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Monthly
Newsletter

July 2024

GFoD

GLOBAL FORUM OF
COMMUNITIES DISCRIMINATED
ON WORK AND DESCENT



CDWD MATTERS

GFoD at the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2024!



In picture (L-R): Queen Bisseng, Africa coordinator, GFoD; H.E. Mohan Pieris, Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN; H.E. Mr. Ljubomir Danailov Frchkoski Ambassador and Representative of the Permanent Mission of North Macedonia to the UN; Marie-Elena John, Racial Justice Lead, UN Women; Paul Divakar Namala, Global Convenor, GFoD; Anita Poudel, National Planning Commission of Nepal; H.E. Paula Fernandez-Wulff, General Director of Agenda 2030 in Spain; Gustavo Bolivar, General Director of the Social Prosperity Department, Colombia holding the document on Informal Working Group on the Rights of CDWD

Official Side-event co-hosted with Permanent Mission of North Macedonia, Permanent Mission of Nepal & UN Women

Towards an Informal Working Group on the Rights of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent

The Permanent Mission of North Macedonia, the Government of Nepal, UN Women (Racial Justice), the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (GFoD), The Inclusivity Project and other partners co-organized a side event for the 2024 HLPF, titled "Good Practices and Challenges in the 2030 Agenda – Showcasing ongoing inclusive strategies of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent," Through an exchange of ideas on inclusive and equitable approaches, strengthening partnerships and collaborative practice, the side event was an opportunity for

all stakeholders to renew their commitment to the principle of 'Leaving no one behind' and reinforce the 2030 Agenda for 270 million people across the world who are discriminated on work and descent.

Speaking at the event, Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives from Canada, Spain, Colombia, North Macedonia, Nepal, Sri Lanka as well as a representative from UN Women, acknowledged the importance of addressing Discrimination based on Work and Descent (DWD) as critical towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the event, representatives from the UN member states endorsed working collaboratively by coming together as an informal working group - a critical step on the journey towards a UN resolution. Whilst the terms and reference of the informal working group and membership is being further considered by state parties, it is anticipated that a key objective of the informal working group will be to explore the scope and rationale for the establishment of a UN Declaration on the Rights of CDWD.

GFoD has released a statement in this regard and the development has been covered by various media platforms across the globe. Read the full statement by clicking the button below:

[Read GFoD statement here](#)

[Watch the recording of the event here](#)

A collaboration between GFoD and the Stakeholder group LGBTI: Side-event highlights various cross-cutting issues

On July 16, 2024, at the UN HQ, the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (GFoD) co-organized a dynamic side event with the Stakeholder Group of LGBTI during the HLPF 2024. The event, focusing on [SDG16 and SDG17](#), explored [the potential of the "Pact for the Future" for LGBTIQ+ individuals and CDWD communities](#).

H.E. Mr. Ljubomir Frchkoski, the Ambassador of North Macedonia, delivered a compelling message, emphasizing unwavering support for human rights, particularly on two fronts: fighting for LGBTIQ+ security against criminalization and violence, and advocating for equal representation through effective institutions and a culture of radical tolerance and acceptance. He stressed that reforms should involve LGBTIQ+ participation at every stage. The panel featured Shawn from Ghana, Vercilene Dias of CONAQ, Kesara Ogola from Kenya, and Bridhika Senchury from Nepal, who shared experiences, challenges and strategies.



The side-event, apart from fostering collective action and collaboration between the stakeholder groups on CDWD and LGBTI issues, built conversations on both the issues that intersect with each other, gaining support from the Ambassador of North Macedonia and greater solidarity and collaboration between civil society and other stakeholders.

[Watch here](#)

A congregation of CDWD leaders from across the globe in NY: Symposium on UN Declaration & CDWD

While the GFoD delegation from different regions was in New York for the HLPF, it provided a good opportunity to bring together CDWD members and leaders from different regions and diaspora in the USA. Consequently, a [symposium](#) was organized by Ambedkar International Mission at Rutgers University, New Jersey co-organized with GFoD, Asia Dalit Rights Forum, CONAQ, ERGO Network, The Africa Network of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent and Against Slavery (ANDS), Bahujan Scholars and Dalit Solidarity in Deutschland. The symposium explored the history and background of our journey, from the [Durban Conference of 2001](#) to the HLPF 2024, and heard from various CDWD leaders from Africa, Europe, Latin America and Asia, and



Stakeholders from academia, civil society and beyond, such as Prof Jenik Radon, Columbia University; Manuela Ott, Dalit Solidarity, Germany; and Gideon Jebamany, Chaplain, NY State spoke in

diaspora leaders on the struggles and experiences embedded in this journey. AIMS leaders Milind Awasarmol and Nitin Suryatale welcomed the guests, followed by CDWD leaders from across the globe, such as Gabriela Hrabanova, Diko Hanoune, Queen Bisseng, Vercilene Dias, Bhakta Bishwakarma, Mary James Gill, Priyanka Samy, Beena Pallical, Simona Torotcoi and Paul Divakar, took the floor and addressed the audience.

solidarity of the movement and the advocacy towards a UN Declaration on the rights of CDWD.

The symposium provided a crucial platform for DWD communities to share their collective concerns and vision, connect with diaspora communities in the US and strengthen our engagements at the UN.

[Know More](#)

CDWD interventions from the floor of the UN



[Watch here](#)

First Quilombola Woman to address the UN at HLPF: Vercilene Dias

Vercilene Dias, GFoD delegate and a Quilombola leader represented the Stakeholder Group (SG) - CDWD at the HLPF 2024 official meeting on "SDG1 and interlinkages with other SDGs". Vercilene called upon member states to undertake transformative action to tackle systemic discrimination and structural inequality, to include them in Ministerial Declaration & Pact for the Future to recognize marginal groups such as the CDWD and address the intersectional aspects of this discrimination to include (but not limited to) gender and religious minorities, persons with disability, LGBTQI+ and other minorities.

"View from the margins is best from CDWD" - from the panel at HLPF 2024

Paul Divakar shared the panel during the official meeting on 'Perspectives from the Major Groups and other Stakeholders' representing the SG on CDWD. Paul highlighted the pre-colonial forms of discrimination existing in the form of Discrimination based on Work and Descent (DWD), stressing the role of civil society in ensuring that all voices are heard and we leave no one behind. Paul talked about the active role of CSOs in tracking budget allocations & SDG progress, shrinking civil society space at the UN, cruciality of recognition to CDWD, and called for a whole-of-society approach to attain the SDGs. "As civil society, we have a responsibility to ensure different social locations have a critical role in ensuring we 'Leave no one Behind'. View from the margins is best from CDWD."



[Watch here](#)



SDG 1 and focus on the most marginalized

Beena Pallical, Chair, Asia Dalit Rights Forum represented the SG CDWD in the official meeting on 'SDG1 & interlinkages with other SDGs'. Stressing the need to focus on the most marginalized CDWD to achieve the 2030 Agenda and eliminate poverty, Beena notes that climate crisis exacerbates the issues of discriminated communities, especially women and children. Moreover, discrimination limits access to opportunities, and results in economic exploitation, lack of social protection, and landlessness - preventing CDWD from accessing basic human rights.

Watch here



Addressing systemic barriers in accessing technological advancements

Our delegate, Simona Torotcoi represented the SG-CDWD in the official meeting on 'Science, technology and innovation: Triggering transformation and sustaining science-driven solutions'. Simona stressed the need for dismantling systemic barriers in accessing technological advancements, academic and action based research on CDWD to achieve 2030 Agenda and ensuring participation of communities. Her intervention was also featured as a [highlight in the Earth Negotiations Bulletin](#).

Watch here



Watch here

Calling countries to join the emerging informal group on CDWD

GFoD's delegate and Haratin leader from Mauritania, Diko Hanoune spoke at the official meeting on Building resilience in African countries & LDCs. Diko applauded the states who are supporting the formation of a Working Group to investigate the under-documented form of discrimination (DWD) and invited more countries to join. Some key recommendations put forth were recognition to CDWD globally, such as Haratin in Mauritania; designing policies to liberate potential regardless of social origin, work, or descent.



Highlighting the need to address systems of discrimination in Middle Income Countries (MICs)



Raising CDWD concerns from the grassroots

On behalf of Global Forum of CDWD, Bishnu M. Pariyar addressed HLPF 2024 official meeting on

Representing SG CDWD, Grijesh Dinkar intervened at the official meeting on 'Overcoming barriers in achieving the SDGs in Middle Income countries'. Bringing attention to the existing forms of discrimination that hinder achieving Agenda 2030, she recommended focusing on access to concessional finance & long-term financing for SDGs, involving marginalized groups in budgeting and financial policies, ensuring intersectional approach, promoting policies and social protection for CDWD. "Success in Agenda 2030 relies not only in meeting needs of MICs but also in addressing systems of discrimination."

[Watch here](#)

'Transformation from the ground up: Acting at local level' at the UN. Her recommendations included ensuring that CDWD are involved in the design and decision-making of finance schemes for targeted allocation of resources. Talking about the SDGs offering a global framework for inclusive development, she poignantly stressed "From my experience on ground in Nepal, we will not be able to achieve SDGs unless local govts & international stakeholders provide resources and prioritize empowerment programs for the benefit of CDWD."

"We need to go beyond regions! We need to create a norm at the UN"

Representing SG-CDWD at the HLPF2024 Official Meeting on Messages from the Regions, our delegate Queen Bisseng highlighted the issues of CDWD that need to be addressed in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Some key demands put forth by Queen include: a resolution that sets global standards & commitments to protect the rights of CDWD; Regional & National level mechanisms to identify groups & collect data, map stakeholders & allocate resources; Strengthened role of CSOs at every level, among others.



[Watch here](#)

At the Voluntary National Reviews



[Watch here](#)

Discussing issues facing Mauritania and the cause of concerns for the Haratin

During the VNR of Mauritania, our delegate Diko Hanoune highlighted pressing issues facing the country such as the issues of external debt, food shortages, corruption & social marginalization. Talking about the CDWD in Mauritania, Diko pointed out that the "legislative provisions & high unemployment rates continue to marginalize Haratin in Mauritania." Some of the key recommendations put forth by Diko include recognition of Haratin community in the constitution, institutionalization of a socially just Tax Policy, social coverage and health insurance for all, criminalization of gender based violence and affirmative action for the marginalized communities.

Civil Society statement during Nepal VNR highlights deprivation faced by the CDWD in Nepal - Dalits

Shilpa Lamichhane of Visible Impact delivered a statement on behalf of Nepalese CSOs during the Nepal VNR. In this statement, she talked about the deprivation faced by CDWD in Nepal - Dalits, and other marginalized groups such as Madhesi, indigenous, farmers, Persons with Disability, LGBTQI, Senior Citizens. Some key recommendations from CSOs to the government of Nepal include implementation of Fundamental Rights of people; inclusive & quality education for all, provision of healthcare including Sexual & Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) services, social security to vulnerable populations, guarantee decent work and gender responsive policies & programs.



[Read Statement](#)

Meetings with the Permanent Missions, UN and Civil society



PERMANENT MISSION OF NORTH MACEDONIA



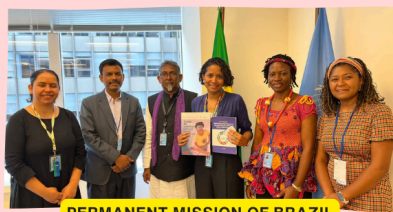
PERMANENT MISSION OF SRI LANKA



PERMANENT MISSION OF MAURITANIA



PERMANENT MISSION OF GERMANY



PERMANENT MISSION OF BRAZIL



PERMANENT MISSION OF IRELAND



PERMANENT MISSION OF UGANDA



PERMANENT MISSION OF AUSTRALIA



PERMANENT MISSION OF NEWZELAND



PERMANENT MISSION OF NEPAL

For GfOD, it is of utmost importance to advocate for the full recognition of CDWD communities across the world and to ensure that the UN and member states take a proactive role to protect these communities and advance their rights. Thus, realizing the responsibilities that lay on us to enrich our advocacy process through in-depth, meaningful and long-term engagements with the UN member states, GfOD delegation met with the permanent missions of countries such as Nepal, Mauritania, Brazil, Ireland, Australia, Sri Lanka, North Macedonia, Germany, Uganda and New Zealand to share CDWD issues across the globe, but to also to explore different approaches as a way to enhance equality for those left behind. This also involved discussions highlighting global solidarity and actionable steps towards forming an informal working group at the United Nations and a UN resolution to protect the rights of the CDWD. Our engagements with the member states have gained momentum as various Permanent Representatives have endorsed our cause or have shown keen interest in taking into account the issues concerning CDWD at a national level. The importance of multilateral cooperation and the growing international commitment to addressing the rights and challenges faced by CDWD communities.



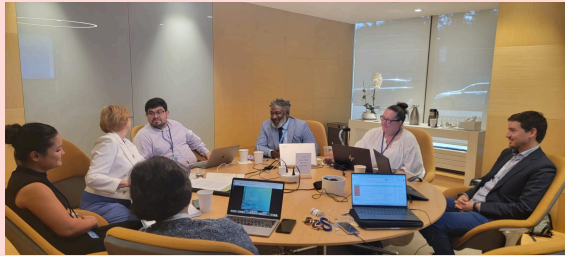
UN Women Hosted GFoD Delegation to Strengthen Support for CDWD Rights

During HLPF 2024, UN Women hosted the GFoD delegation at their headquarters in New York on July 12, where we met with Marie Elena John (Racial Justice Lead, UN Women), Muthoni Muriu (Senior Advisor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, UN Women), and Luis Mora, who delivered a welcome statement on behalf of Ms. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, UN Assistant Secretary-General and UN Women Deputy Executive Director. UN Women have been strong allies and supporters of GFoD, co-hosting HLPF side events and previously collaborating on CSW. They have also been a key part of our initiatives with regard to the informal working group in support of a resolution on CDWD.

The discussion focused on developing a policy brief specific to CDWD women, which is to be a priority for both GFoD and UN Women in the coming months. Technical aspects, processes, and further details are being worked out in partnership. Discussions on "Artivism" - to connect activism with Art expressions also explored ways to broaden our approach in this meeting.

Daily morning briefings with the delegation team kickstarted the HLPF days as we would go through the steps taken to achieve outcomes, charting out further plan of action, and our reiterating our collective vision!





Gfod's presence at the CSocD

The NGO Committee for Social Development (NGO CSocD) held its constitutive meeting with its newly elected Executive Committee at the Bahá'í International Community on July 10th. The NGO CSocD plays a vital role in advocating for social development issues at the United Nations. The Committee is working towards the SoTF and the World Social Summit, engaging NGOs through the efforts of the Commission. A side event, proposed by Johannes Butscher, our Global UN Engagement Coordinator, who is also a new member of the Executive Committee, has been approved for the SoTF. The side-event will focus on social protection mechanisms and decent work for Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD), youth, and women & girls. Gfod's presence in NGO CSocD will ensure advocacy priorities of CDWD are represented and heard.



Engagements with Major Groups and other Stakeholders

As a part of the SG - CDWD, Gfod has been engaging with the various stakeholder groups, exploring collaborations and ways to pose a united front in advocating for Human Rights of all marginalized groups. During HLPF, the MGoS Coordination Mechanism organized an orientation that provided an overview and further relevant opportunities, which was followed by regular engagements with the groups. A final discussion round took place to bring all stakeholders together by Major Group on Children & Youth (MGCY) as we work towards Summit of the Future (SoTF). A side-event is being planned with UNMGCY on social protection floors & promotion of rights of the most marginalized including Descent Communities.



Gfod's Simona Torotcoi attended UNECE bilateral meeting at the HLPF 2024 to discuss about the UN Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD) 2025 and key issues facing the region. These included women's rights in the region, civil society engagement for World Social Summit 2025, addressing right-wing populism, & aligning SDGs with Roma Strategies & more.

Collaborative Discussions with Heinrich Boll Foundation on Advancing CDWD Rights

In our meeting with the Heinrich Boll Foundation (HBF) on 29th of July, we discussed several collaborative opportunities aimed at advancing the rights of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD). The foundation expressed interest in the Informal Working Group (IWG) on the Rights of CDWD, and in co-hosting a side event on social protection and youth as part of the Action Days of SOTF. Additionally, HBF's Gender Unithas expressed interest in supporting our engagement at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2025, particularly focusing on CDWD women's perspectives within feminist foreign and development policy. They are open to providing support for personnel and initiatives in this area and are interested in the policy brief we are developing with UN Women. HBF also indicated their support for our efforts on CDWD rights and the proposed resolution at the UN General Assembly's Third Committee, showing a commitment to advocate with relevant authorities and offices.



Meeting with Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS)

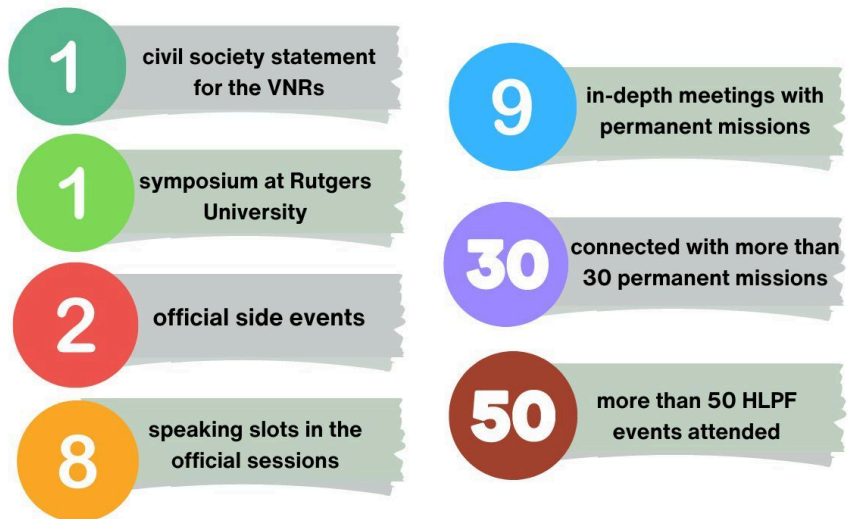
In a meeting with Stefan Liebich, Executive Director, Rosa Luxemburg Foundation - NY office, GfOD delegates shared about the CDWD rights and the engagements in that regard across the continents. The discussions focused on potential interventions from an SDGs' perspective, lack of visibility of CDWD in SDG framework and more. RLS offered support and has shown keenness in collaborating over bringing these issues to the relevant UN bodies.



Exploring ideas & partnerships with Oxfam

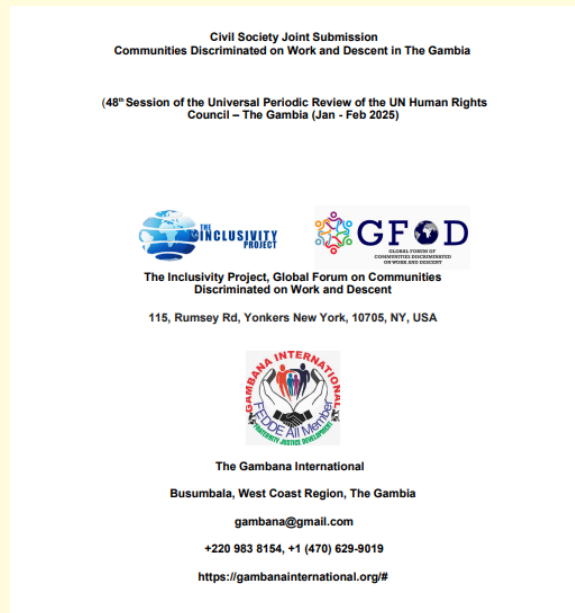
Our delegation met Dr. Tawanda Mutasah, VP, Global Partnerships; Brenda Mofya, head of Oxfam at NY to discuss the concerns of the communities experiencing DWD and exploring how we can continue to work in New York and globally on these issues. Country level collaborations in Africa, Latin America and Asia were also discussed in this meeting.

Although the essence of our advocacy and commitment to the cause of CDWD and human rights cannot be truly quantified as it aims to reach communities & stakeholders more than the numbers, here is a brief overview to the HLPF engagements for our readers:



Taking an active role in the Gambia Universal Periodic Review

Taking an active approach in the 48th Session of the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council of The Gambia, we collaborated with The Gambana International to submit a joint Civil Society report to the UN. This report evaluates The Gambia's implementation of recommendations from the previous UPR cycle (3rd cycle) concerning the current human rights situation. The submission notes the continued prevalence of Caste and Descent based Discrimination in The Gambia where, victims face structural discrimination, locking them in a persistent and vicious cycle of poverty and marginalisation. Building upon the fieldwork undertaken by GFoD delegation and Rights Experts, desk research and a study conducted by NHRC The Gambia on caste based discrimination in the country, the report brings forth various aspects of discrimination based on work and descent and impact on CDWD across themes such as Constitutional & Legislative framework, Slavery & Trafficking, Women's and Child's rights, Access to Education, Equality & non-discrimination and more, while providing recommendations to tackle the issues.



[Read here](#)

Advocating for Inclusion: Statement on the Pact for the Future Rev 2



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[Read the statement here](#)

News from Partners

Trust Africa & partners organize the 5th African Philanthropy Conference

From 29th July to 2nd August, Trust Africa, along with partners, is organizing the 5th Philanthropy Conference in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe and Livingstone, Zambia. Under the theme “The Next Frontiers of African Philanthropy”, this edition explores evolving philanthropic landscape on the continent by engaging academics, practitioners and more.

[Read More →](#)

ERGO Network collaborated with EPSO to highlights employment challenges faced by Roma

As part of the focus group project organized by European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO), ERGO Network addressed challenges faced by Roma during their application for EU jobs. The project identifies potential blocking factors to EU careers based on race & ethnicity.

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