



UN Human Rights Council 8th session
Item 6: Consideration of UPR reports - India
Tuesday, 10 June 2008

Joint Statement on behalf of the International Movement Against Discrimination and All Forms of Racism (IMADR), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Pax Romana and the World Council of Churches.

Mr. President,

We are pleased to note recommendations by a number of states in the report which is the outcome of India's Universal Periodic Review, which address the issue of caste based discrimination. In particular we note the recommendations made by Italy, Luxembourg, Canada and Belgium at sub-paragraphs 5 and 13 of paragraph 86. We were also encouraged to hear more than ten states raise specific questions or recommendations concerning caste-based discrimination during the review, as reflected in Part B of the report. This was a strong message to the Government of India that the international community is deeply concerned about the persistence of this form of discrimination which affects more than 167 million Dalits daily.

In its written responses to the abovementioned recommendations, the Indian delegation indicates that extensive disaggregated data, including on caste, are available in the public domain. We note however that this data does not adequately meet the requests of the CESCR Committee for the provision of annual data disaggregated by sex, age, caste, ethnicity, religion and region, something reiterated by the Committee in its Concluding Observations adopted on 16 May 2008 (paragraph 51, 58). We welcome India's acceptance in its written response to the UPR, of Mexico's recommendation to take into account recommendations by treaty bodies and special procedures in developing its national action plan for human rights. We therefore look forward to seeing the following issues addressed in that action plan:

1. Measures to combat severe violations of Dalit rights in the areas of access to education, health, housing, and property, freedom of religion and free choice of employment, as recommended by the CESCR, CERD and CEDAW Committees;
2. The expansion and improvement of existing statistics on Scheduled Castes to include data on caste and related discrimination in accordance with recommendations made during its UPR, and also the recommendations of the CESCR Committee;

We also appeal to the Indian government to effectively utilise the UPR and follow-up to this review, by strengthening the human rights education initiatives mentioned by India in its written replies. This can be done by including human rights education in the school curricula as recommended by CESCR and focusing specifically in such initiatives on the need to effectively address gender and caste-based discrimination in accordance with Italy's recommendations. We also hope India will respond to the interest and concern expressed by members of the Council regarding caste based discrimination, by enforcing and effectively monitoring the implementation of its legal provisions at the domestic level to prevent atrocities against Dalits, and follow-up on existing recommendations issued by national human rights institutions.

We thank you, Mr. President.