

Stakeholder Group of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (SG-CDWD)

Additional inputs to HLPF 2021 in accordance with Paragraph 89 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As an extension of the official executive summary E/HLPF/2021/2 (XII) and the full position paper submitted by the Stakeholder Group of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (SG-CDWD) available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/202>, this submission provides additional inputs to the HLPF 2021 in accordance with paragraph 89 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) numbering more than 260 million people across the world, are among the most marginalised and excluded peoples, many of whom are persons living in conditions of slavery often tied to descent. They transcend religious, geographical and ethnic boundaries and are a global phenomenon.

Previously described as persons part of who face “caste and analogous systems” and “discrimination based on work and descent”¹, they are commonly known as Dalits, Roma-Sinti, Quilombola, Burakumin, Haratine, Oru, Shambara amongst many other names and fall under the umbrella term **Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD)**.

The lack of public recognition or acknowledgements within and beyond the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)² is a testament to the invisibility of such communities. During the current healthcare and humanitarian crisis disaggregated data is rare and metrics to assess the need for financial assistance are limited. The following recommendations relate to specific SDGs, to specific measures related to the crisis caused by the pandemic and include some broader recommendations on SDG implementation and monitoring:

1. **Non-Discrimination and Protection of Civil and Political Rights:** Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) face intergenerational discrimination, exclusion from public resources and entitlements, and are routinely segregated despite constitutional and legal protective measures in many countries. In most countries they are subjected to contemporary and even traditional forms of slavery. Any attempt to challenge practices are countered with severe and extreme forms of violence. Women and Children among these communities bear additional layers of discrimination and violence. Clear policies of non-discrimination and protection from violence need to be framed and effectively implemented.
2. **Violence against Women:** Girls and women among the Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) face extreme forms of violence by the wider society,

¹ Special Rapporteur on minority issues (A /HRC /31/56), paras 25, 26 and 27

² Special Rapporteur on minority issues (A /HRC /31/56), paras 126

paid unequal wages and are underpaid³. There is a greater proportion of unpaid work among these women. Clear policies towards gender rights specifically focussing on the girls and women among the Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) need to be evolved and effectively implemented.

3. **Children of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent** face extreme forms of violence and discrimination at schools and in society in several countries. Practices of forced child labour and trafficking are prevalent among them. These issues need to be prioritised and effective mechanisms evolved to arrest these practices.
4. **Right to Food:** CDWD are disproportionately affected by hunger, food insecurity and poverty, largely as a result of systematic discrimination and the arbitrary nature of daily wage labourers regarded as a “inferior”, their lack of social, economic and political power and reliance on volatile agricultural harvest as a result of climate change and other factors. Insufficient data is available to paint a conclusive picture on malnutrition or undernourishment rates of CDWD. Special measures to be taken to ensure country and community specific interventions to provide the most immediate needs of the most vulnerable regarding rights to food.
5. **Right to Quality Education:** CDWD face discrimination at all levels of education from primary to higher to technical and professional education in most countries. Cultural practices and beliefs deny millions the right to receive quality education. Notions of “impurity”, child slavery, trafficking and poverty are some of the factors that prevent children and youth but also adults originating from CDWD to receive and access quality education. Profound shifts in cultural beliefs and attitudes combined with mandatory measures to allow persons from CDWD to attend schools and other educational facilities are urgently needed and highly recommended together with adequate resources to implement such measures.
6. **Right to Water and Sanitation:** 2.2 billion people worldwide do not have secure access to safe drinking water. This has devastating consequences for the health of the affected persons, but also leads to poorer education prospects and is a threat for female empowerment since the burden of collecting water often falls on women and girls. During the pandemic, access to water, hygiene products and sanitation facilities were severely restricted for CDWD. CDWD faces additional challenges even during normal times due to exclusive social practices. During the Covid-19 pandemic cases in Asia and Europe emerged in which access to public water and sanitation facilities is either restricted or denied. This situation escalated in South Asia during the summer months when infections peaked, Dalits were restricted from accessing public water/sanitation facilities for being considered “unclean”. Governments failed to ensure access to these facilities across the globe for CDWD.
7. **Right to Housing and adequate shelter:** During the COVID-19 pandemic the lack of adequate housing and shelter became evident when, during lockdowns and curfews,

³ DE ARAÚJO, Eduardo F.; DA SILVA, Givânia Maria. Racismo e violência contra quilombos no Brasil. *CONSELHO EDITORIAL*, 2019, vol. 21, no 2, p. 196-208

millions either did not have a home to go to or the virus was able to rapidly spread in inadequate cramped conditions of housing. This problem is particularly pertinent for CDWD who are denied housing and experience housing discrimination. Alongside segregation in housing, those problems need to be addressed to guarantee all persons, their economic, social and cultural rights to adequate housing and shelter.

8. **Access to land and livelihoods:** To achieve conditions of decent work and alleviate some of the negative effects of the pandemic, **land tenure and ownership** has been named as a vital condition for Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD). In Brazil, the Sahel and large parts of South Asia, land rights and land tenure and ownership remain a central demand for many Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) and represents a multitude of possible consequences such as food security and economic opportunity, reduction of conditions of poverty and homelessness etc.
9. **Frontline healthcare workers and sanitation workers:** Conversely, frontline workers, sanitation workers, frontline healthcare workers, workers in the mortuaries and burial or crematoriums are in several countries such as India, Pakistan, Nepal almost exclusively from Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD). They are being denied both personal protective equipment like masks or gloves, and they are excluded from the healthcare system by not having healthcare insurance or other support mechanisms. This needs to be addressed when building back forward and better, particularly considering financial inclusion mechanisms which emerged during the pandemic.
10. **Contemporary forms of slavery for millions:** Poor implementation of the existing legal framework at national and international and the state's apathy to tackle the issues of modern forms of slavery. According to latest available comprehensive data⁴ 40.3 million people globally. With Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD), factors like the intergenerational discrimination, the perpetuation of social hierarchies, and restrictions to social mobility make these communities susceptible to contemporary forms of slavery. In addition, key features of contemporary forms of slavery are closely associated with the concepts of the CDWD, including debt bondage, forced labour, child labour, unpaid and underpaid work, trafficking and forced marriages. However, while talking about contemporary forms of slavery, CDWD are often ignored or invisible in the discussion and the link between the established discriminations faced by these communities and contemporary forms of slavery is overlooked.
11. **Climate change** is the largest and most severe contemporary global threat to the planet which must be stopped by decisive global action. Climate change perpetuates inequalities and affects the most vulnerable most severely particularly those whose

⁴ According to the Global Slavery Index 2018 <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/>[1]

livelihoods depend on natural resources. Many CDWD⁵ are highly dependent on earnings from agricultural labour and livestock, forests and other lands. With fewer to no resources and options to combat the mitigate or adapt, the internalization of discrimination and exclusion continue deepen the state of deprivation and marginalisation. Their locational, social and economic vulnerabilities place a greater strain on their adaptive capacity to climate change and ability to deal with shocks, stresses and change.

12. **Discrimination in Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation and in Disaster Risk Reduction practices:** Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) face discrimination in several disaster risk reduction (DRR) practices. This has been evidenced in several countries during several DRR practices including pre-disaster warnings, habitations located in vulnerable geographical areas, exclusion from rescue and relief measures, not being counted in rehabilitation entitlements and facing exclusion in rehabilitation measures. Therefore clear measures need to be framed to ensure inclusive measures and practices.
13. **Creating a People's Vaccine** putting the most vulnerable first. In line with UN Secretary-General António Guterres comments “a covid-19 vaccine must be seen as a global public good, a people's vaccine’. There needs to be mechanisms which will undertake a mapping of the most vulnerable in all respective countries especially where Indigenous, CDWD and other racial minorities are a sizable proportion.
14. Creation of **Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)**⁶ that enable a fair chance of recovery for emerging economies and to provide liquidity for the most immediate needs of the most vulnerable, including Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) and emerging economies in general. Richer nations will also be allocated SDRs, however, in light of the growing inequalities and gap between the Global North and Global South, the global north should allocate its SDRs to emerging economies to provide a fair chance of recovery to all and to achieve the SDGs.
15. **Relief and health care during Covid Pandemic:** Several instances of discrimination of CDWD when accessing health care and other assistance during pandemic. The existing discriminatory practices surfaced in their most blatant forms during the pandemic impeding access to healthcare and state relief programs.
16. **Accountability, transparency** and review frameworks for the Sustainable Development Goals must be a multi-stakeholder process including NGOs, as defined by resolution A/RES/70/1, must be ensured. Consultations with Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) should take place at all levels, including representation of the most marginalized voices and clear disaggregated data to monitor progress.

⁵ BHADURI, A. Impact of climate change on life & livelihood of Dalits: An exploratory study from disaster risk reduction lens. *NCDHR & SPWD, New Delhi*, 2013.

⁶ <https://www.latindadd.org/2021/04/19/los-deg-y-la-ayuda-que-puede-significar-para-america-latina/>

17. **Public finance management:** To ensure that CDWD, indigenous peoples, racial and other minorities, with a special focus on women and children, are able to access civic amenities including education, health care and other entitlements of communities within the countries, public finance management needs to be transparent and targeted towards the needs identified in this document.
18. By establishing **new metrics and collecting disaggregated data**, focus on the need for specific communities and countries to combat the COVID-19 crisis are required. Per capita income, relative vaccines administered and relative deaths is one such metric⁷ which allows for a more differential assessment on the urgency and need of a country, region or specific group, such as CDWD.

⁷ <https://nomorepandemics.org/page2.asp?l=2> employing data from worldometers.info, ourworldindata.org and data.worldbank.org