

Statement of Action Canada for Population and Development and the Urban Justice Center to the 16<sup>th</sup> session Human Rights Council – Item 6 – Adoption of UPR outcome of United States of America – March 18, 2011

Thank you, Mr. President. I am a sex worker and transgender rights activist from the United States. On behalf of hundreds of civil society organizations<sup>i</sup> that called on the U.S. government to ensure the human rights of people engaged in sex work, I would like to both congratulate and thank the U.S. delegation for accepting recommendation #86. We believe that it is the first instance of affirmation of sex workers' rights in this forum.

Due to stigma and criminalization, sex workers -- and those profiled as such -- are subjected to violence and discrimination, and are often barred from necessary services and the right to equal protection under the law. State agents themselves, specifically police officers, commit physical and sexual violence against sex workers. These abuses are particularly rampant in low income, African-American and immigrant communities and also greatly affect transgender, bisexual, lesbian, and gay people. Globally, U.S. policies, such as the "anti-prostitution pledge," have negatively affected international HIV/AIDS efforts.

Having agreed, before this Council, that "no one should face violence or discrimination in access to public services based on sexual orientation or their status as a person in prostitution," the next step is for the U.S. to take concrete action to implement this statement. As part of such implementation, it is critical that the government work to systematically involve sex workers in policy decisions that affect them. Specifically, we hope to see the government eliminate federal policies that conflate sex work with human trafficking, investigate and prevent human rights abuses perpetrated by state agents against sex workers, and examine the impact of criminalization on our communities. Protecting the human rights of sex workers is also connected with broader efforts to ensure sexual and reproductive rights and address the problems of the criminal justice system in the U.S.

We are deeply appreciative of the respect for, openness to, and engagement with civil society that the U.S. government has shown throughout this UPR process. We stand ready to work with the administration to implement this recommendation and others.

Thank you.

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<sup>i</sup> These organizations include:

Desiree Alliance

St. James' Infirmary

Bay Area Sex Worker Advocacy Network

Best Practices Policy Project

Different Avenues

Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive (HIPS)

Sex Workers Project, at the Urban Justice Center

Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP USA)

Sex Workers Outreach Project (NYC), Sex Workers Action New York (SWOP-NYC/SWANK)

Sex Workers Outreach Project (Tucson)

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Sex Workers Outreach Project (Chicago Chapter)  
Sex Workers Outreach Project (Las Vegas Chapter)  
Sex Workers Outreach Project (Seattle Chapter)  
Sexual Rights Initiative  
Woodhull Freedom Foundation  
HIVictorious, Inc.  
Nashville CARES International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS Global (ICW Global)  
TAMPEP (European Network for HIV/STI Prevention & Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers)  
Nigerian Diversity Network  
Action pour la lutte Contre L'ignorance du SIDA (Democratic Republic of Congo)  
Asocijacija za Borbu Protiv Side (Association against AIDS, JAZAS, Yugoslavia)  
Tais Plus (Kirgizstan)  
Scarlet Alliance (Australia)  
Sex Worker Forum (Botswana)  
x:talk (London)  
The International Committee for the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe  
Erotic Service Providers' Legal, Education and Research Project  
Human Rights Watch  
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)  
International Women's Health Coalition  
Women's Network for Unity  
MADRE  
Ipas  
Amnesty for Women  
Women's Organization Network for Human Rights Advocacy  
Women's Re-Entry Network  
Women of Color United  
American Jewish World Service  
Religious Institute  
Center for Anti-Violence Education  
Americans for Informed Democracy  
National Minority AIDS Council  
Harm Reduction Coalition  
American Medical Students Association  
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care  
AIDS Project Los Angeles  
AIDS Action Baltimore  
AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
Housing Works  
International Rectal Microbicide Advocates  
U.S. Positive Women's Network (PWN) a project of WORLD (Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Disease)  
Women's Network for Unity (Cambodia)  
Madonna e.V. (Germany)  
Syndicat du Travail Sexuel (STRASS) (France)  
Collectif pour le Developpement Economique, Social et Culturel Integre (Democratic Republic of Congo)  
JJJ Association (Hong Kong)  
Paso del Norte Civil Rights Project  
Public Interest Project, US Human Rights Fund  
Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR)  
Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program (CLPP), Hampshire College  
Population & Development Program, Hampshire College  
Sexuality and Gender Working Group, Human Rights Network

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HIV Prevention Justice Alliance  
Malcolm X Center for Self Determination  
SisterLove  
Women with a Vision  
Black Communities' Process (PCN)  
Aniz, Inc.  
Four Freedoms Forum