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Commission on the Status of Women

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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by International Lesbian and Gay Association and Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



Statement

At the Millennium Summit of the United Nations, held in September 2000, world leaders committed their nations to a set of goals and targets to, among other things, reduce extreme poverty and discrimination against women. Those goals and targets, known as the Millennium Development Goals, include the following eight targets that have to be met and reviewed by 2015:

- (a) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
- (b) Achieve universal primary education;
- (c) Promote gender equality and empower women;
- (d) Reduce child mortality;
- (e) Improve maternal health;
- (f) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- (g) Ensure environmental sustainability;
- (h) Develop a global partnership for development.

In its resolution 64/137, the General Assembly recognized that women's poverty and lack of empowerment, as well as their marginalization resulting from their exclusion from social policies and from the benefits of sustainable development, could place them at increased risk of violence and that violence against women impeded the social and economic development of communities and States, as well as the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The priority theme of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women is "Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls". We wish to underline that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are experiencing all forms of violence, including physical, mental, social and cultural violence, based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

For decades, we have been demanding that violence and discrimination be denounced and our basic human rights be recognized and protected by Governments and international treaties.

Some positive steps have been taken, such as resolution 17/19 of the Human Rights Council, adopted in June 2011, in which the Council recognized violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to commission a study documenting discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Subsequently, in paragraph 1 of that study (A/HRC/19/41), the High Commissioner stated that:

In all regions, people experience violence and discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In many cases, even the perception of homosexuality or transgender identity puts people at risk. Violations include — but are not limited to — killings, rape and physical attacks, torture, arbitrary detention, the denial of rights to assembly, expression and

information, and discrimination in employment, health and education. United Nations mechanisms, including human rights treaty bodies and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, have documented such violations for close to two decades.

We demand preventative measures and protection against all forms of violence, equality for all citizens, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens, and that particular efforts be made with regard to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In order to reach the agreed targets by 2015, much more needs to be done. In this regard:

- (a) Policies to prevent violence against women should also include violence against lesbians, bisexual and transgender women;
- (b) Policies should be put in place to support girls at school, including lesbians, bisexual and transgender girls, so that they receive an equal education;
- (c) Policies to support the health of women should include lesbians, bisexual and transgender women;
- (d) Comprehensive policies against discrimination against women should include lesbians, bisexual and transgender women;
- (e) The authorities should guarantee adequate public services;
- (f) Budget cuts should not prevent the implementation of policies.

The Commission on the Status of Women should be the leading body within the United Nations system that supports national and international efforts to promote gender equality and efforts to eliminate violence against women, including lesbians, bisexual and transgender women.
