

Oral statement: 53rd regular session of the UN Human Rights Council

Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change

Delivered by Swapon Kumar Das on behalf of The International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN)

27 June 2023

Mr. President,

IDSN and DALIT thank the Special Rapporteur for his report on Bangladesh. However, we were disappointed to find that he did not meet with Dalits, around 10 million people in Bangladesh. Dalits are forced to the fringes of Bangladeshi society and are among the most vulnerable to climate change. They are traditionally considered 'untouchable' due to their birth and limited to certain occupations.

Almost 62% of Dalits live in the coastal area of south-western Bangladesh and many are dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods. Due to climate change, these natural resources and occupations are disappearing. Coastal Dalit communities are frequently hit by natural disasters, destroying their mud and thatched houses, fishing boats, crops and domestic animals. As they lose their sources of income, access to education becomes unaffordable. Most Dalit girls drop out of education and around 95% are victims of child marriage. Dalits also face discrimination when accessing relief as they are intentionally not included on relief lists. When Dalits go to shelters, they can face discrimination, sexual harassment and rape.

We urge Bangladesh to develop a SMART climate action plan with special policies focused on Dalit issues, in consultation with the Dalit community. Thank you.