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Statement submitted by

The Inclusivity Project, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

Statement

Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) represent diverse groups across the globe who face systematic marginalization, exclusion, and violence due to their inherited social status. This social status is often linked to ancestral occupations that are stigmatized within caste hierarchies, leading to exclusionary practices and systemic inequalities. These communities include groups such as the Roma in Europe, Dalits in South Asia, Burakumin in East Asia, Osu, Mboros, and Haratins in Africa, Quilombola in Brazil, Palenque in Colombia, and many others.

Women and girls from CDWD communities experience the compounded impact of gender, descent, and social exclusion. Their lives are shaped by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that restrict access to education, healthcare, political participation, and employment, while reinforcing systemic inequalities and violence. Addressing these interlocking structures of oppression requires an intersectional approach that centers the lived experiences and leadership of CDWD women and gender-diverse individuals.

When gender and descent intersect, they compound the discrimination faced by this group. These forms of violations include, inter alia, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, trafficking, forced prostitution and other forms of gender-based violence, bonded and forced labour, discrimination in political, economic, cultural, and social life, and a lack of or limited access to food, water and sanitation, healthcare, education, and adequate housing. For example, Roma women, particularly those who are illiterate or displaced, experience systemic exclusion from reproductive health and maternal care services. Women and girls from descent-based communities are also particularly

vulnerable to reprisal attacks when they seek justice for crimes committed. In addition, those who are refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless or internally displaced, and who live in urban, camp, or remote rural settings, may experience further barriers in being guaranteed their rights. The intersection of caste or descent-based discrimination and patriarchy intensifies their marginalization, making it difficult to assert their rights, access justice, or participate in advocacy efforts.

It is of concern that there is a low rate of reporting of cases of discrimination by victims, including in cases of psychological and sexual violence and rape, owing to general mistrust in the protection system and State institutions with regard to the prosecution and adequate punishment of those crimes. Ongoing hate speech and discriminatory propaganda targeting Burakumin women, requires the urgent need of governments to enact legislation that prohibits and punishes such speech. There is often a culture of impunity for perpetrators committing atrocities against CDWD women. Women from CDWD communities often face multiple barriers in gaining access to justice, owing to legal illiteracy, lack of awareness of their rights, limited accessibility of legal aid and other structural reasons.

In alignment with the 2025 UN Women Policy Paper on *Women belonging to communities discriminated against based on work and descent: Advancing intersectional rights and justice*, we urge the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and all Member States to prioritize the following actions for 2026 and beyond:

1. Strengthen Data Collection and Accountability Frameworks

The CSW should work closely with national governments to develop guidelines for the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of disaggregated data to reflect the lived realities of CDWD and other marginalized groups. Reliable, intersectional data is fundamental for designing equitable policies, guiding legal and institutional reforms, and fulfilling international obligations related to non-discrimination, substantive equality, and social and economic justice. To be effective, data systems must capture the specific realities of CDWD women and girls across intersecting dimensions of caste, ethnicity, occupation, class, geography, and disability. This entails the collection of both quantitative indicators and qualitative evidence that reflect the lived experiences of discrimination, exclusion, and resilience of marginalised communities, with special attention to CDWD women.

Drawing from the European Union and Council of Europe’s JUSTROM Programme—which improved access to justice for Roma women through coordinated data collection and legal monitoring—governments can establish integrated data systems to track CDWD women’s access to justice, education, health, and economic opportunities. Such systems would ensure transparency, strengthen policy responsiveness, and affirm the visibility and agency of affected communities.

2. Implement Mechanisms to Address Intersectional Discrimination

To ensure justice and accountability for CDWD women, we must strengthen institutional mechanisms that recognize and respond to the complex, layered nature of their discrimination. This includes the establishment of specialized units within the CSW to specifically address complaints

involving intersectional discrimination based on caste, gender, descent, occupation, class, and other overlapping factors.

Generalized anti-discrimination frameworks frequently fail to capture the unique experiences of CDWD communities, resulting in underreporting, inadequate responses, and impunity for perpetrators. For example, according to the CEDAW Alternative Report on Moldova (Sections 6–7, 2025), 99% of Roma women indicated they would not report marital rape due to fear of racism, distrust of police, and social stigma. By establishing dedicated units with trained personnel, culturally sensitive procedures, and community-based outreach, states can ensure more effective protection and accountability.

Such units should also collect and analyze data on complaints, issue periodic public reports, and collaborate with civil society organizations to raise awareness and build trust within CDWD communities. These mechanisms must be independent, adequately resourced, and empowered to take binding action to address rights violations. Strengthening institutional capacity in this way is essential to advancing justice, rebuilding trust, and fulfilling obligations under international human rights frameworks.

2. Adopt Comprehensive Legal and Institutional Reforms

The CSW must adopt comprehensive legal and policy frameworks to eliminate discrimination based on work and descent. Reforms must recognize the compounded nature of discrimination and incorporate gender-responsive budgeting to remove barriers to education, healthcare, employment, and justice for CDWD women and girls.

Weak enforcement and limited access to legal recourse perpetuate cycles of poverty, violence, and systemic invisibility. To address these inequities, states must explicitly prohibit descent-based discrimination within national equality laws and establish strong enforcement and accountability mechanisms. Nepal's constitutional recognition of caste-based equality and affirmative action measures demonstrates how inclusive legal reform can improve representation and expand rights for women from historically marginalized communities.

3. Prioritize the Meaningful Participation of CDWD Women

Every policy, program, and initiative concerning CDWD women must be grounded in continuous dialogue and partnership with affected communities. The meaningful participation of CDWD women—through grassroots organizations, collective platforms, and individual advocates—should be institutionalized within the CSW to ensure their lived experiences inform policy priorities and outcomes. This includes establishing robust task forces and strengthening the mandates of Special Rapporteurs to focus specifically on CDWD women. Accessible, community-specific reporting mechanisms must also be developed to enable victims of discrimination to file complaints and seek redress without barriers.

We urge the CSW to make such participation a mandatory principle in policy design, monitoring, and evaluation processes. Dedicated task forces and working groups within UN structures should ensure that CDWD women are not only consulted but actively involved in shaping implementation and accountability frameworks.

4. Invest in Rights Education and Legal Empowerment

We urge the CSW to promote the development of targeted educational and legal empowerment programs for CDWD women. Beyond representation, meaningful participation requires sustained investment in educational and legal rights empowerment for marginalized communities. For CDWD women and girls, access to rights-based education and accessible, community-led training programs is essential to overcoming structural exclusion. These initiatives must be designed to equip CDWD women with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to navigate legal systems, challenge discriminatory practices, and participate fully in civic and political life.

Empowerment must go beyond formal education to include legal literacy, leadership development, and advocacy skills, tailored to the specific contexts and lived experiences of CDWD women. When women from these communities are equipped with rights-based knowledge and tools, they are better positioned to engage in governance, demand accountability, and drive systemic change.

5. Establish Multi-Stakeholder Platforms Linking Policy and Grassroots Knowledge

The CSW should promote inclusive, multi-stakeholder platforms and working groups that bridge political commitments, policy development, and community storytelling. Embedding narrative-driven, community-led approaches within formal UN and state structures enhances the visibility of systemic harms while fostering empathy, accountability, and transformative change. These platforms must elevate local knowledge as a key source of evidence for policy innovation.

Participatory research, storytelling, and documentation initiatives should be prioritized to center the voices and lived experiences of CDWD women and girls. These narratives are vital for informing both local policymaking and global advocacy, ensuring that interventions are contextually grounded and rights-based. Colombia's "*Women Narrate Their Territory*" initiative demonstrates how community-led storytelling can strengthen identity, resilience, and policy responsiveness in post-conflict and marginalized settings.

6. Promote Linguistic and Cultural Accessibility in Policy Processes

It is imperative to invest in the translation and dissemination of policy and advocacy materials beyond the official UN languages to encompass local community languages, particularly those spoken by CDWD women. This approach is essential to ensuring that historically marginalized populations, especially at the grassroots level, have equitable access to vital information.

Expanding linguistic accessibility not only fosters greater inclusivity and participation, but also strengthens the legitimacy, reach, and effectiveness of policy implementation. The translation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) into regional dialects in South Asia demonstrates how linguistic accessibility is instrumental to advancing community-level advocacy, enabling CDWD women to more effectively claim their rights and challenge entrenched discrimination.

Names of the submitting organizations

As a legal entity with ECOSOC status, the Inclusivity Project hosts the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated Based on Work and Descent (GFoD). This statement has been drafted in collaboration with the GFoD Informal CDWD Women's Anchor Group, and the following civil society organizations:

- ADRF (Asia Dalit Rights Forum) - With a focus on Dalits in South Asia
- ERGO Network (European Roma Grassroots Organizations) - With a focus on Roma in Europe
- CONAQ (National Coordination of Articulation of Black Rural Quilombola Communities) - With a focus on Quilambola in Brazil
- Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement With a focus on Haratines in Mauritania
- Platforma Femeilor Rome ROMNI - With a focus on Roma in Moldova

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