

U.N. Sub-Committee for the
Elimination of Racism & Other Forms
of Intolerance of the NGO
Committee for Human Rights

Committee for Human Rights

Mr. Bruce Knotts, Chair

Ms. Bobbi Nassar, Vice-Chair

Sub-Committee

Manbo Dòwòti Désir, Co-Chair

Ms. Malaak Shabazz, Co-Chair

Dr. Corann Okorodudu, Chair Emerita

19 March 2015

To the International Commission for Dalit Rights

Re: the 1st Global Conference on Defending Dalit Rights

As members of the United Nations Sub-Committee for the Elimination of Racism, of the NGO Human Rights Committee, we engage and advocate for the elimination of intergenerational, and contemporary impact of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance as human rights violations. We affirm that our global drive for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance is undertaken, and made in the spirit of solidarity and international cooperation that is inspired by and recommended in the Durban Declaration Programme of Action Plan. Whereas we work in collaborations with other NGO's to promote human rights, social justice and peace, the organizations undersigned recognize the historic importance of the First Global Conference on Defending Dalit Rights of March 19-21 2015.

Though the Durban Declaration and Program of Action plan does not explicitly reference caste-based discrimination but does make an urgent moral mandate to end the scourge of social ills that contribute to and sustain social inequalities and various forms of prejudice; and the International Convention for the Elimination of Racism regards "discrimination based on "descent" as including discrimination against members of communities based on social stratification such as caste and analogous systems of inherited status which nullify or impair the equal enjoyment of human rights." Therefore we support the establishment of justice, dignity, equality and humanity, themes of the conference defending Dalit rights. We recognize the fundamental role of civil society in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and support legislative approaches to ending caste-, work-, and descent-based discrimination; we support and the creation of a Caste Freedom Index and other universal measurements. We urge and will contribute to the development of a strong advocacy framework that will empower the Dalit community; and promote gender equity and the empowerment of Dalit women in particular. The conference and follow-up mechanisms proposed by the International Commission for Dalit Rights play a critical role in meeting the challenges faced by global Dalit communities. We wish you success moving forward.

Sincerely,

Manbo Dòwòti Désir, Co-Chair, DDPA Watch Group

Corann Okorodudu, Chair Emerita, Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues

Shulamith Koenig, People's Movement for Human Rights Learning

Wale Idris Ajibade, African Views Organization

Kerry McLean, the Anti-Sexism Committee of the National Lawyers Guild

Vilna Bashi Treitler, The Drammeh Institute

Beverly Nance, The National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.

Kathleen Webster, International Federation of Settlements

Lobi RedHawk, Gray Panthers