

**HRC39: General Debate Item 6, UPR Outcomes
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Mr. President,

The Asian Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW) and Action Canada for Population and Development make this statement in collaboration with Sexual Rights Initiative.

Sexual and reproductive rights are grounded in existing human rights norms and standards. The Universal Periodic Review has provided an invaluable opportunity to highlight gaps relating to Member States' obligations to respect, protect and fulfil sexual and reproductive rights. The past two cycles have highlighted that violations relating to sexuality and gender occur in all regions of the world.

National civil society organisations and individual human rights defenders have played a significant role in bringing rights violations to the attention of member states in this process. They have also demanded accountability from their governments for the implementation of the recommendations made during the UPR. Some states have ensured the participation of civil society in the review of their own human rights record and the preparation of national reports— unfortunately, the majority have not.

In addition, a number of gaps have emerged over the past two cycles that warrant further attention and remedy¹². Particular themes related to sexual and reproductive rights continue to be underrepresented or even ignored in states' recommendations, despite being addressed in numerous stakeholder reports. Comprehensive sexuality education, adolescent sexuality, universal access to modern contraception, safe and legal abortion and sex work are among these. When these issues are raised, they are often not accepted by the states under review who justify their non-compliance on dubious grounds like national values, which undermine the universality of human rights and the very basis of the UPR.

The potential of the UPR cannot be realised unless states ensure the meaningful participation of civil society— including those advocating on rights relating to sexuality and gender -in the assessment of their human rights record, the development of their state reports, the formulation of follow-up action plans for implementation of recommendations. Finally we call on the UPR Voluntary Fund to increase the support available to member states to engage in the UPR and implement its outcome.

Thank you

1 http://hrbaportal.org/wp-content/files/Final_UNFPA-UPR-ASSESSMENT_270814.pdf

2 http://www.cesr.org/sites/default/files/downloads/CESR_ScPo_UPR_FINAL.pdf