

HRC26 Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Mr. Mutama Ruteere,

24 June 2014

See [UN press release 24 June 2014](#) – References to caste

Presentation of Report by Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism

Turning to his country visit to Mauritania, the Special Rapporteur acknowledged the cooperation established with the human rights mechanisms and the progress in the implementation of some of the recommendations made by the human rights system. A number of challenges persisted with regard to eliminating ethnic and **descent-based discrimination** and the marginalization of certain segments of the population. Mauritanian society was highly stratified along ethnic and **caste** lines with de facto slaves and descendants of slaves assigned to the lowest status which was passed down through generations. Bold measures and zero tolerance were urgently required to accelerate progress in the realization of an equal and diverse society based on respect for all human rights for all. While commending achievements in reforming legislation and establishing the necessary institutions to combat discrimination and slavery-like practices, there were significant challenges related to the pace and effective implementation of the law. As a result, many lost their confidence in those institutions and the justice system. The recommendations contained in the report included the conduct of a baseline study on the status, root causes, manifestations and consequences of the discrimination that had scarred Mauritanian history, in order to develop against racial discrimination.

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism

Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy said that the **caste system** in India had already been recognised by the United Nations and other bodies as a form of discrimination that affected approximately 230 million people in India, who were discriminated against because they were born in the lower rungs of India's **caste system**.