

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

IMADR Oral Statement: 37th session of the Human Rights Council Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on minority issues

14 March 2018

Speaker: Taisuke KOMATSU

Thank you Mr. President,

We welcome the first report of Mr. Fernand de Varennes as the Special Rapporteur on minority issues. We appreciate the clear indication of his commitments and priorities during his tenure.

While his plan to strengthen consultations with regional mechanisms is encouraging, we would like to draw his attention to the significant gap in the Asia Pacific region for minority rights protection in this regard. In the absence of regional mechanisms, the UN human rights system is often the only venue for minorities in Asia Pacific to bring voices outside their countries. However, many States parties in the region continue to fail to fulfil their obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). 13 Asia Pacific countries have not ratified the ICERD which makes the region the largest roadblock to the universal ratification of the Convention¹. Against this backdrop, we encourage the Special Rapporteur to cooperate with all stakeholders in order to close the existing gap in minority rights protection at the regional level.

We further welcome the Special Rapporteur's consistent commitment to the issues of Dalits, Burakumin and other groups who face discrimination on the basis of caste and analogous systems of inherited status. We also encourage the Special Rapporteur to examine and address the situation of those communities through his thematic priorities. Persistent, in some parts even increasing, manifestations of discrimination against Dalits in South Asia and Burakumin in Japan remain a concern. Statelessness continues to disproportionately affect Dalits in South Asia. Lower literacy rate and limited access to quality education for Dalits keep trapping them in economic hardship. We express our commitment to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur to tackle these specific forms of discrimination against marginalised groups.

Thank you Mr. President.

¹ Sinatory: Bhutan; Nauru; and Palau.

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