



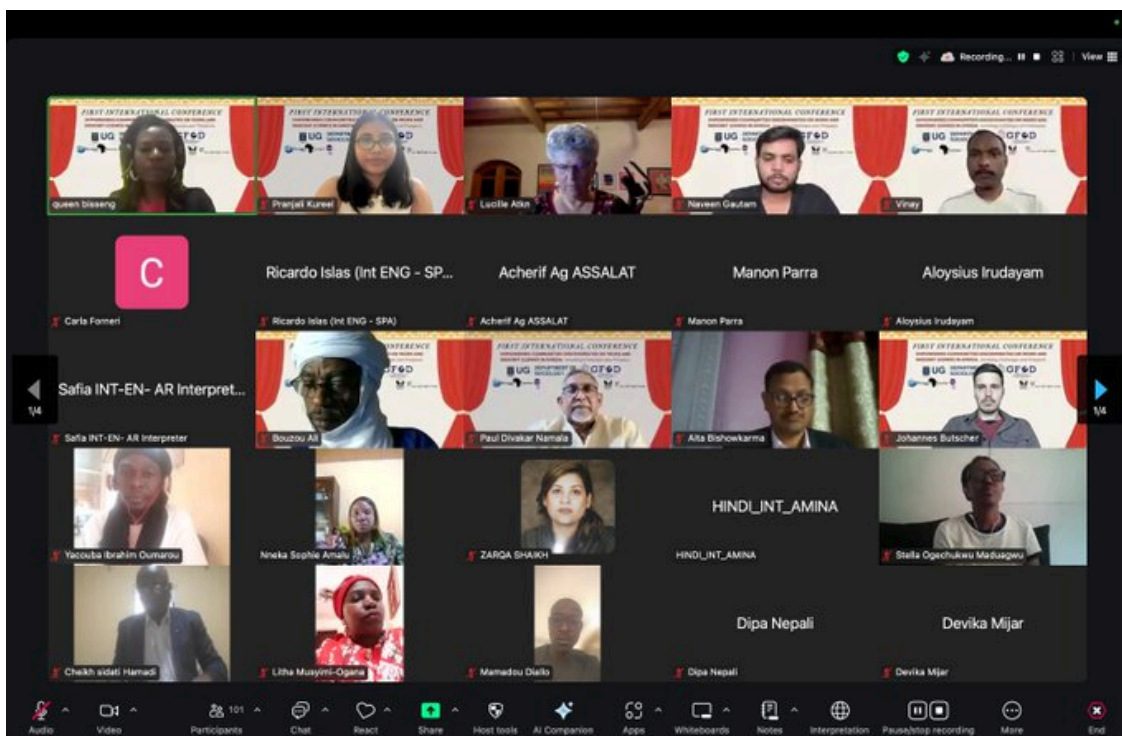
CDWD MATTERS

Read on about the 2025 ECOSOC Youth Forum, how to apply for the coming High Level Political Forum (HLPF), First International Conference - CDWD in Africa, Roma Week, Universal Equality Day - Zoom-a-thon and more!

From Resistance to Recognition: Highlights from the First International Conference on CDWD in Africa🌍

 **03/04/2025** | The First International Conference on Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent in Africa successfully took place earlier in April, bringing together over a hundred participants to amplify critical conversations around descent- and work-based discrimination. It was moderated by Prof. Alhassan Sulemana Anamzoya, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology, University of Ghana, who was also a key organizer of this event, supported by Queen Bisseng and Prof. Joel Lee. Distinguished voices like Prof. Mavis Dako-Gyeke, Dean of the School of Social Sciences at the University of Ghana, offered powerful opening remarks, highlighting the socio-economic dimensions of exclusion. Prof. Nneka Sophie Amalu from the University of Calabar shed light on the enduring Osu caste system in Nigeria, emphasising the insufficiency of legislation and the urgent need for cultural engagement and grassroots action. In Mali, Acherif Assalat discussed the continued reality of slavery by descent, sharing best practices like documentation and strategic litigation, while also acknowledging ongoing challenges.

The discussions deepened with Prof. Ali Bouzou, President of Timidria, who exposed caste-like discrimination within certain Nigerian communities where occupationally marked groups faced religious and social exclusion. From The Gambia, Basiru Pullo of the NHRC Gambia delivered a powerful call to end caste-based discrimination, noting the gap between international obligations and domestic action. The conference closed on a resonant note as our Senior Rights Expert, Yacouba Ibrahim Oumarou, known as Sage Soldat, stirred the spirit of resistance through music, showing how art continues to be a mighty force in the fight for dignity and justice.



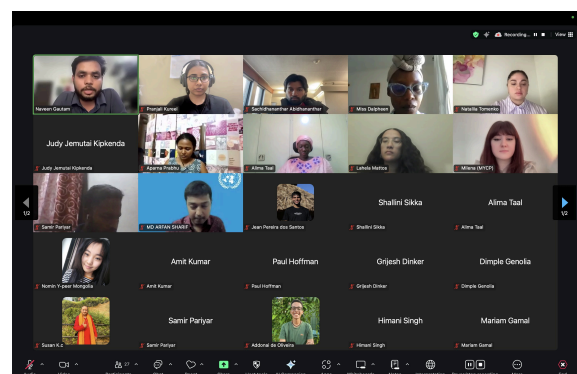
CDWD Youth, powerfully, at the 2025 ECOSOC Youth Forum in New York & Virtually

For the first time, CDWD Youth took the global stage at the *ECOSOC Youth Forum 2025*!

We **organised two impactful side events** and actively **participated in key discussions**, including the **Ministerial Breakfast at the UN Headquarters**. With the extensive support of the Major Group of Children and Youth (MGCY), our engagement at the forum featured a **critical intervention from CDWD youth**, who voiced their concerns and experiences during floor discussions. **GfOD Moderated Plenary in ECOSOC YOUTH FORUM 2025** and more.

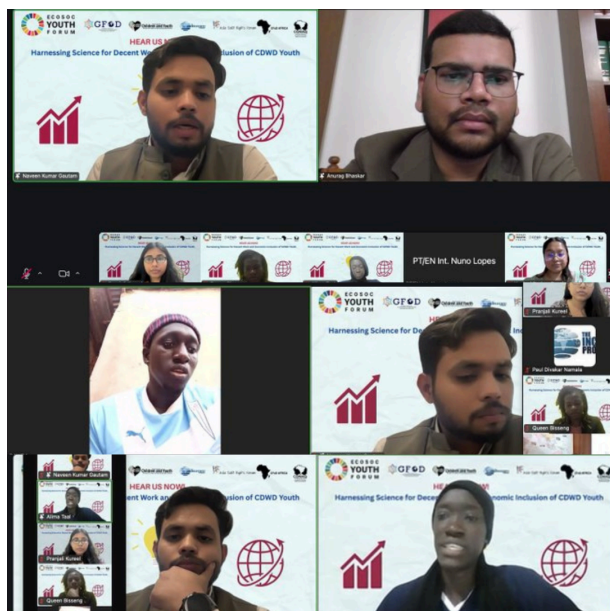
Pre-forum Consultation with Indigenous Youth Caucus

10/04/2025 | The Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) and the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus (GIYC) jointly organized a pre-consultation event ahead of the ECOSOC Youth Forum. The gathering brought together youth leaders from discriminated communities and Indigenous groups to share experiences, build solidarity, and develop collective strategies for advocacy at global platforms. Participants discussed key challenges, including systemic discrimination, lack of access to education and employment, and climate justice. The session concluded with a set of shared recommendations to amplify marginalized voices at the Youth Forum and beyond.



Watch here

Advancing Equity & Inclusion: GfOD's Youth-Led Side Events at ECOSOC Youth Forum 2025



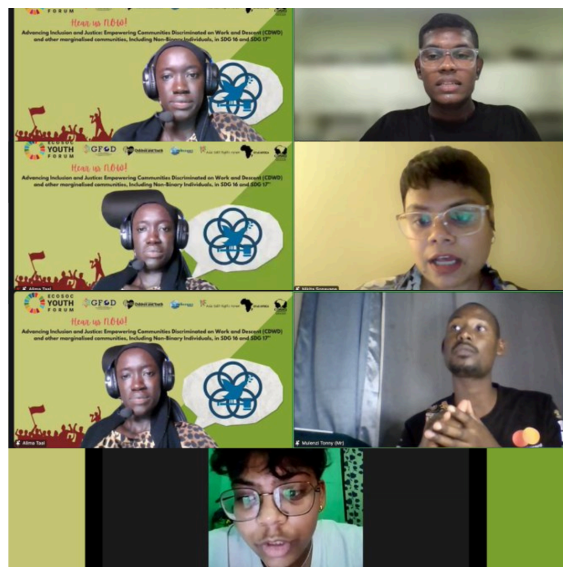
Watch here

Science for Decent Work and Economic Inclusion of CDWD Youth

16/04/2025 | Our first side event at the *ECOSOC Youth Forum 2025* brought critical global attention to the urgent need for decent work and economic inclusion for youth from Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD). Speakers systematically unpacked how caste, work, and descent-based discrimination continue to shape youth trajectories—from restricted access to education and markets to exclusion from social and religious spaces. The discussions highlighted that without targeted interventions, systemic barriers will persist across generations. Participants called for a multipronged strategy: strengthening public awareness, creating leadership spaces for marginalized youth, investing in storytelling platforms to amplify lived experiences, and building robust legal support systems to safeguard rights. The collective message resonated powerfully: **#HearUsNow**

Advancing Inclusion and Justice: Empowering CDWD and marginalised communities, Including Non-Binary Individuals, in SDG 16 & SDG 17

17/04/2025 | Our second side-event at the *ECOSOC Youth Forum 2025*, co-hosted with UN MGCY and partners, provided a critical platform for analyzing how SDG 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) intersect with the rights and inclusion of CDWD youth—particularly Dalit, Roma, gender non-binary, disabled, and other marginalized groups. Speakers emphasized that structural exclusion persists not only due to discriminatory practices but also due to a lack of political will, representation, and shared decision-making. They urged for redistributive justice, health equity, and community-led solutions. The message was clear: meaningful change demands systemic transformation, not symbolic participation.



Watch Here

CDWD Intervention from the UN floor



16/04/2025 | During the *ECOSOC Youth Forum 2025*, Naveen Gautam delivered a powerful intervention at the official session "Youth Lead from Local to Global: Meaningful Youth Participation in Policymaking and Decision-Making." Speaking on behalf of CDWD youth, he shifted the conversation away from abstract policymaking to the lived realities of marginalized communities. His statement—"We don't speak from policy rooms — we speak from informal settlements, rural villages, and urban slums. Our communities know what it means to survive, to resist, to build every single day"—underscored the need to center frontline experiences in global decision-making.

[Watch here](#)

Youth Voices for Justice: GFoD Moderates Plenary in ECOSOC YOUTH FORUM 2025



17/04/2025 | On the final day, GFoD moderated a high-level plenary session **on the Social Development: Youth Solutions for an Inclusive Future**. This session convened diverse youth constituencies and partners to build momentum toward the HLPF and the Second World Summit for Social Development, drawing on ongoing youth consultations. It created a safe space to consolidate feedback from marginalized and underrepresented communities, including (but not limited to) youth from work and descent-based communities, Afro-descendants, and Indigenous groups. Discussions highlighted youth-led solutions for social justice and explored strategies for sustained youth-led accountability, with outcomes feeding into the ECOSOC Youth Forum informal summary, the Presidential statement, and the "Voices of Youth" report.

[Watch here](#)

Other Key Highlights



Youth Blast: Prior to the beginning of ECOSOC Youth Forum 2025, GFoD actively participated in a series of Youth Blast events, one virtual and one in person, which are essentially preparatory meetings organized by the UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY). During this event, GFoD contributed to shaping key advocacy messages, especially emphasizing the need for inclusive youth participation and anti-discrimination measures in the global SDG agenda.

Together for Action: Ministerial Breakfast: On 16 April, youth leaders, ministers, and global changemakers convened at the UN Headquarters for the Ministerial Breakfast, hosted by the UN Youth Office on the sidelines of the *ECOSOC Youth Forum*. The event provided a critical space for discussing how to better integrate youth priorities into national agendas and accelerate progress on the #GlobalGoals.



Bilateral meetings with: Minister of Youth Affairs, Tonga; Delegations from Slovenia, Azerbaijan, Qatar, and Suriname In particular, a productive meeting with the **Minister of Qatar** focused on the **World Social Summit (WSS)**, where key discussions centered on ensuring inclusive youth participation and advocating for the voices of marginalized communities in the summit's preparations and outcomes.

Powerful Engagements at the NGO Forum of African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)



29/04/2025 | At the NGO Forum preceding the 83rd Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, GFoD delegation amplified the urgent struggles and demands of CDWD communities in the region. On the Day-2, GFoD hosted a panel "Promotion of resolution on promotion & protection of CDWD: call for collective actions," chaired by Hon. Commissioner Litha Musyimi-Ogana. Our own Queen Bisseng highlighted the need for monitoring, implementation, and survivor-centred strategies. AlimaTaal shared the deeply moving story of Buba Ceesay, whose mother was buried outside the village cemetery due to caste-based discrimination—reminding us: caste does not end with death. Ali Camara of the Gambana Movement 🇳🇬 told a powerful tale of

resistance, after his community, barred from entering the mosque, built their own mosque and school. Basiru Bah from NHRC Gambia discussed the landmark 2021 study on caste discrimination and outlined the NHRI's role in pushing for rights-based reforms. Panels were followed by the engagements of Special Interest Groups on specific themes. Some of the key points discussed within the Special Interest Group on CDWD, which were reported in the plenary by Inaboutou Ibrahim of Association Timitria, and GFoD's Alima Taal:

- ✓ Official recognition of modern slavery practices
- ✓ Inclusive, survivor-led policy processes
- ✓ Enforcement of anti-slavery laws & prosecution of perpetrators
- ✓ Multi-sectoral reparations: financial, legal, symbolic, and social
- ✓ Establishment of an African Reparations Fund backed by the AU

The Forum concluded with strong recommendations on reparations and modern slavery, including recognition of contemporary slavery practices, survivor-led policymaking, and a multi-sectoral reparations framework. **Follow our regular updates and an interesting Social Media campaign in collaboration with partner organizations in Africa on [X here](#).**

High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) News


Registrations for the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2025 are now open! Apply to be there:

We are pleased to inform you that registration for the HLPF 2025 is now open for organizations with ECOSOC consultative status. If your organization is ECOSOC-accredited, you may proceed with registration via the following link: <https://indico.un.org/event/1016520/>. **Please ensure that you use your organization's own ECOSOC accreditation details when completing the registration.**

If your organization is not ECOSOC-accredited but you will attend the HLPF 2025, [please complete this form](#) by May 15, 2025. This will allow us to explore possible cross-network support mechanisms and help maximize the participation of CDWD delegates. Please note that all costs related to participation must be fully covered by the participants or their respective organizations.

[Appel à participation au Forum politique de haut niveau \(HLPF\) 2025 et aux réunions préparatoires des Nations Unies, et accréditation INDICO via le GFOD.](#)

Co-Facilitators of World Social Summit (WSS) 2025 urged to recognize CDWD in political outcome document

 **22/04/2025** | An in-person informal hearing for stakeholders was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York as part of the preparatory process for the Second World Summit for Social Development, scheduled to take place in Doha, Qatar, from November 4–6, 2025.

One of the key interventions came from the Stakeholder Group of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD), delivered by Laura Stanovic. The intervention called on the co-facilitators to formally recognize CDWD as an emerging issue in the summit's political outcome document.



[Watch her full intervention here](#)

While the outcome document of the first World Social Summit in 1995—[the Copenhagen Declaration](#)—focused on poverty eradication, full employment, decent work, and social inclusion, it failed to explicitly acknowledge Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent. Despite referencing several marginalized groups, it lacked the clarity and precision needed to address caste-based and analogous forms of discrimination.

With the [African Commission's Resolution 619](#) (adopted in November 2024) serving as a model, stakeholders emphasized the need for explicit recognition and condemnation of such structural inequalities as part of the *Emerging Issues* which are likely to be a category in a new political outcome document to be adopted by member states to complement the existing declaration and guide global social development discourses for decades to come. A renewed global commitment must address these longstanding injustices to ensure dignity, inclusion, and justice for over 270 million people affected worldwide.

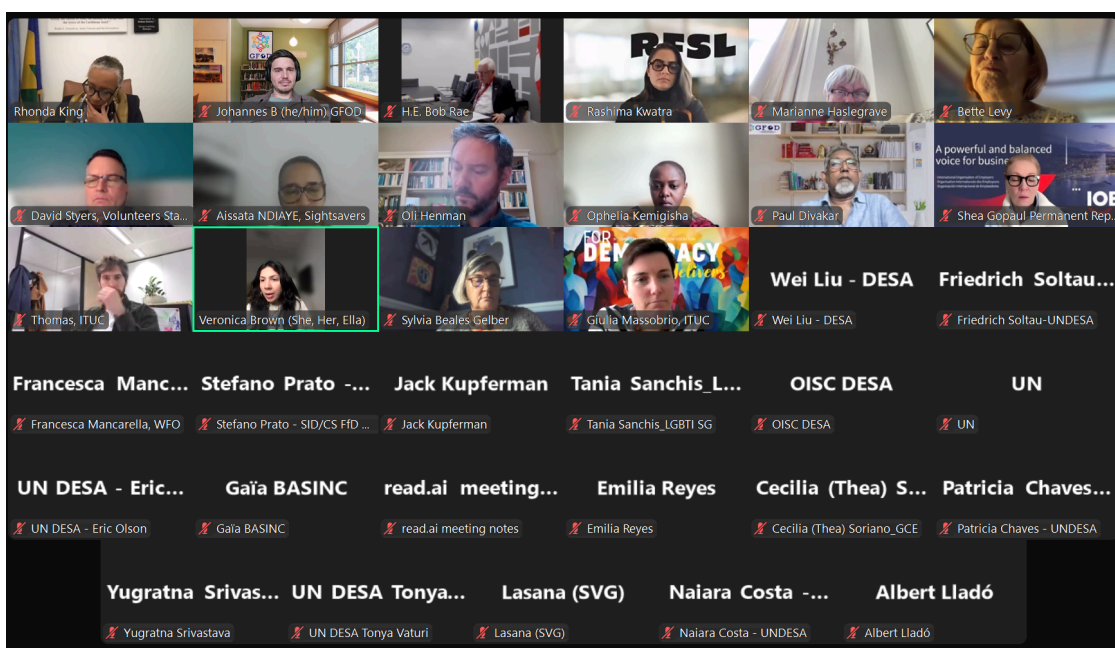
Dinesh Jonnakuty intervenes at the FFD ministerial fireside chat on trade and technology



In the lead up to The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) to be held in Sevilla, Spain in July 2025, GfOD's Dinesh Jonnakuty intervened at the FFD ministerial fireside chat on trade and technology. His address focused on digital access for marginalized groups.

[Watch here](#)

GFoD Pushes for Recognition of Descent-Based Discrimination at HLPF 2025



GFoD has submitted a written contribution and delivered an oral intervention at the invitation of the ECOSOC President. Responding to the Zero Draft of the Ministerial Declaration for the 2025 High-Level Political Forum, Johannes Butscher, representing GFoD, highlighted the systemic discrimination faced by over 270 million people discriminated on work & descent globally.

Our input urges the declaration to explicitly address descent-based forced labour, hereditary labour systems, and socially sanctioned labour exploitation, calling for stronger commitments to protect the right to freely chosen labour. Specific amendments propose strengthening labour laws, tackling digital divides, ensuring universal social protection, and eliminating gendered discrimination rooted in social hierarchies.

UNECE RFSD 2025: Discussion on Roma Women & Gender Equality


For the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2025, our event, *Empowering Roma Women: Advancing Gender Equality and Inclusion in the Context of SDG 5* took place on April 3, 2025. Bringing much-needed attention to the intersecting discrimination faced by Roma women across Europe, the discussions highlighted how systemic exclusion continues to limit their contributions to sustainable development. Framed around the vital goals of SDG 5, the gathering offered enriching conversations and impressive insights into policies and initiatives that can drive true inclusion. Participants shared practical pathways to ensure Roma women have equal access to opportunities, reminding us that gender equality is not just a goal, but the heart of sustainable futures.

The Critical Role of the UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls in Advancing Roma Women's rights: Read this article by GFoD

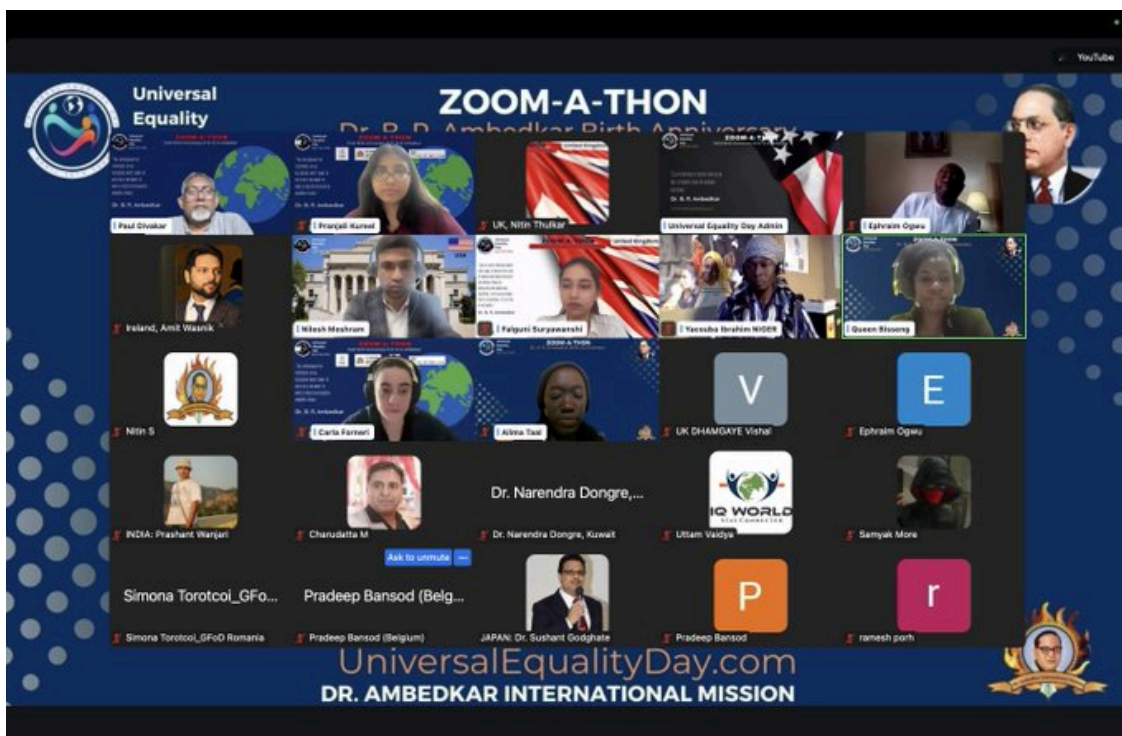
[Click here](#)



Universal Equality Day - Zoom-a-thon

 **12/04/2025** | The Ambedkar International Mission, in collaboration with GFoD, hosted a compelling Zoom-a-thon to mark Universal Equality Day, the birth anniversary of Dalit leader and global icon, Dr. B.R Ambedkar, bringing together global voices from sunrise to sunset. The event provided a platform for in-depth discussions on the enduring legacy of Dr. Ambedkar and the leaders worldwide who have fought for equality and justice.

The South Asia session, which was one of the highlights, examined the continued relevance of Ambedkar's ideas across borders, with reflections from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh. As Europe took over the Zoom-a-thon, the discussions dwelled into the resilience and resistance of Roma communities, carving shared solidarities with other CDWD diaspora in the region. Moving across the globe, the baton shifted to the Africa region, which delved into the challenges and resilience of communities affected by caste, work and descent based discrimination. Speakers like Alima Taal emphasized the urgent need for global recognition of caste and descent-based discrimination, particularly in The Gambia. Ephraim Ogwu, from Nigeria, brought attention to the Osu caste system, urging a broader reflection on structural inequalities and the steps forward. The event not only honored the struggles of marginalized communities but also called for continued action to dismantle systems of oppression, echoing the universal need for justice and equality in all corners of the world.



Global Perspectives Shared at the European Parliament during Roma Week



10/04/2025 | During a session on *Intersectional Discrimination and Racism Against Racialized Minorities in Europe* at the European Parliament, Simona brought a global perspective to complement the European insights shared by Kahina. She highlighted international movements tackling racism and inequality, and explained the concept of discrimination based on work and descent. Simona also addressed the link between racialised professions and systemic discrimination, connecting these issues to global labour standards and GfOD's broader advocacy, including key ILO frameworks.

MGoS Call for VNR Stakeholder Engagement 2025

This form has been designed to collect contacts from organizations and individuals that would like to contribute to MGoS statements during the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) sessions at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2025. We encourage colleagues representing organizations and networks (global, regional, national, and grassroots levels) from 39 [VNR countries](#) that are engaged in national Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) implementation and VNR preparation to join the process. We are looking forward to hearing from you – please fill in this form as soon as possible, even though it will remain open until May 11, 2025. Please share it with all potentially interested in joining this process.

[Register Here](#)

Webinar: How to Make Advocacy at the VNR Session Effective?

This one-hour interactive session is specially designed for stakeholders engaged in the preparation of Voluntary National Review (VNR) Statements through the Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) coordination mechanism.

We will draw from nine years of MGoS VNR engagement experience and share practical, real-life examples of how civil society voices have influenced national and UN-level processes through impactful statements.

[Register Here](#)

Submissions & Input

Response to the Call on Financing for Inclusive Development

GFoD submitted input to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development for the 2025 thematic report on "Financing for Inclusive, Sustainable and Participatory Development."

The input emphasized that structural discrimination against descent-based communities such as Dalits, Roma, Quilombolas, and caste-affected groups in Africa, remains a major barrier to equitable development financing. Some issues highlighted include lack of access to financial systems, social protection, education, and public services, particularly for women, girls, LGBTQI+ individuals, and youth from these communities. Key recommendations include targeted financing, gender-responsive and youth-focused budgeting, establishing a UN Special Rapporteur on Work and Descent-Based Discrimination, disaggregated data collection, and more.

[Read here](#)

Spotlight ✨



Voicing CDWD discourse at the National Convention on Caste and Dr. B.R Ambedkar in India

Observing the birth anniversary of Dr. B.R Ambedkar, The O.P Jindal Global Law University, Sonipat, Haryana, India organized a national convention on caste and Dr.B.R Ambedkar, where Beena Pallical, Paul Divakar and Naveen Gautam were panelists, highlighting key issues wrt CDWD in India, Asia and globally. The theme was National Convention on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Legacy: Advancing Rights, Justice & Constitutional Governance.

News from Partners

Watch this Short film on Manual Scavenging by National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR).

Immerse yourself in the powerful, untold stories of manual scavengers – individuals fighting against the chains of an inhumane practice. Through the lens of NCDHR, experience their courage, resilience, and the movement to reclaim dignity and freedom. Titled "Shackles of Shame: Breaking Free from Manual Scavenging," the film is available to watch on YouTube.

[Watch here →](#)

IV National Forum of Quilombola Women brings together leaders of CONAQ Collective to strengthen public policies

28th April saw the beginning of the IV In-Person Meeting of the Permanent National Forum for Dialogue on the Promotion of Strategies to Strengthen Public Policies for Quilombola Women in Brazil, promoted by the Ministry of Women. With the participation of quilombola leaders from different regions of the country, the program includes strategic debates on central themes for the strengthening of quilombola women.

[Read more →](#)



Copyright (C) 2025 Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent. All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)

