Honorable Chair,

Thank you for the opportunity. I am Dr. Sivapragasam, Represent Coalition of Agriculture Workers International on behalf Communities Discriminated Based on Work and Descent Constituency of APRCEM.

More than 200 million people across the Asia are discriminated on the basis of work and descent or face caste-based discrimination. These communities are among the most marginalised and excluded in terms of political, social and economic development. Across generations, these communities have faced discrimination and exclusion in every aspects of life, and this has often led to high incidence of poverty and hunger. Those communities are commonly known, Dalits and marginalized in South Asia, across continents amongst many names in different regions. The umbrella term to describe those communities is Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD).

Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent in Asia, are mostly engaged in the informal sector or unorganized sector due to their social, economic and political standings. The proportion of the informal economy which employs mainly the migrant workers, is highest in South Asia standing at 77.0%. Predominantly, these migrant workers belong to DWD communities, and there has been no effort to enforce minimum wage & social protection. Lack of formal employment and occupations such as day wage laborers, menial jobs related to risky agricultural labor have become extremely precarious areas to work exercised by DWDs in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka & Malaysia. What was a loss of all income and loss of livelihoods for millions accompanied by hunger, poverty and ill health environment. As of ILO employment data on Informal Sector, in India it is 92%, in Bangladesh it is 87%, Nepal and Pakistan it is estimated 72% & 71.7% respectively and Sri Lanka it is 60.8%.

Honorable Chair, almost we concluded, a decade into the implementation of the SDGs, there is no denying that progress remains slow and targets are still out of reach. We calls for the need for development justice, including five foundational shifts, economic justice,
social and gender justice, environmental justice, redistributive justice, and focus on accountability to people.

Thank you.