



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

#### Fifty-ninth session

9-20 March 2015

**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”**

### **Statement submitted by Australian Lesbian Medical Association, a non-governmental organization 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

Lesbians and women attracted to other women face persecution: the act or threat of violence; laws criminalizing same-sex sexual relations with penalties that include incarceration and the death penalty; the act of, or threat of, forced medical procedures; “corrective rape”; rape; torture; arbitrary detention; the denial of rights to assembly, expression and information; discrimination; homophobia and the assumption of heterosexuality within many of the world’s civil societies, communities, governmental organizations, educational systems, health-care systems, workplaces and families. This has a serious negative impact on both their psychological and physical health.

It is a basic human right to live and work free from such persecution and discrimination. The Australian Lesbian Medical Association bases this assertion on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Australian Lesbian Medical Association also refers to the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights entitled “Discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity” dated 17 November 2011 and to Human Rights Council resolution [A/HRC/RES/27/32](#) on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity dated 26 September 2014. It is therefore asserted that lesbian rights are human rights.

In order to move towards the full implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action, which focuses on women and health, the human rights of women and women and the environment, and as part of their work to achieve the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action, all States Members of the United Nations, and especially those engaging with the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women are urged to take action to ensure that:

(a) Issues related to the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are integrated into all health-care provisions and education systems;

(b) Active steps are taken to prevent violence, persecution, discrimination and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, including the development of specific anti-discrimination policies in all governmental organizations, educational institutions, workplaces and, generally, within civil society;

(c) In countries where persecution, violence and discrimination persist, and legal support for the victims of such persecution and discrimination is inadequate, victims are afforded proper protection and redress. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons must be recognized as victims who have the right to apply for the right of asylum and refugee status from within their own countries to appropriate organizations and countries.

The Australian Lesbian Medical Association is an association of doctors and medical students and is therefore concerned with a range of health and other issues. We note that the issue of climate change has a direct bearing on all our communities, families and cultures (including groups of specific concern to us, namely lesbians and women attracted to other women, and gay, bisexual,

transgender and intersex people) and we therefore request that, at its fifty-ninth session, and in the interest of women and the environment, the Commission on the Status of Women take note that climate change and environmental degradation are occurring as a result of human activity. The Australian Lesbian Medical Association recognizes the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, including the finding that climate change has a widespread negative health and social impact on many people.

It is recognized that:

- Climate change affects the health of all communities, especially those who are already suffering from a shortage of water, food, land and fishing resources
- Per inhabitant, developed countries have contributed more to climate change than other countries
- Climate change will have serious economic consequences

Consequently, the Australian Lesbian Medical Association requests that:

(a) Member States be held accountable for complying with the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Doha amendment;

(b) It be noted that industrialized countries have the responsibility to assist other nations, both financially and technically, in their response to climate change and environmental degradation;

(c) It be noted that climate change will result in people from many communities being displaced from their homes. As a result, the right to seek asylum and the definition of “refugee” needs to be extended to include those who become refugees as a result of climate change.

We thank the Commission on the Status of Women for its attention to these matters.

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