

APRIL-JUNE 2021 | ISSUE 1

GFoD MATTERS

GLOBAL FORUM OF COMMUNITIES DISCRIMINATED ON WORK AND DESCENT - GFoD

#CastoutSlavery

Within most countries and regions, poverty, inequalities and discrimination interact with each other in a vicious circle. These inequalities and discrimination intensify poverty which, in turn, intensifies exclusion and further discrimination.

There are more than 260 million Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD). These communities face greater exposure to diseases due to inadequate housing conditions, overcrowding, vulnerable working conditions, high levels of air pollution, poor sanitation and water availability, and lack of access to education of any kind, let alone quality education.

Paul Divakar Namala, Convenor GFoD, on the Role of UN on Global Inequalities: Focus on Intra-National Rights to Communities at the Webinar - 'Asia Pacific Consultation on the UN We Need', 16 June 2021.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, 6 July, to Thursday, 15 July 2021



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



GFoD

GLOBAL FORUM OF
COMMUNITIES DISCRIMINATED
ON WORK AND DESCENT



Caste out slavery



Delta 8.7 will consider identity-based causal features of the DWD communities' social location being forced into modern slavery as an intergenerational phenomenon, take necessary steps to address the inherent vulnerabilities faced by these communities and accordingly develop necessary hypotheses in view of preparing the proposed policy guide.

Key features of modern slavery are closely associated with the DWD communities' life systems in various regions, including debt bondage, forced labor, child labor, unpaid and underpaid work, and forced marriages. DWD communities are often ignored or kept invisible in the public view or academic debates. One of the key missing aspects is the lack of exploratory and analytical evidence originating from the DWD communities themselves and related to the causal factors of modern slavery.

Another area to be explored deeply is the strong connection between the DWD communities and the elements of slavery, not only in Africa but also in Asia. All such efforts will bring to light the criticality of the issue of modern slavery of the DWD communities to be debated and deliberated upon by the concerned stakeholders at national, regional and global levels. In this respect, SDG 8.7 will certainly serve as the converging point for these stakeholders to engage in purposeful discourse and deliberations.

This action orientated note aims to create a structural understanding of slavery, which has identity-based causal features that result in contemporary slavery forms. Hopefully, Delta 8.7 will consider this aspect of the DWD communities' social location being forced into modern slavery as an intergenerational phenomenon, take necessary steps to address the inherent vulnerabilities faced by these communities and accordingly develop necessary hypotheses in view of preparing the proposed policy guide.

Link to Delta 8.7- <https://delta87.org/resources/policy-guides/policy-guide-working-groups/justice/>



Modern Slavery and DWD communities: Intersecting enforced work with generational descent

Inclusive rights

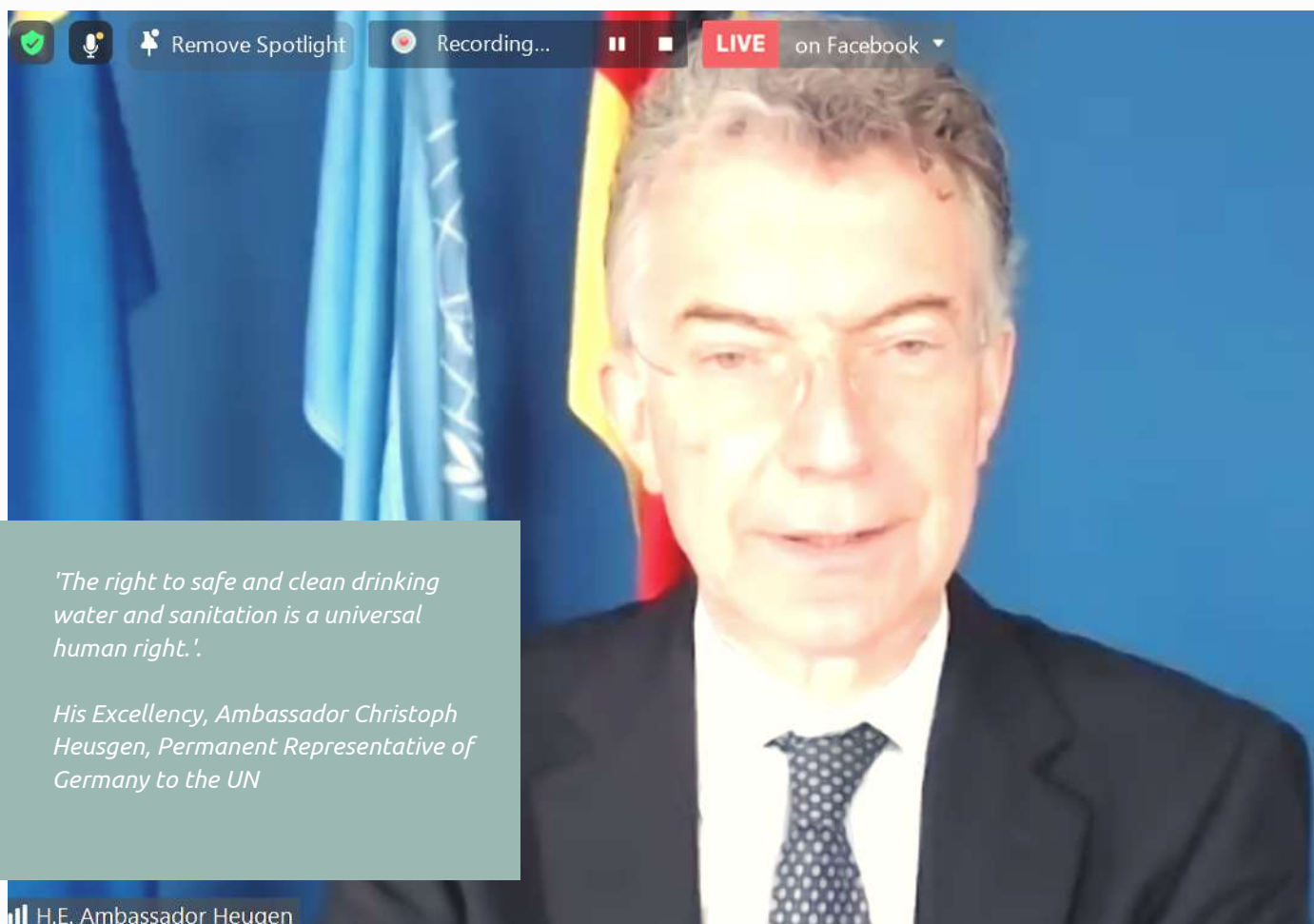
Access to Safe Drinking Water & Sanitation for All

On 4th June 2021, the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of Germany and Spain along with the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent held a virtual Round Table on Access to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation for All.

Against the backdrop of the forthcoming biennial Resolution on the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation put forward by Germany and Spain in the Third Committee of the United Nations the event focussed on the importance of ensuring access to water and sanitation for all with a special focus on communities discriminated on work and descent (CDWD) and highlighted the relevance of the contribution of sanitation workers to Sustainable Development Goal 6, ensuring all persons have access to sanitation services.

This event was inaugurated by His Excellency, Ambassador Christoph Heusgen, Permanent Representative of Germany to the UN who stated in his opening remarks that “the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation is a universal human right.” He added that even there was progress over the past 10 years, there are only ten more years to achieve universal access to water and sanitation, and ensuring access to water and sanitation – as a right and a public service for all, including women and girls and the most marginalized groups and communities, including communities discriminated on work and descent. With regard to the aim of the round table, Ambassador Heusgen stated that both Spain and Germany will work to promote discussion and to seek the inclusion of new language against discrimination based on work and descent in the Biennial Resolution of the Third Committee.

The keynote address was given by Professor Chin Sung Chung, Member of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Prof. Chung has worked closely on the issues of CDWD, having co-authored the Draft UN Principles and



Guidelines on Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent. Mr. Paul Divakar Namala, Convenor, Global forum of communities Discriminated on Work and Descent who moderated the panel reiterated that Communities Discriminated by work and Descent have been experience exclusion from right to access water and sanitation due prevailing cultural and social practices which has not been sufficiently address by the UN including the SDG 2030 goals. His Excellency Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, UN Special Rapporteur for Water and Sanitation began the discussion pointing out ‘When it comes to access to water and sanitation, scarcity is an issue, however, marginalization of populations is a crucial issue that needs to addressed and it is the responsibility of the State to do so.’

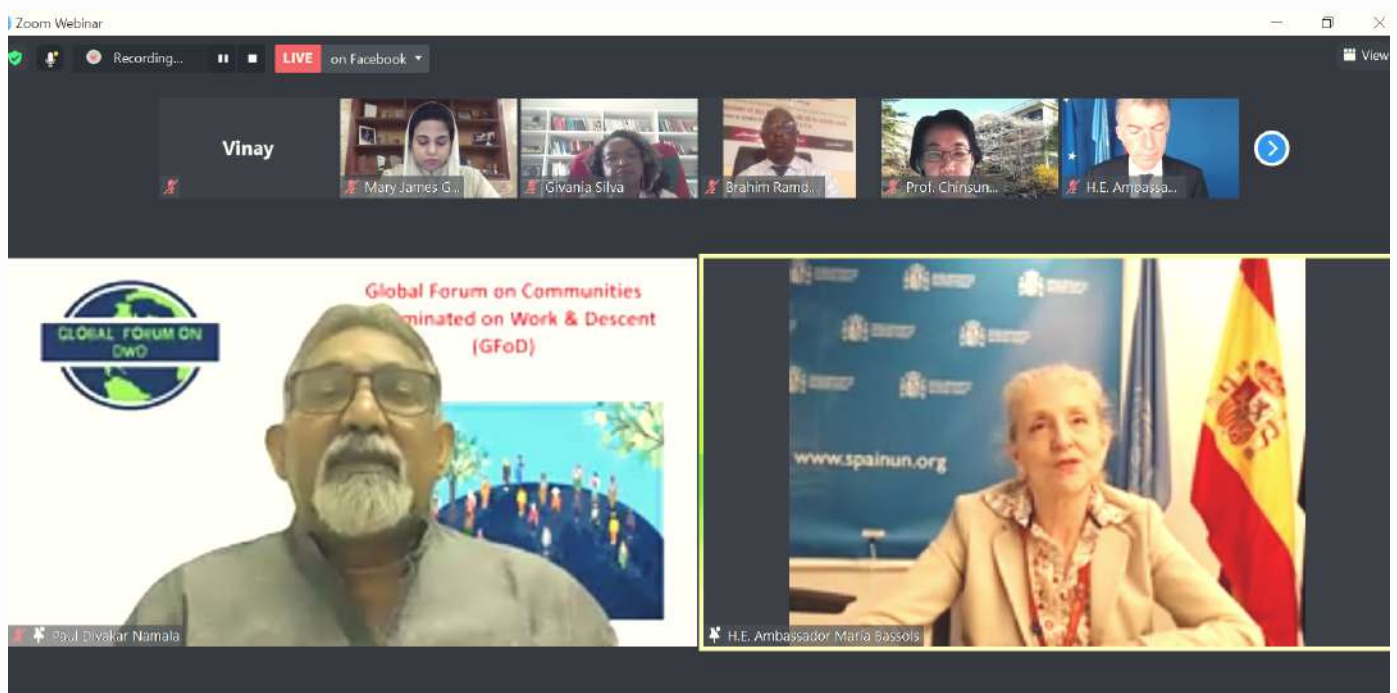
The Special Rapporteur was followed by 3 illustrious panellists, all experts on the field with the issues that face CDWD - Ms. Mary James Gill, Executive Director, Centre for Law & Justice, Pakistan, Mr. Brahim Rhamdane, founder of the Sahel Foundation & African Network against Discrimination based on Work and Descent, Mauritania , Dr. Givania Silva, Executive Director, Coordenação Nacional de Articulação das Comunidades Negras Rurais Quilombolas (CONAQ), Brazil. They brought out clear discrimination in access to water and sanitation as well as in other areas across Asia, Africa and Latin America.

This needs to be addressed on an urgent basis also in view of added difficulty posed by the Pandemic.

Closing remarks to this Roundtable were given by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations, Ambassador María Bassols. Ambassador Bassols reiterated the comments made by Ambassador Heusgen and added “The Agenda 2030 motto is to Leave No One Behind and the human right to water and sanitation is an important component to this.” Speaking of the need for progress towards the commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals, she added “I hope that in 2022 we can tell you about the advances made in this landscape. We are going to be working on this issue in the coming weeks and months.”

This Roundtable was co-hosted by the ANDS – Africa Network on Discrimination on Work and Descent, Asia Dalit Rights Forum, CONAQ – National Confederation of Quilombola Communities, Brazil, European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network – ERGO, TrustAfrica, The Inclusivity Project, Dalit Solidarity in Germany, International Dalit solidarity Network and the Global Call to Action Against Poverty

Video link to the event- <https://youtu.be/t7BTaC-qesk>



Strengthening CDWDs

Youth rights

Youth resilience: Perspectives from Africa, Asia, South America and Europe by youth activists from Communities Discriminated by Work and Descent (CDWD)" - 6th April 2021.

Youth activists from 4 continents gathered under the new Global Forum on DWD (GFoD) and shared their perspectives as activists and members of DWD communities on how the pandemic has impacted them and how resilience can be build and strengthened.

For the first time, global youth DWD activists from Africa, Asia, Europe., Latin America and the Caribbean unite in a global event to exchange their experience during the pandemic. They share the vision of achieving SDGs, especially SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 13 (Climate Action), 10 (Reduced Inequalities) 16 (Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies) and 17 (Partnership) to *Leave No One Behind*.

The event acted as global launch of the official Youth Wing of the GFoD which has obtained stakeholder status in the ECOSOC Major Group and Other Stakeholders (MGoS) in January 2021.

Video link to the event- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RhOmVwxLlmw>

Leave no one behind

COVID-19 Country Study Reports

COVID-19 & Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent in Asia: Looking at 'Leave No One Behind' one year into a Global Pandemic

More than 260 million people across the world are discriminated on the basis of work and descent/face caste-based discrimination. Approximately 80% (215 million) of the Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) are situated in Asia. These communities are among the most marginalised and excluded in terms of political, social and economic development. Across generations, these communities have faced discrimination and exclusion in every sphere of life, and this has often led to high incidence of poverty among them and precludes them from the enjoyment of their rights and entitlements as well as meaningful participation in public life. While it still not possible to predict the long-term effects of the Pandemic, one can certainly say that it has reversed few years of progress of SDGs in many countries.

The multidimensional impact of COVID-19 range from poverty, hunger, unemployment, denial and limitations to access healthcare services, increased incidents of violence and stigmatization, among others. With regard to CDWDs, it further takes back a generation of development as the focus of inclusion has shifted towards COVID mitigation measures. As countries begin to rebuild, the motto of 'Leave No One Behind' must be looked at in all earnest. If not, the implications on CDWDs, in terms of their social-political-economic position, will be grim.





ADRF and The Inclusivity Project along with partners conducted country assessment studies on the impact of COVID-19 among Dalits in 5 South Asian Countries including India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and an additional study on Malaysia completed during the project tenure. The assessment reports were published and released on 19 March 2021 during the *People's Forum Side Event "Development Justice for Dalits in the Pandemic"* conducted alongside the *Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM)*



Link to the reports- <http://www.theinclusivityproject.org/front/publications>

Justice for Stanislav Tomáš

Roma incident Czech Republic

Demanding objective investigation into the death of Stanislav Tomáš, a Romani man from Teplice, Czech Republic, who died soon after two police officers kneeled on him applying excessive and unnecessary force to immobilise him, even after he was handcuffed.

Amateur video footage was posted to Facebook on Saturday, 19 June featuring troubling images of the arrest of a man by three police officers in front of a group of bystanders who were visibly worried for the man's safety, as he was kept immobilized by the application of continuous pressure to his neck and nape area for several minutes.



GFoD has endorsed ERGO's statement

Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, who also chairs the Czech Government Council for Romani Minority Affairs, declared that “The court autopsy has clearly demonstrated that he did not die due to the intervention by police. This is sad, but a normal, respectable person would have a hard time getting into such a situation.” He backed the police officers in Teplice and thanked them for their intervention against Stanislav Tomáš. “If somebody destroys a car, is aggressive, and even bites a police officer, he cannot expect to be handled with kid gloves,” the PM commented.

Prior to the statement made by the Prime Minister, Czech Interior Minister Jan Hamáček also backed the police officers. “The intervening police officers have my full support. Anybody under the influence of addictive substances who breaks the law has to count on the police intervening. It is mainly thanks to the work of policemen and policewomen that we are among the top 10 safest countries in the world,” Hamáček commented in response to a police tweet insisting the Teplice incident is not an example of a “Czech George Floyd”

European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) Network, together with other Roma and pro-Roma and antiracism civil society organisations and individuals worldwide, would like to express our sincere condolences to Stanislav Tomáš's family and loved ones, and hope that justice will be swiftly served.

We therefore call for an independent, thorough and objective investigation into the death of Stanislav Tomáš, a Romani man from Teplice, Czech Republic, who died soon after two police officers kneeled on him applying excessive and unnecessary force to immobilise him against the hot pavement, even after he was handcuffed.

Open Letter to demand justice for Stanislav Tomáš :

<https://ergonetwork.org/2021/06/open-letter-to-demand-justice-for-stanislav-tomas/>



The Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (GFoD) is the global coordination and engagement mechanism for the Stakeholder Group of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (SG CDWD). founded in 2021 and formally recognize the core motto of 'Leave No One Behind' propounded by Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which ensures Planet, Peace and Prosperity for all, especially those who are marginalized through generations and suffered social prejudices for life of dignity and peace.