

DECEMBER 2023 | ISSUE 17

# CDWD MATTERS

## Major Highlights

- 1 GFoD visits to Ghana and Cameroon, Africa
- 2 GFoD at the UN Forum of Business Human Rights and Forum on Minority Issues
- 3 Universal Periodic Review - Bangladesh and Canada
- 4 News From Latin America, Africa, Europe and Asia



# GFoD in Ghana & Cameroon, Africa



## Highlights from Ghana

Click this link for full report



### COMMUNITY VISITS - ADA COMMUNITY, KAYAYEI WOMEN

We visited Ada Community, where women are called by the god of the community to serve him in a shrine for about 5 to 12 years. The young girl, during the service period, does not go to school or socialize with others.

We also visited Kayayei women- who came from the Northern and North eastern region of Ghana but are from different ethnic groups. The main reason for their migration to Kumasi and Accra to carry bags on their heads is due to poverty and no Land ownership to cultivate or the issue of drought.



### Experience sharing with National NGOs and officials in Kumasi

Most of the CSOs know about the existence of the trokosi Practice. Predominant in Ghana, Togo and Benin, which involves the enslavement of women and girls as a form of atonement to the gods for perceived wrongdoings either by them or their families, affecting over 5,000 women and 15,000 children. They are subjected to forced labor and sexual exploitation within shrines. We have identified about 3 CSOs to link with the other CSOs will join as Solidarity.



### ENGAGEMENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

In the Blame Library at the University of Ghana, we searched and collected a number of useful resources on the caste system in Africa, and the Trakosi Practice etc.

We met with the scholars at the University of Ghana where we discussed about the CDWD issues and practices that the communities are involved in. Moreover, discussed scope for conducting webinars and in-depth research in this very important and timely area.



# Highlights from Cameroon

## Meeting with CSOs in Maroua and Yaounde

GFoD held meetings with Civil Society Organizations in Maroua and Yaounde regarding the CDWD in Cameroon. During the discussion, Aminatu Noah, Association des Femmes et de Développement, mentions another group which is discriminated against: Ngoda. They are a sub group of Mafa. They are supposed to dispose of animal carcass which they carry on their heads.



## MEETING WITH OFFICIALS: LAMIDO, DIVISIONAL OFFICER AND OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Meetings with the officials in Cameroon were useful in gaining some useful insights on the Communities discriminated on Work and Descent. Some of the points that were reflected by the officials is that no Mbororo has approached the prefecture. Imam described some cases of injustice. The lamido noted that Mboro live in poverty, which emerges from their traditional profession choice as well as a demographic problem as there are too many people and too less land.



## MEETING WITH UN AGENCIES : NHRC, UN PERMENENT RESIDENT AND UN WOMEN

GFoD met with Mme Bouba, Commissioner at the CNHRC who acknowledged that that the practices CDWD suffer from are rooted in traditional slavery systems. A fruitful conversation took place at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Moreover, The UN Women country representative Mme Marie Pierre Raky Chaupin has installed a new full-time position only focusing on "left behind" - GFoD has recognized the scope of these engagements and will come up with a strategy plan.



## COMMUNITY VISITS

GFoD delegation, in Cameroon, also met with Mbororo and Sedek Communities - listened to their concerns, learnt from them and exchanged insights. It was noted that most of the Mbororo members did not have birth certificates which prevents them from having access to essential resources such as education.



## GfOD at the UN Forum on Business Human Rights

### GfOD Side Event: The Responsibility of Businesses in Realising the Right to Development of CDWD

**The Responsibility of Businesses in Realising the Right to Development of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent**

UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS  
NOVEMBER 27 - 29 NOVEMBER 2023

**NOTE PANELIST**

**Mr. Surya Deva**  
UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development

**Bhakta Bishwakarma**  
General Secretary, Asia Dalit Rights Forum

**Dr. Simona Tortolci**  
Senior Researcher, ERGO Network

**Dr. P.P. Sivapragasam**  
Secretary General, Coalition of Agricultural Workers International

**Beena Pallichal**  
General Secretary, National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)

**Diko Hanoune**  
General Secretary, Association des Haratins de Mauritanie en Europe

**Iver Ørstavik**  
Senior Advisor, Rafto Foundation

**Abdelbagi Jibril**  
African Center for Democracy and Human Rights

November 29, 2023, at 10:00 - 14:45  
Free person event, available at <https://bit.ly/2023BHR>

**GfOD** GLOBAL FORUM OF COMMUNITIES DISCRIMINATED ON WORK AND DESCENT

**CONAQ** Comisión Nacional de Atención al Consumidor Negro Rroma Substantivo

**African Network on Discrimination based on Work, Descent and Contemporary Forms of Slavery**

**INCLUSIVITY PARTNER**

**ERGO Network**

**Asia Dalit Rights Forum**

**THE RAFTO FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

**RADDO**



In the context of the 12th Forum on Business and Human Rights, the Global Forum of Communities discriminated on Work and Descent (GfOD), along with partner entities conducted a side event focusing on the responsibility that businesses have to realise the right to development of CDWD. The forum focused on existing responsibilities, obligations and remedies under the UN Guiding Principles and business and human standards and present regional cases of human rights violations CDWD and good practices in this area by States, businesses and other stakeholders.

This event brought together experts, mandate holders and community members to discuss and deliberate the responsibilities of businesses towards their employees. It highlighted the challenges faced by CDWD on a daily basis and the role that businesses have in the context of the holistic vision of the right to development presented by the Special Rapporteur (A/78/160) and the four pillars - economic, social, cultural and political - that make up this right.

“

Today we are launching Europe Regional report by GfOD which sheds light on the troubling issues of discrimination faced by Roma and the existing gaps between Roma and non-Roma especially with regard to SDG 1, 4, 5, 6 and 8. We should focus on Decent work and eco dev - very imp aspects related to Roma's presence in informal work sector and their protection against Human Rights violations.

Ms. Simona Tortolci  
Senior Researcher, ERGO Network



People should be able to participate, enjoy and contribute to the Right to Development. There are four principles, these are Fair Distribution, self-determination (for people who are left behind), intersectionality and inter-generational equity. All these four principles are absolutely critical to understand where the right to development should be going forward.

Mr. Surya Deva  
Special Rapporteur on The Right to Development



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The problem [of Discrimination based on Work and Descent] in Mauritania is very deep and unknown... Languages of Discriminated communities need to be recognized and taught in schools so that they do not disappear. Second recommendation is that the State should recognize that when the Mauritanian slaves are freed, we have to have centers that shelter them, integrate them. State talks about freeing people, having laws, but if you free someone and don't follow up, they end up in streets. (English Translation by Carla Forneri)

Mr. Diko Hanoune  
General Sec., The Association des Haratins de Mauritanie en Europe



## GfOD at the UN Forum on Business Human Rights

### Major Highlights



#### Meeting with Claude Cahn from the Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section OHCHR

In this meeting, we shared updates and explore how anti-discrimination legislation approaches the situation of CDWD; to share the updates and explore how anti-discrimination legislation approaches the situation of #CDWDbrief him about the Africa Commission and the broader CDWD issue; Invited him for our events; shared our reports.



In this UN Forum on Business Human Rights, our delegation members attended over 18 key events, making important interventions in many of them. For instance, in the session, "Towards effective remedy for persons affected by large scale land acquisition: progress and opportunities in Africa", Mr Diko Hanoune raised the issue of The Haratin facing expropriation of land in Mauritania. Another member, Dr. Simona Torotcoi highlighted the Environmental Discrimination faced by communities affected by caste and DWD that pushes them to the landfills and margins of society everywhere. In the session on Access to Justice and the Role of Human Rights Defenders, Beena Pallical raised the issue of non-functioning of NHRIs and its repercussions for the CDWD.



#### Meeting with Fernanda H. Caberra, WG on UN Business & Human Rights

On the third day, in meeting with Fernanda H. Caberra, we discussed about the discrimination encountered by CDWD on the labour market, but also bonded labour, child labour and the importance of companies incorporating diversity and inclusion in their workforce.



## GFoD at the UN Forum on Minority Issues

### GFoD side event: 'A Simple Minority? Building on Regional Recognition towards a Resolution on the Rights of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent'

**BUILDING ON REGIONAL RECOGNITION TOWARDS A RESOLUTION ON THE RIGHTS OF COMMUNITIES DISCRIMINATED ON WORK AND DESCENT**

**A SIMPLE MINORITY?**

30 November 2023 at 13:00 - 14:00 in PdN room XXIII

Side event during the 16th annual session of the United Nations Forum on Minority Issues

**Keynote speakers:**

- Prof Nicolas Levrat, UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues
- Mr Ibrahim GUISSÉ, UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
- H.E. Ambassador Bwanali-Mussa, Permanent Representative of Malawi to the United Nations Office Geneva
- H.E. Ambassador Ram Prasad Subedi, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the UN in Geneva

**Moderator:**

- Miloon Kothari, Former UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing
- Paul Divakar, Executive Director The Inclusivity Project (TIP)
- Dr Corinne Lennox, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Commonwealth Studies of the University of London

**Other speakers:**

- Mary Jemis Gill, Award-winning songwriter, workers advocate, founder Superheroes Ave Superheroes
- Diko Hanoane, General Secretary, Association des Mauritanais en Europe
- Dr Simona Tortolero, Senior Researcher ERGO Network

**Logos and additional info:**

- GFoD: GLOBAL FORUM ON DISCRIMINATION BASED ON WORK AND DESCENT
- Asia Dalit Rights Forum
- The African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies
- AFRICA NETWORK ON DISCRIMINATION BASED ON WORK, DESCENT AND CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY (ANDS)
- THE INCLUSIVITY PROJECT
- CONAQ
- ERGO
- Interpretation in French & Portuguese & Spanish available
- Lunch will be served

The Sixteenth Session of the Forum on Minority Issues 2023 focuses on the theme 'Minorities and Cohesive Societies: Equality, Social Inclusion, and Socio-Economic Participation'. The core concept revolves around envisioning a cohesive society where minorities are treated equally and have the advantages of socio-economic development, akin to their fellow citizens.

GFoD's side event explored the largely unexplored challenges faced by over 270 million individuals belonging to Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD). Organized jointly with The Inclusivity Project (TIP), Permanent Mission of Nepal to the UN in Geneva, Asia Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF), Africa Network on Discrimination based on work, Descent and Contemporary forms of Slavery (ANDS), the keynote speaker for the event was Mr. Levrat Nicolas, Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues. The discussions delved into the issues faced by the CDWD, need for state recognition, significance of disaggregated data among other recommendations for a more inclusive action. In addition, the Special Rapporteur on Minority Rights urged States, through the Draft Global Convention on the Rights of Minorities, to adopt the UN Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination Based on Work and Descent, which is still pending adoption by the Human Rights Council.



Our 'Global Report on Status of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent' LAUNCHED during our side-event for UN Forum on Minority Issues. The report delves into the intricacies of historical, cultural, and social factors that contribute to this form of discrimination.

## Key Interventions during UN Forum on Minority Issues

### DR. SIMONA TOROTCOI'S INTERVENTION AT UN FMI

Representing ERGO Network, a partner of GfOD, Simona highlighted that CDWD represent over 270 million people across globe. She asserted that in the Europe that prides itself on its to commitment to diversity, equality and Human rights, the persistence of discrimination against Roma communities based on work and descent stands as a stark reminder of challenges that still lie ahead

“We call on all states to recognize this form of discrimination but to also take all necessary steps to eliminate dis based on work and descent.”

...oi of the ERGO Network during the UN Forum on Minority Issues



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### DIKO HANOUNE'S INTERVENTION AT UN FMI

Diko highlighted the issues of Haratin slaves in Mauritania who are victims of slavery from the past. Education is not provided which would allow them to join labour market. The Haratin which would like to start a business do not get credit. Financial organizations, private and public institutions, the executive and legislative are all under the control of dominant ethnicities. Arab berber solinke and wolof ethnicities. Thus, the Haratin group also demands rights on the same footing.

### BHAKTA BISHWAKARMA'S INTERVENTION AT UN FMI

Representing Asia Dalit Rights Forum, Bhakta talked about he discrimination faced by CDWD in South Asia which results in their lack of participation in socio-economic and political opportunities and access to justice.

“In Nepal, a Dalit boy's dead body is lying in the hospital waiting for justice since 2016... For them, UN Human Rights Council need to adopt the UN principles and guidelines for the effective elimination of DWD.”



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Dalits and communities discrimi

...anda-Singh during UN Forum on Minority Issues 2023



individuals. The Human Rights Council sho  
...consider can adopting the Draft

### ADIKANDA SINGH'S INTERVENTION AT UN FMI

Adikanda recommended that Discrimination Based on Work and Descent should be recognized and addressed for all groups rather than individuals. UN HRC should consider adopting the draft resolution on the rights of CDWD, creation of UN special procedures, mandate in the form of rapporteurs, setting up of a working group to address the same.



## UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW: BANGLADESH AND CANADA

In August/September, 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.



### **#Bangladesh UPR**

Mexico recommended: "Collect disaggregated data on the Dalit population, including data on gender-based discrimination and violence faced by Dalit women".

Costa Rica recommended: "Strengthen the legal framework of protection for the "Dalit" population, as well as develop awareness campaigns on caste discrimination and promote inclusion and social cohesion".

Germany recommended: "Implement the Anti-Discrimination Bill to improve protection against discrimination, in particular on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, caste or religion".

### **#Canada UPR**

Switzerland recommended: "Evaluate Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2019–2022 in consultation with affected groups and take the necessary steps to combat racism and racial discrimination."

Mexico recommended: "Adopt a concrete strategy to strengthen access to quality health care and adequate housing, primarily for Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants, migrants and refugees."

Austria recommended: "Ratify immediately the OP to the Convention against Torture, which will allow for continued and strengthened independent oversight, monitoring and reporting of the human rights situation in all places of detention."



# NEWS FROM:

## LATIN AMERICA

### Report Released: Racism and Violence against Quilombos in Brazil - 2nd edition

Developed by the National Coordination of Articulation of Black Rural Quilombola Communities (Conaq) and Terra de Direito, the second edition of the report identifies murders recorded in quilombos between 2018 and 2022. The research also reveals that violence against quilombolas has increased in the last five years. This is because the 1st edition of the research mapped 38 murders that occurred over a ten-year period (2008-2017). In 15 years, 70 quilombolas were murdered (2008 to 2022). [Click here for the report.](#)



## AFRICA

### Trust Africa Event: CDWD and the Political, Security and Humanitarian Situation in West Africa and in the Sahel

The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery was celebrated this December 2023. This celebration took place in a context characterized by the rise in violent extremism, coups d'état, a deteriorating global health situation, human rights violations, poverty, immigration, and climate change. Trust Africa notes - 'This situation impacts, significantly, the lives of communities that are victims of Descent-Based Discrimination and Slavery (DWD)'.



## EUROPE

### ERGO Network Annual Policy Conference 2023

This past 28 November, ERGO Network organised its Annual Policy Conference, both on-site in Brussels and online. This year's event was dedicated to exploring how to improve Roma access to quality and affordable housing, as well as to taking stock of the implementation of the EU and National Roma Frameworks, particularly from a housing, energy poverty, access to services and utilities, and environmental justice perspective.

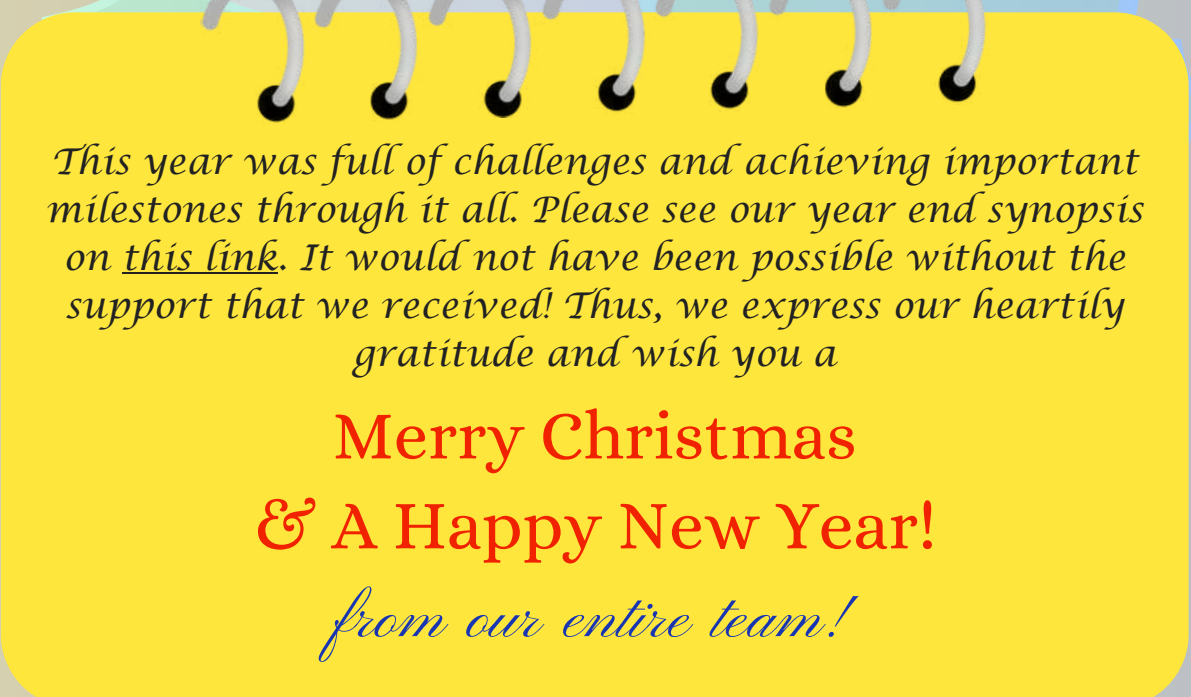


## ASIA

### National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) Launched Campaign on Eliminating Manual Scavenging in India

NCDHR's [#EliminateManualScavenging](#) campaign launched on December 5th. The organization recognized that it is time to flush away this inhumane practice. Millions are trapped in manual scavenging in India who deserve dignity, not discrimination.





*This year was full of challenges and achieving important milestones through it all. Please see our year end synopsis on [this link](#). It would not have been possible without the support that we received! Thus, we express our heartfelt gratitude and wish you a*

**Merry Christmas  
& A Happy New Year!**

*from our entire team!*



Send us your pieces (short write-ups, photo stories, poetry, art etc.) relevant to CDWD in your region at [GFoD@globalforumcdwd.org](mailto:GFoD@globalforumcdwd.org) - and get a chance to feature in our next issue and social media!