

ID with the SR on contemporary forms of slavery – item 3

Speaker: Mr. Paulo Lugon Arantes

Madame Rapporteur,

Minority Rights Group and the International Dalit Solidarity Network welcome your report. As you are looking at the features of slavery today, we would like to highlight the role played by descent-based discrimination, in the perpetuation of contemporary forms of slavery like bonded labour. In particular, caste hierarchies put lower castes in a position of vulnerability to enslavement.

Due to widespread exclusion, Dalits have limited access to resources, education, services and development, keeping many in extreme poverty and making them particularly vulnerable to different contemporary forms of contemporary slavery. 80% of those working in bonded labour in India, Pakistan and Nepal are Dalits or indigenous, in particular in agriculture as caste structures are deeply entrenched in rural areas. The majority of workers in India's brick-kiln industry, where bonded labour and child labour are endemic, is composed of Dalits, working 9 to 12 hours a day, with little recourse to justice. Victims remain in such debt bondage for generations as it passes from through the family.

In the garment industry, Dalit girls and women are recruited under Schemes which promise them large payouts after 3 years. They end up working a 68-hour week, locked inside factory and dormitory compounds, in violation of their freedom of association and movement, with reports of sexual harassment and suicide being widespread.

As we discuss decent work through the global supply chains worldwide and the Sustainable Development Goals, we reaffirm that no caste should be left behind, particularly in the context of the worst forms of labour and trends in slave-like labour. We call on you to keep monitoring and addressing the important role of descent-based discrimination in contemporary forms of slavery.

I thank you.