

Human Rights Council 39th Regular Session

Item 3 – Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

Oral Statement by Minority Rights Group
Delivered by Mr. Paulo de Tarso Lugon Arantes

Mr. President, Madame Special Rapporteur,

Minority Rights Group and its partner organization International Dalit Solidarity Network welcome the Report of the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, outlining States obligations related to the protection of domestic workers and domestic servitude, in the context of migration, highlighting the several instances of vulnerability, with a particular gender component. We welcome references to obstacles to access to justice and the role on non-state actors.

As the Report highlights, women seek domestic work as a way to escape violence, forced marriage, feminized poverty and other social economic conditions that place women in multigenerational poverty.

From our experience, we have witnessed that Dalit women sustain discrimination on the grounds of work and descent, as well as on the grounds of gender, in a complex set of intersections. They are particularly subject to bonded debt in the area of domestic work. Some practices, like the haliya, employ labourers from low castes or minority ethnic groups, out of which is estimated that one-fifth is composed by Dalits. Despite the prohibition by the law, this practice still persists in many countries in Asia, particularly in interior parts of a number of countries.

We strongly encourage the Rapporteur to continue monitoring the situation of those discriminated on the base of caste, in particular those subject to servitude and modern slavery. Despite international prohibition, Dalits and low caste individuals are still trapped in forced prostitution and scavenging or engaged in works such as brick kiln, agriculture, and hazardous occupations for a minimal pay and without minimum labor rights. Children and women are especially subject to those situations. We emphasize the need to further discuss access to justice, professional rehabilitation and reparations for the violations these individuals sustain.

Thank you.