



International Dalit Solidarity Network

WORKING GLOBALLY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION BASED ON WORK AND DESCENT

The situation of Dalits in Bangladesh

Recommendations from UN experts

The independent Expert on human rights and extreme poverty, Magdalena Sepúlveda Cardona, and the independent expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, address the situation of Dalits in a joint report following their visit to Bangladesh in December 2009. The report (dated 22 July 2010) is published as an addendum to their main report which will be considered at the 15th session of the Human Rights Council in September 2010 under agenda item 3.

IDS N recommends that attention is paid to this comprehensive report on Bangladesh, which contains extensive references to the situation and 'terrible living conditions' of the country's Dalit population and provides a series of recommendations to the Government of Bangladesh, the international community and other stakeholders. The commendable work of the experts can be further enhanced and brought to fruition if interest is specifically expressed by delegations through questions and recommendations on the topic.

We further recommend that the analyses and specific recommendations are taken into consideration in policy and development dialogues between bilateral and multilateral development actors and the Government of Bangladesh.

[Link to full report](#)

[Link to IDS N news item with extract of Dalit references from the report](#)

Conference on Bangladesh also makes recommendations on Dalit issues

In April 2010, the Bangladesh Forum Germany – a coalition of NGOs with a particular interest in this country - organised a conference in Berlin on inclusive citizenship and good governance. The conference examined the situation of various marginalised groups in Bangladesh and the measures that need to be taken to ensure that international development cooperation includes these groups.

The final statement paper included a chapter containing recommendations on Dalit issues to the Government of Bangladesh, the international community and civil society actors in Bangladesh and abroad. The recommendations, which IDS N endorse, are listed below and a link to the entire conference statement paper follows here:

Recommendations to the Government of Bangladesh

1. To undertake specific policies and programmes to implement the constitutional prohibition on caste-based discrimination, as guaranteed under Articles 28 and 29 of the constitution, and in particular to ensure equal opportunities for persons irrespective of caste, descent and occupation with respect to access to public employment or educational institutions.
2. To enact and implement legislation to criminalise discrimination or violence based on caste, descent or occupation.
3. To compile data in the upcoming Census 2011 to identify the extent of discrimination based on caste, descent and occupation and in order to facilitate enhancing and enforcing the access for Dalits to basic services as well as in the decision making process.
4. To increase awareness within local government institutions about the rights of Dalits as citizens and to establish mechanisms within such institutions for ensuring more effective responses, monitoring and reporting of violation of human rights of Dalits and to facilitate their equal access to basic services.

Recommendations to the international community

1. To support the Government in translating local and national Dalit concerns by incorporating into domestic law based on international standards, e.g. the (draft) United Nations Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination Based on Work and Descent.
2. To support the Government of Bangladesh in adopting policies and programmes to address and eliminate discrimination based on caste, descent and occupation.

Recommendations to the civil society of Bangladesh

1. To strengthen and expand engagement on Dalit issues, including within their own organisations, through advocacy and mobilisation and development interventions and through extending solidarity.
2. To undertake increased coordination and cooperation amongst all stakeholders working on Dalit issues.
3. To ensure appropriate representation of Dalits within organisations that work towards inclusivity of Dalits.

Recommendations to international civil society

To increase engagement on Dalit issues through support to advocacy and mobilisation initiatives as well as development interventions and to extend solidarity to Dalit communities and Dalit-led organisations.