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Joint statement on violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

June, 2015

Mr. President,

Colombia has the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of more than ___ countries of all regions.

1. We recall the previous joint statement on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity, presented at the Human Rights Council in 2011;
2. We express concern about continued evidence in every region of acts of violence and related human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity brought to the Council's attention by the Office of the High Commissioner, Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures since that time, including killings, rape, torture and criminal sanctions;
3. We commend the attention paid to these issues by the United Nations Secretary General, the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights and international human rights mechanisms including relevant Special Procedures and treaty bodies and welcome continued attention to human rights issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity within the context of the Universal Periodic Review. As the United Nations Secretary General has reminded us "the very first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims that, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." All human beings – not some, not most, but all. No one gets to decide who is entitled to human rights and who is not."

4. We welcome the positive developments on these issues in every region in recent years, such as the resolutions on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity adopted by consensus in each year by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, the initiative of the Asia-Pacific Forum on National Human Rights Institutions to integrate these issues to the work of national human rights institutions in the region, the guidelines of the European Union and the resolutions of the Council of Europe, the increasing attention being paid to these issues by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, and the many positive legislative and policy initiatives adopted by States at the national level in diverse regions;
5. We note that the Human Rights Council must also continue playing its part in accordance with its mandate to "promote universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without discrimination of any kind, and in a fair and equal manner" (GA 60/251, OP 2);
6. In 2011, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 17/19, and, in 2014, resolution 27/32 on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity.
7. We acknowledge that these are sensitive issues for many, including in our own societies. We affirm the importance of respectful dialogue, and trust that there is common ground in our shared recognition that no-one should face stigmatisation, discrimination, violence or abuse on any ground. In dealing with sensitive issues, the Council must be guided by the principles of universality and non-discrimination;
8. We encourage the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue addressing violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and to explore opportunities for outreach and constructive dialogue to enhance understanding and awareness of these issues within a human rights framework;
9. We recognise our broader responsibility to end human rights violations against all those who are marginalised and take this opportunity to renew our commitment to addressing discrimination in all its forms;

10. We call on States to take steps to end acts of violence, discrimination, criminal sanctions and related human rights violations committed against individuals because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, encourage Special Procedures, treaty bodies and other stakeholders to continue to integrate these issues to their relevant mandates, and to report to the Council, and urge the Council to address these important human rights issues.