

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

IMADR Oral Statement: 30th session of the Human Rights Council
Item 4: General Debate

22 September 2015

Thank you Mr. President,

We join Feminist Dalit Organisation of Nepal (FEDO) to express disappointment in the new Constitution of Nepal which just came into force last Sunday. Dalit communities repeatedly demanded the Government and Constituent Assembly (CA) to include provisions to increase the political participation of Dalit people and protect and promote their rights. Regrettably, those demands are not incorporated. Consequently, the new Constitution can further marginalise Dalit people, especially children and women.

Dalit civil society organisations have identified widespread discrimination against Dalit communities in the relief response efforts to the Earthquake in this April. In their assessment study, majority of respondents experienced discrimination and a limited access to emergency aids compared to dominant castes. Such discrimination is rooted from the lack of political representation in the central, provincial and local levels. Therefore, it is inevitable for the Government of Nepal to ensure equal political participation of Dalit people to create a stable and fair society. In this light, we call upon the Government to adopt additional policy and legislative measures for the protection and promotion of Dalit rights to close the gap in the new Constitution. Furthermore, we are deeply concerned by the excessive use of force against protesters. The Government must conduct proper investigations, and those responsible for casualties must be held accountable.

Mr. President,

We would like to reiterate our concern on the alarming situation in Okinawa, Japan. In spite of the opposition from more than 70% of the population in Okinawa, the Government of Japan is forcibly pushing forward the construction plan of a new U.S. military base in Henoko. Last year, the CERD (Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) recommended the Government to recognise the people of the Ryukyu/ Okinawa as indigenous peoples, and to "enhance its consultations with Ryukyu representatives on matters related to the promotion and protection of Ryukyu rights."¹ Yet, the Government has not held any genuine consultation with local communities with this regard.

The construction of a large U.S. military base in Henoko will pose a serious threat to human rights and democracy. We urge the Government to halt the construction plan and respect Okinawan/ Ryukyuan's right to free, prior and informed consent and self-determination as enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Thank you Mr. President.

¹ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2014), CERD/C/JPN/CO/7-9, para 21