

WHAT A YEAR IT WAS!

Dear valued colleague,

As this year comes to a close, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on the past twelve months and express our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support. Despite the challenges that came our way, we are proud to say that we have achieved significant milestones and accomplished some amazing results together.

With your support...

... over the past one year, we have made significant **interventions Internationally, Regionally as well as Nationally** with grounded impact.

The year started with preparations for the **67th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67)** which opened a unique opportunity to underscore CDWD issues and their intersections with the focus on gender at a global feminist platform. A GFoD delegation attended the CSW67, which took place **in March**. We organized a parallel event during the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on *Addressing Barriers in Accessing Technology & Transforming CDWD Women's Lives*. We also engaged actively with over 8 Permanent Missions and laid the foundations of an informal transnational CDWD Feminist network group.

We also intervened regionally in Asia Pacific with Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM) and Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD); and in Europe with UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).



In April, a GFoD delegation consisting of Simona Torotcoi and Rhaichatou Walet visited Geneva as official speakers during the **UPR Pre-Sessions of Mali and Romania**. Through bilateral meetings with member States, GFoD was able to secure recommendations on Mali on forced labour and hereditary slavery from Mexico and Norway; for Romania, GFoD was able to secure recommendations on Roma education, the national Roma inclusion strategy and discrimination against Roma women from Switzerland, Finland, the Netherlands and Canada. All recommendations were supported.



July was a challenging yet rewarding month when a GFoD delegation of 16 persons from 10 different countries participated at the **High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York, USA**. We delivered over 10 statements combined in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and HLPF official sessions.

We also organized a side-event on *Access to Water and Sanitation for all*, and connected with over 32 Permanent Missions from across the world.

Towards the end of August, a GFoD delegation consisting of Zakir Hussain and Dafina Savic visited Geneva for the **UPR Pre-Sessions of Bangladesh and Canada**, and Queen Bisseng from Cameroon participated online. Zakir was an official speaker at the Pre-Sessions. Through bilateral meetings with member States, GFoD was able to secure recommendations on disaggregated data and stronger legislative protections for the Dalit population and on Canada's anti-discrimination strategy. The state Party position on the recommendations will only be known early 2024.

In September, GFoD, in collaboration with UN OHCHR and IDSN organized a three-day workshop for the **capacity building of youth, aimed at promoting and protecting the Rights of the CDWD in Kathmandu, Nepal**.



Subsequently, GFoD delegation engaged actively in the **United Nations SDG Summit 2023** in New York, with our high-level side event attended by the foreign Minister of Nepal, Shri N.P Saud along with the Permanent Missions of Mauritania and Brazil. Nepal Government's support to our *Draft Resolution to protect the rights of CDWD* has definitely strengthened our voice. Moreover, this year GFoD represented the MGoS, Stakeholder Group of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent at the UN General Assembly, Ms. Beena Pallical was selected to present her statement in the General Assembly, who also happened to be the first ever Dalit woman to achieve this!

In this very month, an event organized jointly by GFoD and Asia Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF) in Kathmandu brought together Nepalese Parliamentarians, UN representatives and South Asian Civil Society organizations (CSOs) representatives from 5 countries of South Asia, including Nepal, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka – calling for joint efforts to address discrimination against Dalit communities in South Asia at the national, regional and international levels.



October proved to be historic! We are elated to share that during the 77th ordinary session of African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) held in Arusha, Tanzania, on 18th October 2023, the NGO Forum of ACHPR passed a *'Resolution for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent'* in Africa, bringing us closer in realizing our vision- a UN Declaration on the rights of CDWD. During this time, GFoD organized a panel discussion at the NGO Forum, and read statements on the DWD issue at the 77th ordinary session of the ACHPR. We also visited communities discriminated on work and descent in Ghana, Cameroon and Tanzania, met with various community leaders, Civil society organizations and University scholars, laying the groundwork for planning initiatives and fostering relationships that empower the CDWD.

In November and December, we made several interventions at the **UN Forum on Business Human Rights and the UN Forum on Minority Issues** in Geneva, with our delegates vigorously highlighting the issue of Discrimination based on Work and Descent. These interventions, along with the two side-events to the respective Forums organized by GFoD generated significant international attention to our cause. Commemorating the **75th Anniversary of the Universal declaration of Human Rights** on 10th December, we organized a panel discussion during Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung's *3rd Night of Global Social Rights*.



We also put together a vibrant panel of artists and speakers from across four continents, in celebration of the 75 years of the UDHR, and to deliberate on its relevance for the CDWD.

Change begins from home...

Through our **Rights Experts program** this year, we supported many grassroots change-makers who engaged actively with the issues of DWD communities in the local contexts, gathered inputs for our reports and also represented the Global Forum of CDWD at various high-level events.

This year, we organized a **Gender mainstreaming training** for the GFoD secretariat to build gender sensitivity in our work and culture and to foster interpersonal equality. Another training was conducted on the **International Human Rights Standards and System: Monitoring and Implementation Strategies at the National Level**.

A glance at our research output



As a result of the rigorous research and data collection undertaken by our researchers and Rights Experts in their respective countries and regions – we released our Executive Summary of **Global Report** (Global Report on Status of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent), **two Regional Reports** (Europe, Africa), and **four country reports** (Cameroon, Slovakia, Romania, Pakistan,.) with four more country reports (Niger, Mali, Gambia and Mauritania) to be launched by the last week of December 2023.

None of this would have been possible without the commitment and support of our partners and donors, the hard work of the interpreters who facilitated communication and translations, as well as the sheer dedication of networking partners and our team.

There is no denying that we are currently living in tumultuous times. At the same time, however, this is also the time to stand firmly in the face of challenges that lay ahead. The global threat of climate change has reached alarming proportions, as was reiterated during COP28 in Dubai, with the most marginalized communities being the most impacted. Moreover, the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Palestine serves as a stark reminder of the importance of advocating for justice, peace, and human rights. Hence, in these trying times, it is crucial to reaffirm our commitment to and stand in solidarity with the marginalized communities everywhere.

On behalf of our entire team, we would like to express our heartfelt thanks and we look forward to bigger and better things in the New Year.

Season's greetings 