

Thank you chair for the floor.

I am Naveen Gautam from Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent . I am speaking on behalf of the Major Group for Children and Youth. I thank the panel for insightful comments.

**As Dalit Youth myself, from a middle income country, I have lived the harsh realities of structural discrimination based on work and descent, we also call it caste based discrimination . The exclusion I have faced is not unique—it echoes across communities around the world that are discriminated against based on work and descent such as Dalit from South Asia, Roma from Europe, Quilombola and Palenque from Latin America and Haratin and Osu from Africa, and others—I've seen that this inequality is not a phenomenon of the past. It is systemic, it is current, and it is deeply entrenched.**

**Youth and Children from descent communities are denied access to quality education, decent work, healthcare and digital connectivity and access to justice—not because of any fault of our own, but because of where we come from, the communities and the descent we belong to. Our dignity and rights are not overlooked by accident—they are systematically denied, by design.**

Despite these challenges, we are mobilizing our communities . We are instead collecting and providing data, pushing policy, creating platforms, and demanding dignity. It's time for more visibility: But we cannot continue to be the only ones naming the problems and instead: Its also your duty to raise the issue and make it visible and change stereotypes?

**This is not just a regional or cultural issue—it is a global issue.** Discrimination based on work and descent is connected to histories of casteism. And until it is recognized globally as such until we are not recognised, visible and equal, we will continue to be left behind.

So, what do we need?

**First, as young people from middle-income countries, we recognize that progress has been made on meaningful youth engagement. Several processes, including the High-Level Political Forum, the SDG Summit, and FFD4, have guaranteed funding for the meaningful participation of young people from middle-income countries. However, more needs to be done. We call for designated funding spaces and funding opportunities specifically for youth from middle-income countries from the marginalised groups to ensure their participation throughout the entire ECOSOC cycle.**

**Second, we feel that the priority given to middle-income countries and this issue of work and descent based discrimination remains very limited when it comes to formal UNGA discussions. This needs to change.**

**More space to talk about this form of discrimination openly—at the UN, in national parliaments, and in development spaces.** Work and descent-based discrimination is often

invisible in policy and taboo in conversations. That must change instead: we, meaning you and me together have to change that.

**More representation of Descent communities and other marginalised groups at decision-making tables**—not as guests or observers or tokens of representation, but as co-creators of policy, research, and funding mechanisms.

And trust me, we are not passive recipients of development—we are already building alternatives from the ground. Me taking this stage and speaking here itself proves that we are ready and prepared to rise and be part of the development actively. But the question remains the same, are we ready to do this as citizens, as member states or as a global community.

**Jai bheem, Opre Roma, Lenthai, Salve, Uhuru**

Thank you.