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THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

IMADR Oral Statement: 23rd Session of the Human Rights Council

Item 2 and 3: General Debate

3 June 2013

Thank you Mr. President,

This is a statement made by IMADR in cooperation with National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights – AIDMAM, Navsarjan Trust and Dalit Feminist Organisation. We collectively express our strong welcome and endorsement to the joint call made by seven Special Procedures thematic mandate holders for strengthened protection of the victims of caste based discrimination which was stated in the media statement on 24 May. As stated in the joint call “Caste-based discrimination remains widespread and deeply rooted, its victims face structural discrimination, marginalization and systematic exclusion, and the level of impunity is very high”. While the majority of the victims are the Dalits in South Asia, caste based and similar forms of discrimination based on work and descent such as Buraku discrimination exists in various countries world-wide and affects more than 260 million people. It also needs to be highlighted that this particular form of discrimination entails gross forms and wide-ranging kinds of human rights violations including brutal forms of violence.

We also stress that Dalit women and girls are extremely vulnerable and victims of multiple forms of violence, discrimination and exploitation. The intersections of the structural forces such as caste, class and gender is further compounded with poverty, lack of resources and socio-economic-political exclusion. Dalit women are in the centre of this web and their multiple identities only push them further to the margins of society as in detail documented in our joint written statement A/HRC/23/NGO/36. Children of the communities affected by caste based and similar forms of discrimination based on work and descent are also particularly vulnerable to various issues such as lack of access to education, discrimination at school, child labour, sexual exploitation, trafficking.

Mr. President,

It is this against this backdrop that we would like to reiterate the joint call made by Special Procedures mandate holders and urge all the governments of affected countries to enact and, more importantly, implement national legislations and tailor made policies addressing specific situation, needs and concerns of the affected communities on the ground. Moreover, we call upon all the member States of the UN and this Human Rights Council, in recognition of the complexity and gravity of the issue as global problem, to take decisive action, in particular to adopt, endorse and implement the UN Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent. We also request Human Rights Council to consider the possibility of establishing specific thematic mandate holder addressing caste based and similar forms of discrimination based on work and descent. Finally, expressing our support to their work, we would like to recommend OHCHR, Special Procedures and other relevant UN actors to continue their efforts to comprehensively address the caste based discrimination in effective cooperation with the Civil Society and based on the needs of the affected community.

Thank you Mr. President.

IMADR is an NGO in consultative status (Special) with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations