

2019

annual report



IDSN

International Dalit Solidarity Network

WORKING GLOBALLY AGAINST CASTE-BASED DISCRIMINATION

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 inferior, '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 exclusionary practices, 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.

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2019 Highlights

- **IDSN supports UN side-event on caste and gender justice**
- **'Caste and Gender Justice: Delivering on the UN Global Goals for Dalit Women and Girls' published by IDSN**
- **IDSN and IMADR co-organise a joint workshop on caste and gender at the Beijing +25 Regional CSO Forum**
- **IDSN has a stand and snapshot presentation at the UN Business and Human Rights Forum**
- **The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) releases the Base Code Guidance on 'Caste in Global Supply Chains'**
- **UK and Danish ETIs organise a seminar on vulnerable workers together with IDSN**
- **The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights raises concern over violence against Dalits**
- **IDSN delegation participates at the European Development Days with the #NoCasteLeftBehind stand**
- **Several Members of the European Parliament raise concern over caste discrimination**
- **Caste featured in new EU Guidelines on Non-Discrimination**
- **EU annual reports on human rights highlight concern over caste discrimination**
- **IDSN participates in the ALNAP annual meeting on humanitarian action**
- **Engagement with IDSN's website resources and social media channels rise**
- **IDSN visits members in South Asia and embarks on a mapping of the network**

Foreword

Dear friends and supporters of the International Dalit Solidarity Network,

A warm welcome to what I hope you will find to be an excellent and informative IDSN Annual Report of 2019.

We are a unique global human rights network that has been mobilising international solidarity for the elimination of caste-based discrimination for nearly twenty years. Our network includes civil society members and affiliates from countries affected by caste discrimination, national Dalit Solidarity Networks and international human rights and development NGOs.

Caste discrimination remains one of the biggest human rights abuses existing today and yet still goes unchallenged and often unacknowledged. But the tireless work of activists and supporters continues to raise awareness to help achieve our vision of a world free of caste-based discrimination and untouchability.

This year, as every year, we are proud to be part of a growing global movement of people and organisations where we have together had some incredible successes, overcome many challenges and stand ready to face the hurdles that will come our way.

In 2019, some of our best bits were being a key support to the organisers of the 'Caste and Gender Justice' side event in June at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva (page 7); an IDSN delegation took part in The European Development Days in Brussels, which brought together over eight thousand participants from all over the world to discuss the theme 'Addressing inequalities: Building a world which leaves no one behind' (page 12). Our communications platform remains the leading global website on caste discrimination and Dalits. We kicked off our Business and Human Rights strategy with the publication and launch of the Ethical Trading Initiative's Base Code Guidance 'Caste in Global Supply Chains', which we hope will be the 'go-to' document for all businesses with supply chains in key caste-affected sourcing countries (page 9 and 16).

We do all this with few resources – financial and human. So, my gratitude goes to the whole staff team at IDSN – all of them hardworking, skilled and excellent at what they do and who underpin the whole structure. A welcome this year to our new Membership Coordinator (page 17).

Following the adoption of our 2019-23 strategy last year, we have forged new partnerships, strengthened existing relationships and work ever harder to bring the issue of caste discrimination to the global table. I take this opportunity to thank all the caste-affected country members, Dalit Solidarity Networks, National and Research Affiliates, our International Associates and our donors. Without all of whom the achievements highlighted in this report would not be possible.

Special thanks to the Board members of IDSN, who give so much of their time and energy – who show passion and commitment to ensure a vibrant and thriving organisation.

We will continue to update you on our progress; we will continue to do great things and continue to tackle our biggest challenges. In turn, we hope you will continue to support us in the years to come as we fight for a caste-free world.

Meena Varma

Executive Director - IDSN

United Nations

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

In 2019, IDSN engaged with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on several occasions. Multiple IDSN delegations participated in UN events, and the IDSN UN advocacy consultant held meetings with relevant Asia country officers and other key OHCHR staff, working on violence against women, business and human rights, slavery and other relevant areas. IDSN briefed them on the latest developments in relation to caste discrimination and the situation of Dalits.

In her [speech](#) to the Human Rights Council in March 2019, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michele Bachelet, raised concern over, “increasing harassment and targeting of minorities – in particular Muslims and people from historically disadvantaged and marginalised groups, such as Dalits and Adivasis.” She pointed to narrow political agendas in India, leading to further marginalisation of vulnerable people.

IDSN also submitted a comment on the half-day discussion on the General Comment on Freedom of Association in March and IDSN Board Member, Henri Tiphagne, delivered an oral statement on this at the Human Rights Committee.

In May, IDSN together with member the National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ-NCDHR), provided a joint [submission](#) to the UN Human Rights Committee, ahead of the adoption of the list of issues for the 126th session’s consideration of India. This submission sets out some of the key concerns about violations of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (the Covenant) vis-à-vis the Constitution of India with regard to Dalits and Adivasis.

In October, IDSN supported Henri Tiphagne’s [participation](#) in the Global Consultation on the role of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in facilitating access to remedy for business-related human rights abuses. This consultation is part of an ongoing project of the OHCHR about accountability for human rights violations and abuses, committed by corporations. The links between

business-related violations, such as modern slavery, freedom of assembly and association, land rights and displacement, criminal lawsuits, environment and poverty, were highlighted and IDSN suggested that NHRIs encourage inclusion of Dalits in high-level posts.

In November, IDSN Executive Director, Meena Varma, gave a presentation on caste discrimination at the OHCHR Expert Consultation on Minority Rights, stressing the need for robust action to curb caste-related human rights violations and promote equality and dignity.

Throughout the year IDSN also disseminated information to IDSN members about opportunities for training or fellowships from the OHCHR.

Human Rights Council and Special Procedures

In February, IDSN produced and disseminated targeted [recommendations](#) for the 40th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). IDSN also facilitated the participation of Dalit leader, Ruth Manorama, in the session, organising meetings and supporting her in her delivery of [statements](#). Ms. Manorama addressed the UN Secretary General’s [report](#) on the linkages between inequalities and enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

“We cannot agree more on the multidimensional nature of poverty and on the need to address poverty through reaffirming rights and political participation ... Today, we are not here only to speak of our plight. We are also agents of change”

Ruth Manorama, National Federation of Dalit Women

IDSN also held meetings with officials and diplomats on the fringes of the session. The International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) also delivered an oral [statement](#) on “Stateless minorities and discrimination against Dalit women and girls”.

Caste, Gender and the SDGs

Caste and gender justice at the UN Human Rights Council



Dalit human rights defenders and UN experts raised concerns over intersectional caste and gender discrimination and its adverse impact on access to human rights, at the Dalit Women and Gender Justice side-event at the UN Human Rights Council's 41st Session, held on 25 June, in Geneva.

The side event was organised by the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) and co-sponsored by Minority Rights Group International, Human Rights Watch, Anti-Slavery International, Lutheran World Federation, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation and Franciscans International, supported by IDSN.

The panel at the event was composed of Dubravka Simonovic, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Renu Sijapati, General Secretary of the Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO-Nepal) and Abirami Jotheeswaran, from the National Dalit Movement for Justice-National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NDMJ-NCDHR). The event was moderated by Henri Tiphagne, from People's Watch, India.

The event was [live-streamed](#) by the human rights organisation the International Network of Human Rights (RIDH) with over 900 views and had very good attendance. Significant social media activity surrounded the event, including on Twitter and Facebook using #NoCasteLeftBehind and #CasteGenderJustice hashtags.



“My suggestion for everyone trying to work to end caste and gender discrimination is to use all the UN mechanisms available to submit cases and concrete examples to ... I am advocating for a specific National Action Plan to address violence against Dalit Women, and it is now important to raise those recommendations with the Government and national actors.” Said Dubravka Simonovic, The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, at the event.

“Eliminating caste-based discrimination is not just the responsibility of Dalits but the responsibility of all people globally, Dalit rights are human rights.” Commented Abirami Jotheeswaran, National Dalit Movement for Justice-National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NDMJ-NCDHR) – India,

The panelists subsequently took part in meetings and dialogues at the Human Rights Council.

In March, IDSN supported the [side event](#) on Women Human Rights Defenders, organised by the Right Livelihood Award (RLA), where Ruth Manorama spoke on the panel. Later in March, IDSN facilitated the participation of Henri Tiphagne, in a side-event organised by the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) on India and the Convention Against Torture (CAT).

In April, IDSN prepared a submission to the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders on the situation of Dalit rights defenders. IDSN's [recommendations](#) for the 41st session of the HRC were issued and disseminated in June. IDSN participated in the session, holding several meetings with partner NGOs, OHCHR staff and diplomats, drafted oral statements and facilitated the participation of delegates from the Feminist Dalit Organisation (FEDO) in Nepal, at the session and in side events.

Renu Sijapati, from FEDO, delivered an oral [statement](#) at the session, encouraging Nepal to implement the recommendations from the UN Nepal country visit [report](#) of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. The statement underlined that caste-based sexual violence, social stigma, the normalisation of violence and casteist attitudes, combined with patriarchal social norms, are leading to lower educational levels and a high percentage of poverty among Dalit women in Nepal.

In June, IDSN supported the side-event, “#NoCasteLeftBehind - Dalit Women and Gender Justice”, with important participation of Dalit women rights defenders from South Asia (see feature box on page 7 for details).

In July, IDSN participated in the global consultation on trends of racism, organised by the Special Rapporteur on Racism, submitted [input](#) to the follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and met with CIVICUS, IMADR and Minority Rights Group in preparation for the 42nd session of the HRC in September.

In September, IDSN drafted and disseminated [recommendations](#) to the HRC 42nd session and participated in the session, holding several meetings with partner NGOs, OHCHR staff and diplomats. IDSN was also part of a joint [statement](#) with MRG for the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery and a [statement](#) for the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to

safe drinking water and sanitation. IDSN also drafted a [submission](#) for the Working Group on Discrimination against Women on ‘Women and the World of Work’.

UN Forum on Business and Human Rights

IDSN met with staff of the working group on Business and Human Rights ahead of the 2019 UN Forum on Business and Human Rights. Subsequently, IDSN successfully pitched a stand at the forum and a snapshot presentation and were selected to do both, giving IDSN very good exposure. Ankita Paudel, from IDSN member FEDO, took part in the IDSN delegation to the forum (See the Feature box on page 9 details).

UN Women

As part of the Beijing+25 Regional CSO Forum in Bangkok, organised by UN Women in November 2019, IDSN and IMADR organised a [joint workshop](#) on strategies to tackle caste and gender discrimination.

At the workshop, participants and presenters shared stories, ideas and strategies. The presenters included Judith Anne Lal, from the National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ-NCDHR) and the event was moderated by IDSN board member, Megumi Komori, Acting Secretary General of IMADR.

The strategies aimed to address injustice, human rights violations and violence on the basis of intersectional discrimination and look at ways forward for human rights defenders working on this. Conclusions from the workshop will be taken forward to the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2020 in New York. A [video](#) from the event was also made and updates were posted on Twitter.

In 2019, UN Women also produced two prominent features on Dalit women. In a [5 minute-video](#) collaboration between Google and UN Women, Asha Kowtal, General Secretary of the Dalit Women's Movement AIDMAM-NCDHR, talks about the #DalitWomenFight movement, and in the [article](#), 'From where I stand: Local and global political and economic systems create and maintain social inequality', Durga Sob from FEDO gave her perspective on the current global situation and human rights.

Caste, Business and Human Rights

IDSN highlights caste-related rights violations at the UN Business and Human Rights Forum



IDSN left its mark on the UN Business and Human Rights Forum with a very popular stand, highlighting the links between caste and human rights violations in global supply chains. The IDSN Executive Director also gave a snapshot presentation on what Governments can do to start addressing these issues with businesses.

The IDSN stand was open for three days at the forum in the Palais des Nations in Geneva, and by the end of the first day 70 copies of the new ETI-UK/IDSN Guidance on [Caste in Global Supply Chains](#) had already been picked up by participants, eager to learn more. At the stand, Dalit human rights defender Ankita Paudel from IDSN member organisation FEDO in Nepal, and IDSN staff, spoke with participants to improve their understanding and urge them to take action. Ms. Paudel also took part in key events at the forum and made connections with other relevant stakeholders.

In a [video](#) made by IDSN, Ms. Paudel reflects on her participation and stresses the importance of the exchanges with other participants at the forum and how she will take the new insight gained at the Forum back to Nepal to improve the understanding of business and human rights.

The IDSN Executive Director, Meena Varma, also took part in the forum and had been selected by the organisers of the forum to give a [snapshot](#) presentation on what Governments can do to address caste-based human rights abuses in business operations in caste-affected countries. Her presentation, which included seven top tips for what Governments can do, made a significant impact and was well received.

IDSN Ambassador and business and human rights expert, Gerard Oonk, also formed part of the IDSN delegation, participating in advocacy and networking to increase the visibility and impact of IDSN's work to address caste-related human rights issues in business supply chains.

Photo: Slide from Meena Varma's presentation

UPR and Treaty Body reviews

In 2019, IDS^N prepared for key UPR and Treaty Body Reviews scheduled for early 2020, including the review of Pakistan by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Nepal, liaising with IDS^N members in these countries to prepare joint input to these reviews.

ECOSOC

Throughout the year IDS^N continued to do targeted advocacy work with diplomatic missions and relevant officials, including the Assistant Secretary General on Human Rights, to push for IDS^N's ECOSOC accreditation to be granted, in order to give IDS^N official UN Consultative status. The IDS^N application for ECOSOC status has been [deferred for over a decade](#) on unjust grounds.

Several organisations supported IDS^N in these efforts in 2019. CIVICUS released a [statement](#) on the unjust blocking of civil society by the UN NGO Committee. The International Service on Human Rights (ISHR) supported IDS^N with advice and published a [news piece](#) on their website entitled 'NGO Committee: Members must reject reprisals by saying 'not in my name'.

“The 2019 sessions of the NGO Committee have seen undue questioning of human rights organisations leading to the continued deferral of their applications. Amongst them the International Dalit Solidarity Network, deferred in May for the 24th time. Such deferrals have been called a form of reprisal against NGOs. Members of the NGO Committee can stop this practice by refusing to allow further questions to be asked in their name.”

Statement by the International Service on Human Rights

Later in the year, the Chair of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures (CC) issued a letter to the Chair of the NGO Committee, detailing the problems encountered by legitimate human rights organisations wishing to obtain UN ECOSOC status.

The letter states:

“Concerns raised by special procedures mandate holders, the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, the Secretary-General, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights in various reports and communications remain. A large and growing number of NGO applications for consultative status continue to be perceived as arbitrarily deferred based on politically motivated and repetitive questioning by Committee members, leading to an increasing backlog for the Committee and longer waiting times for NGOs ...

Some experts have expressed that the continued arbitrary deferral of certain applications for consultative status undermines and unduly interferes with human rights guaranteed under both conventional and customary international law, namely, the rights to freedom of assembly and of association and the rights to freedom of information and expression ...

In addition, some deferrals also appear to constitute reprisals against NGOs in response to their cooperation with the UN in the field of human rights. The use of NGO activities and criticism against Member States at the Human Rights Council as a ground for not granting consultative status, which is not a ground permitted under ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31, is disconcerting.”



European Union

Throughout 2019, IDSN continued to conduct outreach with EU institutions, including representatives from the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Commission and Members of the European Parliament (EP). As a result of these efforts, IDSN has continued to contribute to important EU initiatives.

IDSN played an active role in the Brussels-based Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN). As part of the HRDN's campaign around the European elections, caste was highlighted in the network's [manifesto](#), 'A Free and Fair Europe', launched in early 2019. In February, IDSN participated in a networking event with the EU delegations' human rights focal points in Brussels, co-organised by the HRDN.

In March, several high-profile members of the European Parliament, including the Parliament's Vice-president MEP Heidi Hautala, sent a [public letter](#) to the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, asking the EU to take action to support IDSN's 10 year quest for UN accreditation.

"IDSN is a key actor in bringing the plight of Dalits, suffering from caste discrimination worldwide, to the attention of the UN as well as at the EU level. We therefore find it unacceptable that the organisation's application has now been unjustly deferred on spurious and repetitive grounds by the UN NGO Committee for over 10 years. Blocking accreditation is a clear attempt to silence the voices of the Dalit community on the international stage."

Joint letter from Members of the European Parliament to EU High Representative for Foreign Policy and Security Policy Federica Mogherini

In April, EU Foreign Ministers endorsed new [EU Guidelines on Non-Discrimination](#), where caste is mentioned several times as a form of discrimination that must be addressed. The Guidelines specify that that the term 'descent', "includes discrimination against members of communities based on forms of social stratification such as caste and analogous systems of inherited status", and that the EU should, "Participate actively in UN mechanisms and

Caste, equality and the SDGs**#NoCasteLeftBehind at the European Development Days**

The European Development Days 2019 brought together over eight thousand participants from all over the world to discuss the theme 'Addressing inequalities: Building a world which leaves no one behind'. At the IDSN [#NoCasteLeftBehind stand](#) participants could meet and speak to Dalit human rights defenders and learn more about how to take action to fight caste discrimination and ensure that Dalits are not left behind the Global Goals. At the stand participants could take a photo to join hands to end caste discrimination and take a [quiz](#) on caste and the Global Goals.

The stand was busy with people wanting to learn about caste and engage in dialogue with the Dalit human rights defenders. Nobel Peace Prize winner Kailash Satyarthi, also paid a visit to talk about issues of child labour and education in relation to caste and to have his photo taken, joining hands with IDSN members and staff to end caste discrimination. There was also active participation on Facebook and Twitter.

The IDSN delegation took part in several debates, labs and plenary sessions. Ashif Sheikh, of IDSN member organisation Jan Sahas, was on the panel for the European External Action Service lab event on Non-discrimination. IDSN also published videos of [Ashif speaking](#) about manual scavenging in India and IDSN delegate from Bangladesh, Tamanna, making a [statement](#) about access to water and sanitation for Dalits in Bangladesh. Durga Sob from Nepal also spoke up about the situation of Dalit women in Nepal.

After the successful IDSN participation at the EDD19 there were several meetings with key EU officials. Among others, the delegation met with the new EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Eamon Gilmore, who was very engaged in how to support the struggle to end caste discrimination. He was briefed on the situation in caste-affected countries and spoke with the delegation about the EU's commitment to anti-discrimination.

processes dedicated to general and specific discrimination related issues such as ... discrimination based on caste (work and descent)". The guidelines also state the EU must encourage and support active participation of civil society in multilateral fora and mechanisms in relation to discrimination based on caste (work and descent). IDSN subsequently created an internal guidance note for IDSN members on how to use these new EU guidelines.

In May 2019, the EU adopted and published its 2018 annual [report](#) on human rights and democracy in the world. The report highlights caste-related issues in some relevant country chapters including Bangladesh, Nepal and India.

"Relating to non-discrimination and economic and social rights, a project was funded on combating caste based discrimination contributing to the strengthening of the legal framework related to equality and non-discrimination as well as to enhancing effective access to justice for victims"

From the Nepal Chapter of the EU annual human rights and democracy in the world report published in May 2019

In July, an IDSN delegation with Dalit human rights defenders Durga Sob (Nepal), Tammana Sing Baraik (Bangladesh) and Ashif Shaikh (India) participated in the European Development Days 2019, which brought together over eight thousand participants from all over the world to discuss the theme "Addressing inequalities: Building a world which leaves no one behind".

The IDSN delegation made its mark at this event with a stand in the Global Village and participation in several debates, labs and plenary sessions. Ashif Sheik, of IDSN member organisation Jan Sahas, was on the panel for the European External Action Service (EEAS) lab event on Non-discrimination. The event also saw the launch of IDSN's #NoCasteLeftBehind initiative with participants joining hands to fight caste discrimination (See page 12 box).

Following the May 2019 European elections, letters were sent to MEPs highlighting key recommendations for parliamentary action to address caste discrimination, by IDSN and its DSN members. IDSN subsequently met with some new members of the parliament to introduce the work of IDSN.

In October, IDSN signed a [public letter](#) to the EU calling for EU legislation introducing mandatory human rights due diligence for companies operating within the EU.

Caste also featured in the draft European Parliament's 'Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2018 and the European Union's policy on the matter' expected to be adopted in January 2020. MEPs expressed "great concern over the scale and consequences of caste hierarchies, caste-based discrimination and the perpetuation of caste-based human rights violations, including the denial of access to the legal system or employment, continued segregation, poverty and stigmatisation, and caste-related barriers to the exercise of basic human rights and facilitation of human development".

"[The European Parliament] reiterates its call for the development of an EU policy on caste discrimination, and calls for the EU to act on its own grave concerns over caste discrimination; calls for the adoption of an EU instrument for the prevention and elimination of caste-based discrimination; reiterates its call for the EU and its Member States to intensify efforts and support initiatives at the UN and delegation levels to eliminate caste discrimination"

European Parliament's draft annual report on human rights and democracy in the world 2018 and the European Union's policy on the matter

Caste and humanitarian action

IDSN participates in ALNAP annual meeting

IDSN was represented by Innasimuthu Pandiyan, from IDSN Affiliate the Social Awareness Society for Youths (SASY), at the "Relevant for whom? Responding to diverse perspectives and priorities in humanitarian action" ALNAP meeting, held in Berlin in October.

In the breakout sessions on "Power and Marginalisation" Mr. Pandiyan [presented](#), sharing his experiences in the context of caste discrimination and caste-based social exclusion in disaster responses. He received a significant response during and after the presentation from participants curious to learn more and shared important recommendations and information with the participants.

Communications and Networking

In 2019, IDSN produced and released the new '[Caste and Gender Justice](#)' publication and collaborated with the Ethical Trading Initiative UK to produce the ETI Base Code Guidance on '[Caste in Global Supply Chains](#)'. These were promoted and disseminated widely at events, online and through social media. Engagement with the IDSN website, videos and social media channels grew and IDSN continued to publish news articles, newsletters, press releases, website updates and entries in the IDSN online documentation database. IDSN also embarked on a journey to visit our South Asia network members to map their work and get their input and priorities to take forward in IDSN's work.

Publications

In July, IDSN released the publication "Caste and Gender Justice: Delivering on the UN Global Goals for Dalit women and girls." The publication is the first in IDSN's new #NoCasteLeftBehind series that examines the UN Global Goals through the lens of caste and intersectional discrimination.

The publication looks at the caste and gender-based inequity that leads to Dalit women being left behind the UN Global Goals. Examples are drawn from Nepal, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh and given within the framework of the Global Goals. There are also references to actions needed and recommendations for progress.

The publication was first promoted at the IDSN stand at the European Development Days (see the EU chapter for details) and formally launched at the Caste and Gender Justice UN side-event (see the UN chapter for details).

IDSN partnered with the Ethical Trading Initiative UK to produce and release the new ETI Base Code Guidance on 'Caste in Global Supply Chains'. This guidance provides much needed impetus and support to businesses looking to meet global and national human rights obligations, when sourcing in caste-affected countries. IDSN promoted the guidance widely and collaborated with ETI and the Danish ETI (DIEH) to organise a seminar on Vulnerable Workers in Supply Chains, highlighting the new caste guidance (See feature box on page 16 for details).

IDSN was also consulted in the drafting and release of the [report](#), "Caste and Development: Tackling Discrimination Based on Work and Descent", published in March by UK NGO network BOND. The report explores the link between caste discrimination and the SDGs and also identifies a set of practical actions for policymakers and civil society organisations to help start bridging these gaps. IDSN provided input, disseminated and promoted the report.

In 2019, IDSN also updated and published the UN [compilation](#) of references to caste-based discrimination and produced and released the IDSN Annual Report 2018. Throughout the year we also disseminated and promoted key reports by IDSN network members.

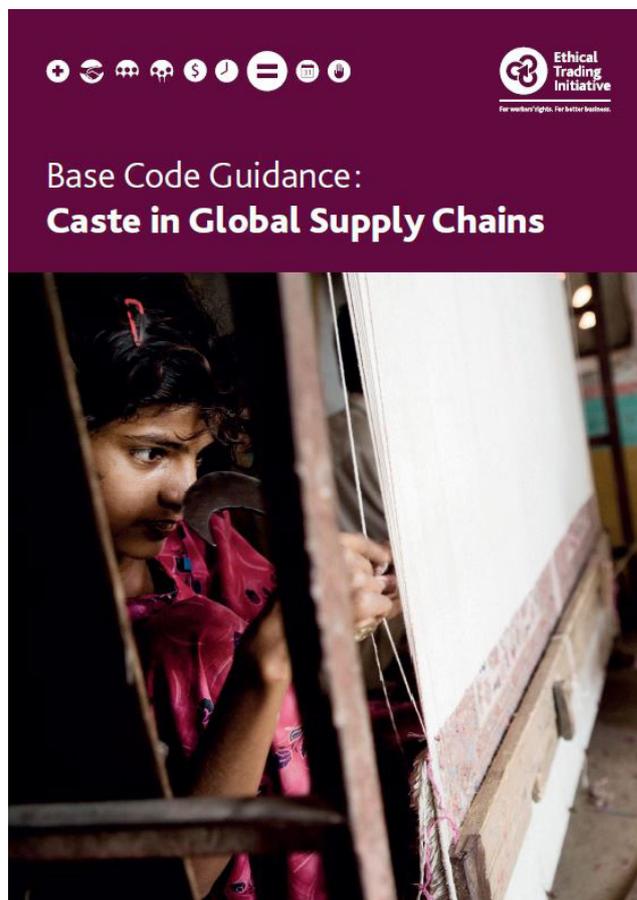
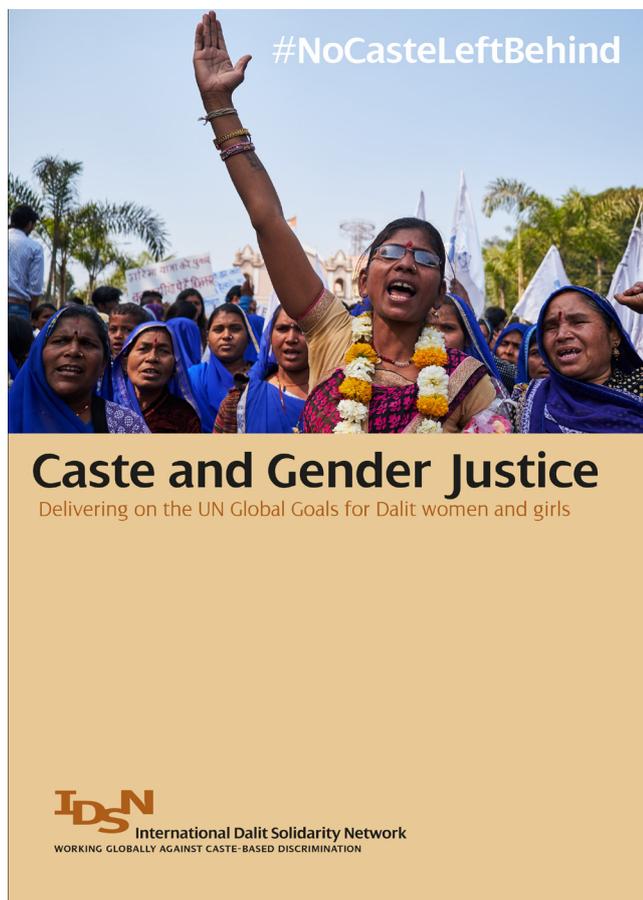
Media statements and liaison

IDSN issued and circulated the press release '[Rights Activists: No global goals without tackling caste](#)', to promote the IDSN delegation and stand at the European Development Days, and supported the press release '[No more silence: Companies must address caste in their global supply chains](#)' (ETI-UK). Throughout the year IDSN liaised with many journalists to offer contacts and input for articles, radio or TV features.

IDSN social media and videos

IDSN's Twitter channel rose sharply in popularity in 2019 with over 50% increase in tweet impressions, rising to 208,800 - a 40% increase in link clicks and retweets and more than 100% more likes of IDSN tweets than in 2018. The amount of twitter followers also rose by 20% compared to 2018. IDSN's social media channels continue to be an important part of IDSN's internal and external communications, with members and associates interacting regularly via social media and cross promoting news and documentation. IDSN's Facebook followers also rose to over 9,000.

Views of IDSN's online video on Dalit women grew to over 160,000 views and views of the general IDSN video on caste discrimination passed 80,000 views in 2019. The original 'I'm Dalit, How Are You?' video by IDSN continues to garner views with 217,000 views in total. IDSN also posted videos of Dalit rights activists from India, Nepal and Bangladesh, making statements at the UN or reflecting on their participation as part of an IDSN delegation.



IDS N website and newsletter

The IDS N website was visited by over 63,000 users in 2019, a rise of over 25% compared to 2018. Pageviews rose by over 20% to 127,000. Looking at user demographics, the number of users between 25-34 rose by over 25% compared to the previous year and the number of female users rose by over 10%, with 58% female users and 42% male users. This shift in demographics reflects IDS N's strategic focus on women and youth.

There were trackable visits from over 180 different countries and over 100 universities, cementing the IDS N website's position as the leading global resource on caste-based discrimination, disseminating information to a broad global user base of policy and decision-makers, activists, academics and the general public. The top ten countries using the IDS N website in 2019 were India, United States, Nepal, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Pakistan, Germany, Bangladesh and Denmark.

In 2019, IDS N posted over 70 [new entries](#) in the IDS N online documentation [database](#) on caste discrimination, where entries are cross-referenced and searchable according to theme, institution, country and year, as well as other relevant parameters.

Throughout the year, forty [news articles](#) were written and published on the IDS N website. The articles cover developments at the UN and EU level as well as in countries affected by caste discrimination. They are based on IDS N's work and input from the network. Some of the key themes addressed in these articles are the protection of Dalit human rights defenders, Dalit women and gender justice, equal participation and business and human rights.

These news articles, as well as other news curated from IDS N's network members and associates, were published in IDS N's [newsletters](#) throughout 2019. The newsletters have a varied readership - from UN and EU decision-makers, academics to human rights defenders from a wide range of countries. 2019 saw a 16% increase in the amount of subscribers to the IDS N newsletter.

Caste, Business and Supply Chains

Caste guidance launched at seminar on vulnerable workers



In 2019, IDS^N co-organised a seminar on vulnerable workers with the Danish and UK Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI). The event was held in Copenhagen on 12 November and featured the launch of the ETI Caste Guidance.

The seminar proved very successful, with a packed room and registration closed days before the event, due to a large interest from Ethical Trading Initiative members. The Director of the Danish Ethical Trading Initiative (DIEH), Mikkel Stenbæk, kicked off the seminar speaking to the importance of the new ETI caste guidance and the need for more action to be taken to promote and ensure the rights of vulnerable workers.

ETI Director, Peter McCallister, launched the new [guidance](#) giving participants history and insight into the need for this new tool saying, "I am proud and honoured to be here to launch the ETI Base Code Guidance on Caste in Global Supply Chains today ... caste underpins so many elements of vulnerability that we must engage with caste issues if we want to address vulnerability."

Participants were given an overview of caste and human rights by the IDS^N Head of Communications while the IDS^N Executive Director presented key practical tips and recommendations for taking action, that included ensuring businesses understand the unique form of discrimination arising from caste and always include the lowest castes in any planning, policy-making, action or reviews meant to address the issues they face.

The Director of the Ethical Trading Initiative in Norway, Heidi Furustøl, also presented at the event speaking about how Dalits and other vulnerable workers in supply chains can be supported through ETI awareness-raising, dialogue and cooperation and an increased focus on these issues at the global level.

Speaking on tools to address vulnerable workers in business supply chains, Senior Advisor at the Danish Institute for Human Rights, Cathrine Bloch Velberg, commented that the new ETI guidance on caste is an important hands-on, practical document to address a key human rights issue and expressed an interest in seeing much more being done on this issue by businesses sourcing in caste-affected countries.

Participants at the event asked many relevant questions of the panelists and the event ended with a networking opportunity with lively discussions and new connections being made. The seminar was held at DIEH.

Visits to IDSN members

In 2019, IDSN was joined by Ritwajit Das, taking on a new role as IDSN Membership Coordinator. Mr. Das is based in South Asia and will be ensuring enhanced links and liaising with the IDSN member organisations in South Asia.

After a thorough orientation, the Membership Coordinator created a comprehensive questionnaire and mapping of the IDSN network. In 2019 and at the beginning of January 2020, he has visited many of the IDSN members in India including, Peoples Watch – Tamil Nadu, SASY, Jan Sahas, The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (including interviews with the leaders of each wing of NCDHR) and the National Federation of Dalit Women.

In 2020, visits will be made to IDSN's members in Nepal and Bangladesh and telephone interviews held with members in Pakistan.

The findings from these interviews will be integrated into IDSN's programmatic work and considered in relation to strategic approaches and activities undertaken in future. The mapping also uncovers particular areas of expertise within the IDSN membership, upcoming leaders and younger staff members with whom IDSN can engage with and ascertain possible needs for support or training opportunities. The photos below are from the India visits.



Organisation

Governance

The IDS N 5-year strategy adopted at the end of 2018, steered IDS N's work and Governance in 2019.

The IDS N Board had both face-to-face and Skype Board meetings throughout the year and Board members play an active role in many of IDS N's activities. In 2019, IDS N's Board held three Skype meetings spaced throughout the year and met in Geneva on the 23-24 June for a two-day meeting.

The gender composition of IDS N's board as of the 31 December 2019 is five women and four men.

IDS N Board Members as of 31 December 2019:

- Bhakta Bishwarkarma
Dalit NGO Federation, Nepal
- Meenakshi Ganguly
Human Rights Watch, India
- Sono Khanharani
Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network
- Megumi Komori
International Movement against All forms of
Discrimination and Racism(IMADR), Japan
- Manuela Ott
Dalit Solidarity, Germany (DSiD)
- Beena Pallical
National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR),
India
- Henri Tiphagne
People's Watch, India
- Einar Tjelle
Dalit Solidarity Network, Norway

Secretariat

The Secretariat team was delighted to welcome Ritwajit Das, who joined in September, to undertake the new role of Membership Coordinator, based in South Asia.

IDS N secretariat staff in 2019:

Executive Director: Meena Varma
 Head of Communications: Maria Brink Schleimann
 Programme and Finance Assistant: Madeleine Cowper
 UN Advocacy Consultant: Paulo Lugon Arantes
 EU Advocacy Consultant: Claire Ivers
 Membership Coordinator: Ritwajit Das
 Bookkeeper: Peter Soby Petersen

Aside from the Programme and Finance Assistant, the rest of the secretariat staff work part-time.

Finances and funding

We would like to thank the following for their generous contribution to IDS N funding in 2019: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Hermod Lannungs Fond (Denmark), Bread for the World (Germany) and DanChurchAid – Nepal. IDS N also continued fundraising efforts in order to ensure the longer-term stability and sustainability of the organisation.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2019

Profit and loss

	2019 DKK	2019 EURO	2018 DKK
Opening balance ¹	405,691.91	54,340.77	586,232.44
Income			
DanChurchAid	200,000.00	26,789.18	200,000.00
Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs	387,773.39	51,940.66	790,689.87
Norwegian Human Rights Fund	1,095,210.28	146,698.94	
Brot für die Welt	1,207,361.00	161,721.07	1,272,629.80
Misereor			136,120.15
Hermod Lannungs Fund	48,340.00	6,474.95	
Other income	27,864.65	3,732.36	41,200.00
Total	2,966,549.32	397,357.16	2,440,639.82
Expenditure	2,219,738.16	297,324.85	2,621,180.35
Result	746,811.16	100,032.30	-180,540.53
Balance	1,152,503.07	154,373.08	405,691.91

Balance statement

	2019 DKK	2019 EURO	2018 DKK
Assets			
Cash at bank at 31.12.2019	1,246,197.28	166,923.03	620,770.50
Other assets			
Petty cash	1,221.32	163.59	905.32
Outstanding accounts	107,229.44	14,362.95	14,996.29
Brot für die Welt 2018 ²			74,367.10
Total other assets	108,457.66	14,526.54	90,268.71
Liabilities			
Balance Master Card account	-24,630.50	-3,299.15	-23,391.71
Compulsory holiday payment fund	-14,291.67	-1,914.31	-48,008.70
Outstanding Accounts ³	-113,222.80	-15,165.73	-103,644.79
H. Lannungs Fund 2020 ⁴	-50,000.00	-6,697.30	-48,340.00
Brot für die Welt 2019 ⁵		-11,000.00	-81,962.10
Total Liabilities	-202,144.97	-27,076.49	-305,347.30
Balance carried forward	1,152,503.07	154,373.08	405,691.91

The financial statements are presented in Danish kroner. Please find the full financial statements on the IDS N website.

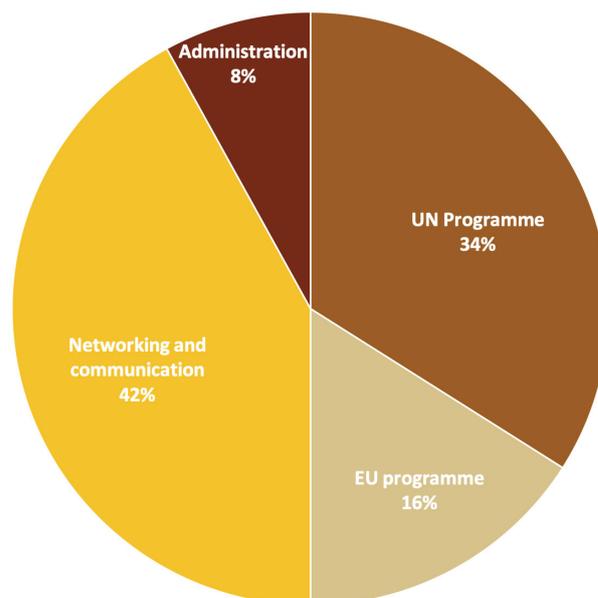
For reasons of comparison, amounts in Euro are presented, using a fixed exchange rate based on a monthly average from www.inforeuro.eu: 7,4657

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

Notes:

1. Opening balance is in accordance with accounts for 2018
2. Payment from Brot für die Welt for 2018, to be paid
3. Consists of audit, annual report, insurance, tax for 2018 to be paid in 2019
4. Prepayment from H. Lannungs Fund for 2020
5. Prepayment from Brot für die Welt for 2018 and 2019

IDS N EXPENDITURE 2019





International Dalit Solidarity Network

Farvergade 27D, 1.floor
DK-1463 Copenhagen V
Denmark
Phone +45 31 49 31 04

info@idsn.org
www.idsn.org

IDSN members

India

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

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 Solidarity Network – Norway
- Dalit Solidarity Network – Finland
- 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
- Advocating Rights In South Asia (Arisa)

Affiliates

- New York University School of Law's Center for Human Rights and Global Justice
- International Centre for Ethnic Studies – Sri Lanka
- Social Awareness Society for Youths - India
- National Dalit Christian Watch - India
- Dalit Welfare Organisation - Nepal

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www.idsn.org



The IDSN website www.idsn.org

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.