memorandum to the Ministry of Finance, together with other NGOs, to push for separate budget allocations for Dalit welfare. Meetings were also held with local administration on land rights of marginalised communities and employment opportunities.

Promoting increased access to education for Dalits have also been central to the work of BDERM and NNMC in 2015. BDERM has given support to Dalit students in admission procedures and applications and have lobbied universities to take up Dalit issues as a part of their discourse and make policies on quotas for Dalit students. In 2015, six universities in Bangladesh introduced quotas for Dalit students. At the primary education level NNMC held a meeting with the Ministry of Education with regards to the situation of Dalit children and access to primary education and supported youth Dalit leaders advocacy campaigns on education.

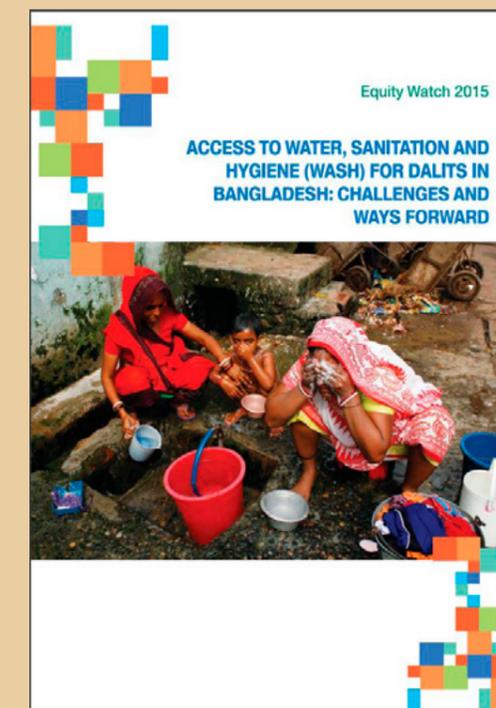
Seminars and workshops were held throughout the year including the BDERM National seminar on "Dalits' Right to Health: Accessibility and Reality" in March, where representatives from national and international organisations working on health issues participated and gave commitments to consider health rights of Dalits in their future strategic plans. NNMC also held a round table

Briefing notes and report

New BDERM briefing notes on Dalits in Bangladesh

- [Access to justice and Dalits in Bangladesh](#)¹⁴⁷
- [Dalit women in Bangladesh](#)¹⁴⁸
- [Water and sanitation and Dalits in Bangladesh](#)¹⁴⁹
- [Untouchability in Bangladesh](#)¹⁵⁰
- [Land rights and Dalits in Bangladesh](#)¹⁵¹
- [Housing situation of Dalits in Bangladesh](#)¹⁵²
- [Dalits and education in Bangladesh](#)¹⁵³
- [Dalit Children in Bangladesh](#)¹⁵⁴

Report on water & sanitation



event on "Empowerment of Dalit people: our responsibility" at the national level with participation of the National Human Rights Commission, policy makers, human rights activists and journalists.

The organisations also engaged in signature campaigns, marches, and supported legal action to be taken in

atrocities cases against Dalits. BDERM and NNMC have been very active in 2015 in taking up legal cases and creating awareness of violence and atrocities against Dalits and highlighting the specific threat of rape and violence against Dalit women due to the three-fold marginalization along both caste, religious and gender lines.

A [Public Hearing](#)¹⁵⁵ on “Discrimination and Atrocities on Dalit and Excluded Communities in Bangladesh” was held by BDERM, and fact-finding missions were carried out in specific cases. At the local level BDERM district committees also worked to change policies and practice and increase awareness of the situation of Dalits and the discrimination they suffer. District committees furthermore helped to gather information and data for a BDERM needs assessment in 36 districts. The information was submitted to Government officials for the production of a Government development plan in relation to Dalits. Several atrocity cases were also taken up by the media including the [killing of a Dalit youth](#)¹⁵⁶ from a sweepers colony.

“We’re looked down on ... we are not connected to the rest of the world.” Ratan Basfur, a young Dalit

Media advocacy and new publications

Media advocacy with the aim of sensitising the general population to the exclusion faced by the Dalit community were an important part of IDS N members’ work in Bangladesh. For example, NNMC launched a digital media campaign on issues faced by Dalits and tribals in Bangladesh, produced a television commercial in connection with this and facilitated that a rural Dalit woman was brought in to speak on Dalit women’s issues on a national TV talk-show. NNMC furthermore trained young Dalit leaders in media advocacy.

Several important new reports and briefing notes were published by BDERM in 2015. Full length reports on the [right to education](#)¹⁵⁷ and [water and sanitation](#)¹⁵⁸ were published as part of an Equity Watch series on Dalits. Eight thematic briefing notes were also published by BDERM and subsequently made available on the IDS N website and distributed through the IDS N newsletter and digital platforms. NNMC conducted research on Dalit Communities Living in Railway Colonies and railway lands in the North of Bangladesh in 2015, to be published in early 2016.

Other caste-affected countries

While the bulk of IDS N’s work in 2015 has been focused on Dalits in South Asia, IDS N has also been engaged in awareness raising and advocacy in relation to disseminating information on caste discrimination in countries outside of South Asia, including Yemen, Mauritania and Japan.

In June 2015, IDS N released a [briefing note](#)¹⁵⁹ on caste-based discrimination in Africa, Yemen and diaspora communities offering an overview of some of the key documentation available, including UN references to caste. The briefing note was shared through IDS N’s communications channels and directly with UN officials. IDS N associate Minority Rights Group International highlighted caste discrimination in Yemen, Japan and Mauritania in their State of the World’s Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2015 [report](#)¹⁶⁰.

Yemen’s outcaste Muhamasheen, literally meaning ‘marginalized ones’, previously referred to as ‘Al Akhdam’, continued to suffer in the war torn country. A ground-breaking UNICEF mapping, promoted by IDS N in 2015, revealed an enormous welfare gap between the Muhamasheen and the general population.

The mapping of 9,200 Muhamasheen households was carried out by UNICEF and the Social Welfare Fund (SWF) in Yemen and revealed drastic disparities in education, housing, child protection and water and sanitation between the Muhamasheen community and the general population.

IDS N released a [news article](#)¹⁶¹ on the survey findings and distributed this widely. The IDS N news was also carried by global humanitarian news site ReliefWeb. While it has been widely known that this community is particularly disadvantaged, this mapping is the first time statistical evidence is brought forward to support this knowledge, and the figures are alarming.

In May 2015, Minority Rights Group published the [report](#) ‘Still Far From Freedom: The Struggle of Mauritania’s Haratine Women’ highlighting how the women of the outcaste Haratine community continue to suffer severe discrimination and caste-based slavery. IDS N promoted this report through its communication channels and shared it with relevant officials.

In relation to caste discrimination in Japan several global news articles surface on this in 2015, that were also promoted through the IDS N newsletter and website.

Dalit Solidarity Networks

In the Netherlands, Germany, UK, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Belgium national Dalit Solidarity Networks worked to raised awareness of caste based discrimination with the Government, the general population and businesses. The networks pushed for action from the Government and tried to build understanding of the issue with people in their countries through events and media work. Many of the networks also engaged in working with the corporate sector to push for measures to combat caste-based slavery and discrimination.

Calling for action on caste, modern slavery and business

The Dalit Solidarity Network in the UK and the Dalit Network Netherlands member, India Committee on the Netherlands, were very engaged in raising the issue of caste in relation to labour, slavery and big business.

India Committee on the Netherlands (ICN) produced and disseminated reports on natural stone/stone quarries and two on the seeds sector in India – and various articles on the garment industry which show that Dalits, people of low caste and Adivasi are the main victims of child labour, modern forms of slavery and exploitation. All three reports and the articles led to parliamentary questions with promises and action on dialogue with the Indian government and pressure on companies. In the case of the cotton and vegetable seeds sector several multinational and Indian seed companies have come together with NGOs and unions in India to work on tackling child labour and increasing wages.

ICN were also part of the negotiating team of NGOs working with trade organizations in the garment sectors, unions and government on a so-called Covenant (binding agreement) in the sector, and were able to include the Dalits as specific group in the section on child labour and forced labour in the document.

The Dalit Network Netherlands also gave input to the UN Special Rapporteur on slavery, Urmila Bhoola, for her report on global supply chains. The information on modern forms of slavery – especially of Dalits – in the garment and natural stone industry formed part of the final report. The network also participated and gave written input in the two-day meeting organized by the OHCHR on a UN Guidance Tool on caste discrimination with a focus on specific supply chains.

In the UK the Dalit Solidarity Network UK continued its work as a member of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI). The Director of DSN-UK, Meena Varma, is an ETI Board member.

DSN-UK as a member of the Tamil Nadu Multi Stakeholder

Reports

Reports - caste & business

Rock Bottom¹⁶² – Modern Slavery and Child Labour in India Granite Quarries

“The interest on the loan is often so high - up to 48 percent per year - that workers can hardly pay off the loan. This debt-bondage is directly linked to the fact that more than three-quarters of the workers are Dalits (outcasts) or from the lowest castes and extra vulnerable because of discrimination.”

Cotton's Forgotten Children¹⁶³ – Almost half a million Indian children produce cottonseed

“Almost half a million Indian children are working to produce the cottonseed that is the basis for our garments and all the other textile products that we use. Around 200,000 of them are below 14 years of age.” “Most of the children working in cottonseed farms belong to poor Dalit (outcaste), Adivasi (tribal) or Backward Castes families.”

Soiled Seeds¹⁶⁴ - Child Labour and Underpayment of Women in Vegetable Seed Production in India

“Almost 156,000 Indian children are producing vegetable seeds (tomato, hot pepper, okra), of which 50,000 are below 14 years of age. The large majority of them are either Dalits, low caste or Adivasi (tribals). All of them are exposed to harsh working conditions, including poisonous pesticides and long working days. They mostly drop out of school between 11 and 13 years of age.”

group continued to provide its expertise on caste discrimination and called for improvements in the supply chains. DSN-UK is a lead NGO in the ETI Rajasthan Stone Group, which aims to build a sustainable model and framework that can help this sector address core labour rights issues. The Group has been working with various partners, including companies, NGOs, trade unions and local industry players, to better understand the labour conditions in Rajasthan’s export sandstone sector. The opening activities concentrate on Health and Safety, and also a good buy in from the local NGOs, including Centre for Dalit Rights and Gravis, both with a clear Dalit focus.

The DSN-UK Director also gave a presentation on caste discrimination in supply chains to the ETI in Norway giving recommendations to the Norwegian ETI company members; this had been facilitated through the Dalit Network in Norway who were also active in pushing for corporate sector awareness of this issue in Norway. Ten different companies, including some of Norway’s biggest garment and ‘aluminium’ retailers attended the meeting. The retailers were shocked at the scale of the caste problem in India.

DSN-UK and Rights Education and Development (READ) partnered for a project funded by Textile Recycling for Aid and Development (TRAID), aimed at ending the Sumangali Scheme affecting Dalit girls. As part of the project, a National Consultation was organised by READ and supported by the NCDHR in May 2015. It addressed

the problem of forced labour in the textile mills from a local, national and international context – and heard from grassroots activists, national campaigners and international Trade Unions, NGOs and business. Meena Varma also spoke at the IDSN side event on caste and gender based forced and bonded labour at the UN Human Rights Council.

Lobbying for Government concern over caste discrimination and more NGO action

The DSN-UK Honorary Chair and long term supporter, Jeremy Corbyn MP, was elected the leader of the UK's Labour party in September. While this means that he is no longer able to lead the All Party Parliamentary Group for Dalits (APPG), he will continue to pursue Dalit rights in his new position.

In March, The DSN-UK Director spoke at the Liberal Democrat's conference side event, organised by the Humanist Secular Lib Dems. The Party's Equalities Motion, and the policy paper that it endorsed at the Autumn Conference, both included a commitment to tackle caste discrimination.

Following this, in April, the Liberal Democrats launched their BAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic) manifesto, which also included a pledge to outlaw caste-based discrimination. The manifesto seeks to tackle racial discrimination and boost equal opportunities for Britain's BAME communities. Unfortunately, LibDem support in the Parliament has been greatly reduced post the General Election.

DSN-UK alongside other Dalit rights groups in the UK continued to push for the activation of the anti-caste discrimination clause in the UK Equality Act. An amendment introduced in 2013 making caste an aspect of race, is not yet implemented. To raise awareness of caste discrimination in the UK, the DSN-UK Director also gave several interviews - including to the BBC Asian Network and the Economist.

The Dalit Solidarity Network in Norway actively pursued bringing caste discrimination to the attention of state officials and the Government of Norway. The network provided written and oral input to the Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence's hearing on the new white paper on human rights. The issue was also raised on several occasions with Parliamentarians.

The DSN-Norway addressed the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Børge Brende, in a letter about the importance of involving Dalits in the relief work and in the coming reconstruction work in Nepal, after the earthquakes in April and May and gave input to the Norwegian government before the UPR hearing of Nepal. In the UPR, Norway asked a question about the Government's plans to improve inclusion of marginalized groups, such as Dalits, in the education system.

DSN Norway also met with the new State Secretary at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tore Hattrem in order to introduce the issue of caste-based discrimination. Caste-based discrimination was addressed in the Norwegian white paper on human rights, released in December 2014 and the network believes this is having an impact on Government action. Among other things, the Norwegian delegation to the UN raised the issue in 2015. In Belgium, the Dalit solidarity network SDB also addressed the Belgian delegation at the UN headquarter in New York regarding the status of Women.

The Dalit Solidarity Network – Denmark (DSN-DK) and IDSN met on several occasions with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including at the delegation to the UN in Geneva, and presented recommendations for actions at the UN and EU. At the UPR of Nepal, Denmark recommended that Nepal ensure full and effective implementation of the 2011 Caste-based Discrimination and Untouchability (Offence and Punishment) Act.

In the Netherlands, the issue of caste discrimination was brought up with the Government in the context of discussions on specific supply chains. The visit of the Dutch Prime Minister to India resulted in joint action of six NGOs including Amnesty and Greenpeace, on the narrowing space for human rights defenders and civil society in India. This also resulted in a joint op-ed in a major national daily, pertinent parliamentary questions and raising of the issue of shrinking space in India by the Dutch Minister of Trade and Development with an Indian Minister.

The Dalit Solidarity Network in Finland (DSN-Fi) also pushed for Government action on caste in 2015. DSN-Fi contacted the humanitarian aid unit of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Finnish aid organisations working in Nepal and appealed to combat caste discrimination in the post Nepal earthquake relief work.

In November, DSN-Fi also organised a discussion on "Development and Human Rights in Nepal after the Constitution". The panellists included scholars, NGO representatives and a representative of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Dalit rights was one of the themes discussed in the event and DSNFi was able to reach new audiences.

Pushing for action through the NGO sector

The DSN-Fi vice-chair was also one of the speakers in the panel discussion on the UN Post 2015 development process and inequality, at the Social Forum of Finland in April and DSN-Fi also contributed to the Post 2015 agenda position paper of the Finnish NGO task force and as a result the position paper included references to caste-based discrimination.

In the UK, the DSN-UK also engaged in advocacy with UK based NGOs. Through coordination between Christian Aid, DSN-UK, VODI and BOND - a network of UK based NGOs working in international development, seeking to foster greater collaboration on issues such as training, advocacy and fundraising. a meeting was organised for BOND members to form a Working Group on Caste Discrimination and Dalits.

In Germany the Dalit solidarity network DSiD held discussions with decision makers and donor agencies in relation to caste-based discrimination during relief following the devastating Tamil Nadu floods in South India in November 2015, sharing the report by NCDHR and SASY on caste discrimination in relief efforts.

Awareness raising, exhibitions and events

All the Dalit solidarity networks engaged in raising public awareness of the issue of caste discrimination in 2015. The DSN in Finland had a stand on caste-based discrimination and the situation of the Dalits at the World Village Festival. The stand featured a photo exhibition of Jacob Carlsen's photos of Dalits in South Asia. The festival had almost 80,000 visitors.

In the UK the 'Caste out of the Shadows'¹⁶⁵ conference was organised by Christian Aid, DSN-UK, Karuna Trust, Village Services Trust and Anti Slavery International with the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and the School of South Asian Studies in September, 2015. The conference explored the persistence of caste-based discrimination and exclusion, in relation to gender and human rights, and addressed the role of NGOs in the eradication of caste-based discrimination. In connection with this an inter-disciplinary seminar on how caste identities shape the mind called 'Minds of Caste'¹⁶⁶ was held by University College London (UCL). The Executive Director of IDSN also attended the conference and seminar.

During the weeks prior to the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to the UK, DSN-UK alongside the Awaaz Network and the South Asia Solidarity Group sent an open letter to Mr Modi, and organised protests, articles and briefings to the press and media. As a result several press pieces highlighted the growing unrest of the Modi regime and Channel 4 ran an excellent piece¹⁶⁷ featuring DSN members. The DSN-UK director also spoke at a Human Rights Watch event at the Royal Institute in October on Caste discrimination in education in India.

In Germany, the DSiD network together with Amnesty International organised the German tour on 'Violence against women – exploring Gender and Caste intersections: Experiences from India' featuring Asha Kowtal, the General Secretary of AIDMAM – The Dalit women's movement of NCDHR. The tour held events and seminars in Kiel,

Hamburg, Berlin, Bremen and Münster. The facts shared with German students and other people were frightening and shocking for most of the audience. At the same time the discussions with the Indian guests provoked a lot of solidarity among the listeners. Together with German and Indian students and volunteers DSiD also had a stall at the German Evangelical Church Assembly. Many visitors participated in a quiz on Dalits, for which you had to study the DSiD flyer. A special highlight was the dance performance on "Beauty and shame: Dalit girls, women and sexualised violence".

The Dalit Network Netherlands continued to be very active on their website Dalits.nl where over 30 articles were published, some adapted from IDSN. The website had more than 80,000 visits. The Dalit issue also figured frequently in the Dutch and English newsletter from the India Committee on the Netherlands.

In Belgium, SDB also distributed information on caste discrimination in French through their digital channels, including a special issue of their newsletter on Dalit icon and author of the Indian Constitution, Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar is still unknown to many Europeans, there is hardly any information about his life and his work available to the French speaking Belgian audience. Articles have also been added to the website www.dalit.be¹⁶⁸.

During the month of May, the Belgian version of the IDSN exhibition "260 million reasons to act" was presented at the city hall of Woluwe-Saint-Lambert (Brussels), in close cooperation with the local mayor and his administration. As a follow up to the exhibition, the mayor has invited Solidarité Dalits Belgique to the South Festival of Woluwe-Saint-Lambert, where solidarity groups had access to a large audience to present their action. Several hundred people visited the exhibition, and about one hundred people from different areas of Brussels participated at the opening ceremony and the conference. SDB also continued its educational activities in secondary schools, featuring the exhibition as well as other educational materials.

In Denmark, work on sensitizing the Danish media resulted in several interviews in Danish National Television and one of Denmark's largest newspapers Politiken wrote an article on the situation in Nepal featuring Dalit rights activist, Bhakta Bishwakarma, of IDSN member organization NNDSWO.

Organisation and finances

Membership

With the adoption of revised statutes and the [IDSN strategy 2015-2018](#)¹⁶⁹, in December 2014, effectuation of the envisaged gradual changes in membership and affiliation were initiated in the beginning of the year.

National associates from caste-affected countries were invited to become full members of IDSN. In addition, new members joined IDSN. The new members are: Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organisation – Nepal, Jagaran Media Center - Nepal, Jan Sahas - India and Network of Non-Mainstreamed Marginalized Communities (NNMC), Bangladesh.

All existing and incoming members signed up to a new Membership Declaration that stipulates members' obligations and expected contributions. Work to expand the network with new categories of affiliation, i.e. affiliates from caste-affected countries and research affiliates, was postponed due to resource constraints.

Finances and Funding

While the programmatic outcomes have been commendable in 2015, IDSN has been faced with financial constraints, which have affected sustainability and raised concern over long-term financial support. An immediate financial crisis occurred in June due to the unexpected withdrawal by one donor of a considerable funding commitment for 2015 and 2016. IDSN was able to reduce budgets and operations, and with support of another donor, HEKS, ensure that sufficient funding sustained the organisation through the year.

IDSN maintains government funding from Norway and Denmark, whereas INGO funders of IDSN's work have decreased mainly due to the phasing out of programmes in India. Generally, there is a less conducive funding environment on the global and bilateral scene with cuts in development and human rights funding and shifting priorities. In the second half of the year, fundraising efforts were intensely pursued with global human rights funders to minimize the funding deficit in 2016, and onwards. While prospects for some major grants for IDSN exist, the timeframes are not ideal.

Despite being a well-recognised organisation with a strong membership base, testimonials from top UN and EU officials about efficiency of our work and an excellent external review in 2014, IDSN is challenged due to external circumstances.

In 2015, IDSN with gratitude received funding from the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Norway, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Denmark, HEKS and DanChurchaid. A small balance from operations was carried forward to 2016, and a deficit avoided due to the willingness by HEKS to prepone its 2016 grant.

Governance

With the adoption of new statutes in December 2014, the Council decided on a new governance structure with a General Meeting (GM) for members held every three years and a Board in replacement of the Executive Group (EG). Currently, IDSN governance is in between the two structures. The funding constraints affected the timing of the first GM of IDSN originally planned to take place in 2015; which is now scheduled for March 2016 and to be held in conjunction with the 31st session on the UN Human Rights Council. At this GM, the Board will be elected, thus completing the transition to the new governance structure.

The frequency of EG meetings was higher than usual due to the funding challenge; EG members met in Geneva in March, Brussels in June and Geneva in November in connection with IDSN advocacy interventions. In addition, several SKYPE meetings were conducted.

A revised version of the IDSN Policy and Guidelines on Participation in IDSN organised events was adopted on 7 March by the EG, which also started work on an IDSN gender policy and a guiding note on additional criteria on membership.

In 2015, the Executive Group composed of the following members:

- Meena Varma, Dalit Solidarity Network, UK – Co-convenor
- Manjula Pradeep, Navsarjan Trust, India – Co-convenor
- Paul Divakar, National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, India
- Durga Sob, Feminist Dalit Organisation, Nepal
- Sandra Petersen, Dalit Solidarity Network, Norway
- Henri Tiphagne, People's Watch, India
- Rikke Nöhrind, IDSN, Ex-officio member

Secretariat

There were several changes in staffing during the year. In March, Maia Ingvardson, Program and Finance Manager, ended her long-term assignment with IDSN. Maia had been with IDSN since its inception in 2003 and worked with much dedication and a high commitment for the Dalit cause.

Marie Gertz Schlundt, IDSN UN Programme Officer, left the organization in August. She was replaced by Nina Back Andersen, in the position of International Advocacy Officer.

The position as Programme Officer - Finance and Administration, was partly covered with interim arrangements, and in late December, IDSN contracted Karen Bundgaard Andersen for the job in a part time position.

IDSN Executive Director, Rikke Nöhrind, Head of Communications, Maria Brink Schleimann and part time book-keeper, Peter Soby Pedersen, remained in their positions.

The Executive Director travelled extensively during the year, including to New York and Washington to seek remedies against the blocked IDSN ECOSOC Application, and Bangladesh. In addition, travels to Geneva, Brussels and London were undertaken for advocacy interventions, most of which involved IDSN members or partners from South Asia.

ECOSOC Application

The now 8-year deferral of IDSN's application for ECOSOC accreditation continues due to repeated questions in the NGO Committee. During this period, IDSN has received 69 written questions, posed by one member of the Committee, namely India, resulting in continuous deferral of the application by the Committee. IDSN's application is now the longest pending with the Committee. As pointed out by the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of assembly and association in the General Assembly in October 2014, the continued questioning of IDSN and deferral are "clearly unacceptable, wrong and unfair". Several states have also expressed their concern and at the June meeting, the Chair of the Committee encouraged members to reach a conclusion on the application.

IDSN Executive Director participated in the Regular Session (January) and the Special Session of the NGO Committee (May) and had meetings with several states on the continued blocking of the application. On 23 March, a [joint letter](#)¹⁷⁰ on the case was presented to US Secretary of State, John Kerry, signed by 14 international organisations. On several occasions, IDSN was invited to speak on the case at launches of the International Service on Human Rights (ISHR) Handbook on the NGO committee in Geneva and New York, at events hosted by the Government of Australia.

ECOSOC case

IDSN's ECOSOC Status – the longest pending NGO application

The International Solidarity Network (IDSN) has since 2007 sought to be accredited as an NGO with the United Nations in order to be better able to monitor and influence the work in the UN on caste discrimination. The application has been deferred at all following sessions of the Committee on NGOs, for over eight years.

During this period IDSN has received 69 written questions posed by one state, India, to which IDSN has always provided full, transparent and timely responses. During the process, no objections have been made to IDSN's application on technical or procedural grounds.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in the context of multilateral institutions has criticised India for arbitrarily blocking IDSN from obtaining UN consultative status calling it "clearly unacceptable, wrong and unfair" and he has highlighted IDSN's application for accreditation as an NGO with the UN (ECOSOC) stating:



"The case of the International Dalit Solidarity Network, an international NGO focusing on caste-based discrimination and other forms of discrimination based on work and descent, is particularly troubling: since 2008, the Network has received 64 written questions from the Committee, all raised by India. It is now the longest pending application before the Committee." (2014)

Norway has also addressed the case specifically in the UN General Assembly in 2014 stating that,

"The continued deferral for seven years of the International Dalit Solidarity Network's application for accreditation as an NGO with the UN ... is in our view unacceptable and the situation should be rectified."

For IDSN's work, it remains a considerable challenge that the application for ECOSOC accreditation has not yet been granted to ensure its free and effective association with the UN. Consultative status would provide for easy and direct access to various UN bodies, including the human rights mechanisms. In 2015 IDSN continued its battle for UN ECOSOC status.

Photo of Maina Kíai by Jean-March Ferré/UN Photo

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015

Profit and loss

(Details in note 1)

	2015 DKK	2015 EURO	2014 DKK
Opening balance	246.981,88	33.151,93	493.124,18
Income			
DanChurchAid	250.000,00	33.557,05	250.000,00
Bread for the World	0,00	0,00	401.857,00
Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2015	877.926,44	117.842,48	550.000,00
Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2014	366.639,14	49.213,22	
Membership fees recd. for DSN-DK	32.500,00	4.362,42	32.500,00
Danida	1.000.000,00	134.228,19	1.000.000,00
HEKS	360.085,00	48.333,56	422.010,90
HEKS, extraordinary grant for 2015	123.660,77	16.598,76	0,00
CCFD	0,00	0,00	163.737,00
ICCO	0,00	0,00	223.515,00
Open Society Institute	0,00	0,00	218.852,00
European Commission	279.067,25	37.458,69	0,00
Other Income	193,11	25,92	1.775,81
Interest	162,35	21,79	1.013,11
Total	3.290.234,06	441.642,16	3.265.260,82
Expenditure	3.108.900,71	417.302,11	3.511.403,12
Balance	428.315,23	57.491,98	246.981,88

Balance statement

(Details in note 1)

	2015 DKK	2015 EURO	2014 DKK
Assets Cash and Bank			
Cash at bank at 31.12	1.907.959,76	256.101,98	993.420,32
Other Assets			
Petty cash	17.738,20	2.380,97	16.043,67
Outstanding accounts	4.157,91	558,11	21.450,17
	21.896,11	2.939,08	37.493,84
Liabilities			
Balance Master Card account	-17.625,34	-2.365,82	-15.133,16
Compulsory holiday payment fund	-212.188,32	-28.481,65	-267.306,79
HEKS received for 2016	-172.308,23	-23.128,62	0,00
Danida received for 2016	-1.000.000,00	-134.228,19	-366.639,14
Outstanding accounts	-99.418,75	-13.344,80	-134.853,19
	-1.501.540,64	-201.549,08	-783.932,28
Balance carried forward	428.315,23	57.491,98	246.981,88

The financial statements are presented in Danish kroner.

For reasons of comparison, amounts in Euro are presented, using a fixed exchange rate based on a monthly average from www.inforeuro.eu: 7.45

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

Notes:

1. Opening balance is in accordance with accounts for 2014
2. Outstanding amount received from European Commission.
3. The total balance includes all IDSNs programmes, and is as such equivalent to the balance carried forward of IDSN.
4. Compulsory and calculated as per the situation on the 31st of December 2015
5. After request from IDSN part of the HEKS 2016 grant was paid out in 2015
6. DANIDA paid out the 2016 grant in December 2015

Note 1

Profit and loss

	2015 DKK	Core programme DKK	EU project DKK	DSN-DK DKK	Reserve DKK
Opening balance	246.981,88	95.829,77	-269.080,22	1.632,43	418.599,90
Income					
DanChurchAid	250.000,00	250.000,00			
Norway MFA 2015	877.926,44	877.926,44			
Norway MFA 2014	366.639,14	366.639,14			
Danida	1.000.000,00	1.000.000,00			
HEKS	360.085,00	360.085,00			
HEKS, extraordinary grant for 2015	123.660,77	123.660,77			
European Commission	279.067,25	0,00	279.067,25		
Membership fees recd. for DSN-DK	32.500,00	0,00		32.500,00	
Other Income	193,11	193,11			
Interest	162,35	162,35			
Total	3.290.234,06	2.978.666,81	279.067,25	32.500,00	0,00
Expenditure	3.108.900,71	3.074.496,58	9.987,03	24.417,10	0,00
Balance	428.315,23	0,00	0,00	9.715,33	418.599,90

Balance statement

	2015 DKK	Core programme DKK	EU project DKK	DSN-DK DKK	Reserve DKK
Assets Cash and Bank					
Total Bank accounts	1.907.959,76	1.210.302,84	0,00	0,00	697.656,92
Other assets					
Petty Cash	17.738,20	17.738,20			
Outstanding accounts	4.157,91	-5.557,42		9.715,33	
	21.896,11	12.180,78	0,00	9.715,33	0,00
Liabilities					
Balance Master Card account	-17.625,34	-17.625,34			
Compulsory holiday payment fund	-212.188,32	-212.188,32			
HEKS received for 2016	-172.308,23	-172.308,23			
Danida received for 2016	-1.000.000,00	-1.000.000,00			
Outstanding accounts	-99.418,75	-99.418,75			
Outstanding accounts between reserve/core programme	0,00	279.057,02			-279.057,02
	-1.501.540,64	-1.222.483,62	0,00	0,00	-279.057,02
Balance carried forward	428.315,23	0,00	0,00	9.715,33	418.599,90

Notes:

1. HEKS, Switzerland paid out part of 2016 grant in 2015 on request from IDSN, part of this payment is extraordinary grants for 2015.
2. DKK 1.000.000 received from Danida in 2015 allocated for use in 2016.
3. Covers audit, remaining tax obligations and cleaning December.
4. The total capital resources (balance carried forward) are 428.315,23 DKK which is available to cover future costs for using a going concern principle.

EXPENDITURE 2015

Communication, networking and coordination

	Budget 2015 DKK	Expenditure 2015 DKK	Budget 2015 EUR	Expenditure 2015 EUR
General staff expenses				
Staff training	22.000	11.981	2.953	1.608
Insurance	19.000	17.184	2.550	2.307
Other staff expenses	10.000	10.413	1.342	1.398
Finance officer	90.706	74.619	12.175	10.016
Subtotal	141.706	114.197	19.021	15.328
Office costs				
Rent	129.733	129.733	17.414	17.414
Insurance	10.500	10.500	1.409	1.409
Office supplies	20.000	21.955	2.685	2.947
Postage and freight	13.500	11.735	1.812	1.575
Hospitality expenses	5.000	3.993	671	536
Telecommunication	17.000	15.364	2.282	2.062
Materials/memberships	3.500	2.043	470	274
Equipment	12.000	11.980	1.611	1.608
Bank	13.000	13.022	1.745	1.748
Office cleaning	23.967	24.911	3.217	3.344
Salaries administration	5.500	5.352	738	718
Corrections old year	0,00	1.853	0,00	249
Audit	59.000	61.266	7.919	8.224
Subtotal	312.700	313.706	41.973	42.108
IT				
IT service	10.000	0,00	1.342	0,00
Software license	37.000	36.936	4.966	4.958
Subtotal	47.000	36.936	6.309	4.958
Total administration and office costs	501.406	464.839	67.303	62.395
Communication and Networking				
Website	16.527	18.872	2.218	2.533
Tech. Assistance website	3.769	2.926	506	393
Publicity & Publications	69.231	70.449	9.293	9.456
Campaign and activity support				
Travel	40.000	37.038	5.369	4.972
Communications officer	474.408	509.592	63.679	68.402
Subtotal	603.935	638.877	81.065	85.755
Governing bodies				
Board meetings	47.496	49.295	6.375	6.617
General Assembly	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Subtotal	47.496	49.295	6.375	6.617
Programme management and implementation	462.805	476.447	62.122	63.953
Total communication, networking and coordination	1.114.236	1.164.620	149.562	156.325

UN Programme

	Budget 2015 DKK	Expenditure 2015 DKK	Budget 2015 EUR	Expenditure 2015 EUR
UN Human Rights Council				
Interventions for universal periodic reviews				
Travel, affected country reps	16.000	17.303	2.148	2.323
Secretariat	2.500	4.625	336	621
Food	7.566	6.473	1.016	869
Accommodation	17.000	14.152	2.282	1.900
Subtotal	43.066	42.553	5.781	5.712
Interventions at Council sessions				
Travel affected country reps	33.000	44.784	4.430	6.011
Secretariat	19.000	12.023	2.550	1.614
Food	24.000	19.697	3.221	2.644
Accommodation	36.000	22.690	4.832	3.046
Subtotal	112.000	99.193	15.034	13.315

	Budget DKK	Expenditure DKK	Budget EUR	Expenditure EUR
Special Procedures & OHCHR related activities				
Travel, affected country reps	34.000	33.463	4.564	4.492
Secretariat	6.000	4.804	805	645
Accommodation	32.000	30.839	4.295	4.139
Food	18.000	15.806	2.416	2.122
Subtotal	90.000	84.912	12.081	6.906

UN Treaty Bodies

	Budget 2015 DKK	Expenditure 2015 DKK	Budget 2015 EUR	Expenditure 2015 EUR
UN Treaty Bodies				
Travel affected country reps	16.000	7.032	2.148	944
Secretariat	5.000	5.758	671	773
Food	9.000	2.905	1.208	390
Accommodation	20.000	13.622	2.685	1.828
Subtotal	50.000	29.317	6.711	3.935

	Budget 2015 DKK	Expenditure 2015 DKK	Budget 2015 EUR	Expenditure 2015 EUR
ECOSOC application	31.111	26.125	4.176	3.507
Programme management and implementation	597.955	601.943	80.262	80.798
Total UN Programme	924.131	884.043	124.044	118.664

EU Programme

	Budget 2015 DKK	Expenditure 2015 DKK	Budget 2015 EUR	Expenditure 2015 EUR
Lobby interventions				
Travel, affected country reps	46.000	41.409	6.174	5.558
Secretariat	17.000	11.068	2.282	1.486
Food	18.000	12.903	2.416	1.732
Accommodation	50.000	35.171	6.711	4.721
Subtotal	131.000	100.551	17.584	13.497
Programme management and implementation	442.544	460.443	59.402	61.804
Total EU Programme	573.544	560.994	76.986	75.301

Summary core programme

	Budget 2015 DKK	Expenditure 2015 DKK	Budget 2015 EUR	Expenditure 2015 EUR
Administration and office costs	501.406	464.839	67.303	62.395
Networking and Communication	1.114.236	1.164.620	149.562	156.325
UN Programme	924.131	884.043	96.200	118.664
EU programme	573.544	560.994	76.986	75.301
Total programmes	3.113.318	3.074.497	390.051	412.684
EU Project audit 2014	0,00	9.987	0,00	1.341
Total	0,00	9.987	0,00	1.341

DSN-DK (funded separately)

	Budget 2015 DKK	Expenditure 2015 DKK	Budget 2015 EUR	Expenditure 2015 EUR
Programme management and implementation	28.484	24.417	3.823	3.277
Total	28.484	24.417	3.823	3.277

Summary total expenditure

	Budget 2015 DKK	Expenditure 2015 DKK	Budget 2015 EUR	Expenditure 2015 EUR
Total core programme	3.113.318	3.074.497	390.051	

Notes

Please find a fully hyperlinked version of this annual report on www.idsn.org

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India

- The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)
- The National Federation of Dalit Women
- Navsarjan Trust
- People's Watch
- Jan Sahas

Nepal

- Dalit NGO Federation (DNF)
- The Feminist Dalit Organisation
- Nepal Dalit National Social Welfare Organisation (NNDSSWO)
- Jagaran Media Center (JMC)

Bangladesh

- Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM)
- Network of Non-Mainstreamed Marginalized Communities (NNMC)

Pakistan

- Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN)

Dalit Solidarity Networks in Europe

- Dalit Solidarity Network – UK
- Dalit Network Netherlands
- Dalit Solidarity Network – Norway
- Dalit Solidarity Network – Finland
- Dalit Solidarity Network – Denmark
- Solidarité Dalits Belgique (Belgium)
- Dalit Solidarität Deutschland (Germany)

International Associates

- Human Rights Watch
- International Movement Against all forms of Discrimination (IMADR)
- Asian Human Rights Commission
- Asian Centre for Human Rights
- Minority Rights Group International
- Anti-Slavery International
- The Rafto Foundation
- Lutheran World Federation
- Robert Kennedy Memorial Foundation, USA
- ICMICA/Pax Romana
- World Council of Churches
- Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
- Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
- Franciscans International

Associates

- The National Confederation of Dalit Organisations (NACDOR)

Research Affiliates

- Research associates New York University School of Law's Center for Human Rights and Global Justice
- International Centre for Ethnic Studies – Sri Lanka

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The new IDSN website was launched in spring 2015. The website features a new documentation database and enhanced features.

IDSN was founded in March 2000 to advocate for Dalit human rights and to raise awareness of Dalit issues nationally and internationally. IDSN is a network of international human rights groups, development agencies, national Dalit solidarity networks from Europe, and organisations in caste-affected countries. IDSN engages with the United Nations, the European Union and other multilateral institutions, working for action-oriented approaches to address 'untouchability' and other human rights abuses against Dalits and similar communities that suffer discrimination based on work and descent. IDSN bases its work on contributions from members, associates and affiliates. The network produces crucial input in the form of documentation, strategic interventions and lobby action and also supports national level lobbying.