



Establishing Justice, Dignity, Equality and Humanity

1st Global Conference on Defending Dalit Rights

March 19-21, 2015
Trinity Washington University
Washington, D.C.

Presented by ICDR and the Global Conference Organizing Committee

DALIT RIGHTS GLOBAL DECLARATION 2015

“ESTABLISHING DALIT RIGHTS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: A CALL FOR ACTION”

Delegates to the First Global Conference on Defending Dalit Rights:

Bearing in mind the commitment to establish Dalit Rights in the contemporary world by the year 2020, the Dalit Rights Movement must be connected at all levels through networking, collaborating, and mobilizing. This Movement shall strive to achieve respect for the equal freedom and dignity of all human beings, particularly Dalit people who are most vulnerable. Their entitlement to equal rights and freedoms without distinction of caste, work or descent, race, gender, social origin, birth or other status, including analogous systems of inherited status, must be respected globally. The Dalits' plight is a contemporary human rights crisis, often referred to as a 'hidden apartheid,' in which Dalits are forced into slave or bonded labor and manual scavenging, denied access to their share of natural and other community resources, and refused services at public establishments solely on the basis of their caste or work and descent. Such discrimination is especially harsh for women, girls and children, resulting in caste-based sexual violence, which includes heinous atrocities such as gang rape, being stripped and paraded naked, mutilation of body parts, lynching, cutting and burning alive, caste-based honor killing, murder, and forced sex trafficking.

We, the delegates of the First Global Conference on Defending Dalit Rights in Washington, D.C. recognize caste-based discrimination and all other forms of discrimination and inequality as key challenges to achieving inclusive democracy, human rights, justice, good governance, rule of law, and Sustainable Development Goals, including establishing a casteless society and empowering Dalits in a caste-sensitive Post-2015 development agenda. The meaningful implementation of existing international human rights agreements by Member States of the United Nations must take place in order for Dalits and other vulnerable groups with requisite political will, civic engagement, skills, technologies and resources, to achieve equality and equal access to justice.





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Bearing this in mind, we hereby:

1. Recall the terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights according to which all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and are entitled to the rights and freedoms therein without distinction of any kind, including caste, race, color, sex, language, religion, social origin, birth or other status,
2. Recall also the terms of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights according to which it is the duty of States, regardless of political, economic, and cultural system, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms,
3. Call on member states of the United Nations to create affirmative actions and policies to fulfill their international human rights obligations to protect, promote, and respect human rights of all persons, including caste-affected people; enforce national legislation and end impunity for crimes committed against Dalits and other vulnerable groups; adopt and implement special measures and budgetary allocations for Dalits and similarly discriminated or marginalized communities,
4. Urge the UN Human Rights Council to endorse the draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent published by the UN Human Rights Council (A/HRC/11/CRP.3); and call on the United States to sponsor a resolution for its endorsement,
5. Strongly affirm General Recommendation 29 of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (61st session - 2002), which confirms that the term 'descent' in Article 1, paragraph 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination applies not only to race but also includes discrimination against members of communities based on forms of social stratification such as caste and analogous systems of inherited status which nullify or impair their equal enjoyment of human rights,





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6. Welcome the European Parliament Resolution of October 10, 2013 on Caste-based Discrimination (P7_TA-PROV (2013) 0420); the United Kingdom's 2010 Equality Act which requires secondary legislation to include caste discrimination under race discrimination (SN06862); the United States House of Representatives' historic 2007 Resolution Expressing the Sense of Congress regarding Untouchability in India (H. Con. Res. 139, 110th Congress), and the Resolution introduced by Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) Calling on US Congress to Condemn Discrimination Against Dalit People (H. Res. 158, 114th Congress),
7. Reaffirm the Kathmandu Declaration made by the South Asian Parliamentarian Forum on Dalit Concerns (December 08, 2013); Declaration of Empathy introduced by the African American Legacy Families; and other national, regional and international declarations, Ambedkar principles, and comprehensive review activities done or made by local or national Dalit and pro-Dalit organizations, regional forums, Dalit Solidarity and Diaspora groups,
8. Reaffirm the Kathmandu Dalit Declaration 2004 made by International Consultation on Caste-based Discrimination, and the joint Declaration and Global Call for Action to Eliminate Caste-Based Discrimination 2011 of the International Consultation on Good Practices and Strategies to Eliminate Caste-Based Discrimination,
9. Call for inclusion of caste discrimination in the Durban Review Process; and recognize the condemnation of discrimination in the Durban Declaration and Program of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance of 2001,
10. Stand in solidarity with indigenous sovereignty and civil rights movements, as well as activism against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance to end the sources of social ills that contribute to and sustain social inequalities, discrimination and prejudice,





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11. Condemn state brutality against persons of African American descent and indigenous descent as well as persons with immigrant status in the United States and other parts of the world,
12. Recognize International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, and its accompanying General Recommendation; the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of 2005; the UNESCO Convention on Discrimination in Education of 1960; and recognize that discrimination based on gender, caste, race or work and descent exacerbates poverty and constrains progress toward achieving the post-2015 development agenda Sustainable Development Goals,
13. Call on national governments and member states of the UN, in collaboration with Dalit civil society and stakeholders, including the private sector and international development agencies, to mobilize all resources necessary to eradicate caste-based violence, poverty, socio-political and cultural exclusion through the socio-economic and political empowerment of Dalits,
14. Reemphasize the need to counter media propaganda that encourages caste and gender-based discrimination and violence; support media that accurately portrays Dalits, women and other vulnerable groups; and promote the recruitment of journalists among Dalits, women, and other vulnerable groups,
15. Call on nation states to establish and provide necessary resources to predominantly Dalit educational institutions, which promote targeted action, civic engagement and transformation of skills and technologies, following the model of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the United States of America,





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16. Call for enhancing and strengthening preventive measures and resources by the UN agencies, national governments and international civil society by formation of special legal and judicial measures and courts that recognize gross violations of human rights against Dalits and vulnerable groups and rectify the disproportionate acquittals of those propagating violence and other atrocities against Dalits and other vulnerable groups,
17. Recognize the observations and recommendations on Caste-related human rights violations by UN human rights bodies, including UN Treaty Bodies, UN Special Procedures Mandate Holders and UN Universal Period Reviews of caste-affected countries; support the statements by UN high level officials on caste, caste status, and caste discrimination as a cross cutting human rights concern,
18. Demand the full and equal participation and leadership of Dalits and vulnerable groups in decision-making and political process at all levels, as well as the accountability of governments to end caste and gender-related sexual violence, human trafficking, bonded labor, torture and inhumane acts by enforcing constitutional, legislative, judicial and other international measures,
19. Express our firm determination that justice, dignity and equality, the empowerment of Dalits and vulnerable groups, and human rights of Dalit men, women and children are achievable with requisite political will and inclusive democratic systems,
20. Call for adoption of the Caste Freedom Index as a unique and universal measurement and advocacy framework addressing caste discrimination and inequality, untouchability, and socio-political exclusion – introduced by the International Commission for Dalit Rights as a benchmark,





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21. Demand the protection of Dalit rights to freedom of thought, opinion, expression, conscience, and religion, including freedom of choice to practice and propagate religious faith and practice and the protection of religious spaces for all,
22. Call for continued protection of employment opportunities of Dalits in the all sectors, including private sector through affirmative action (reservation) for social justice and equal opportunity,
23. Demand accountability of the state for multiple forms of discrimination and violence faced by Dalit women and girls as a result of intersecting structural and gender violence,
24. Urge the Constitution Assembly, Government and Political Parties of Nepal to ensure Dalit rights in the new constitution,
25. Seek support from UN agencies; the international community; and civil society, including Dalit and pro-Dalit, human rights, Ambedkarite, Diaspora, solidarity and community-based organizations; to protect and promote policy towards advancement of the rights of Dalit men, women and girls and to build and strengthen the Dalit rights movement.

