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entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and
peace for the twenty-first century”**

Statement submitted by Coalition of Activist Lesbians - Australia, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

In Australia, women's sex-based human rights are under attack and digital technologies have become a tool of oppression. Pornography and pedophilia are two examples whose incidence has exploded with the advent of the digital age. In this submission, Coalition of Activist Lesbians - Australia focuses on the digital oppression of lesbians and other women and girls through trans-ideology conveyed digitally.

Extent of the problem

Governments, other organisations, and individuals have been captured by trans-ideology—a mass delusion that denies reality, conflates sex with gender, erases the class 'woman', and has significant detrimental effects on lesbians, women and girls. Harnessing the hope and hyperbole of the digital age, trans-ideology is an oppressive force that has been promulgated worldwide through the internet: in chat rooms, on twitter and other social media, through some scientific magazines, such as *Nature* (US proposal 2018) and *Scientific American* (Sun 2019), in online guidelines produced by some professional organisations, (e.g. Australian Psychological Society that advises practitioners to affirm a client's belief in their declared 'transgender' identity (a position promoted within transgender ideology). Even organisations originally established to improve the position of women in a sexist and misogynist world are accepting claims by men that they are 'transgender' women and rewarding them, such as in the UK with nomination of Torrey Peters last year for the Women's Prize for Fiction (Flood 2021) and the election of Lily Madigan to the Constituency Labour Party Women's Office (Bannerman 2017). UN Women itself has been enrolled (Yoshihara 2019). Daniel Radcliffe, an actor from the Harry Potter films has even re-tweeted a statement allegedly from UN Women stating "Transgender women are women. Any statement to the contrary erases the identity and dignity of transgender people" (Radcliffe 2020). Coalition of Activist Lesbians - Australia rejects such ideological claims as false, as it is entirely possible to respectfully treat people who identify as transgender without having to accept claims such as a 'transgender' woman is a woman.

Resistance

Coalition of Activist Lesbians - Australia is a signatory and supporter of the Women's Declaration International's Declaration on Women's Sex-Based Rights and has recently established its own website to empower and support lesbians in Australia. The Women's Declaration International is a powerful global feminist response that uses the internet (e.g. webinars, podcasts, book discussions) to inform and educate in order to combat the pernicious effects of trans-ideology. The Women's Declaration International declaration on Women's Sex-Based Rights (translated into 23 different languages), has attracted over 33,000 individual signatures from 160 countries in collaboration with 463 organisations, proving that they are meeting a global need (Women's Declaration International no date). Women's Declaration International is an example of a positive social change agent that uses digital technologies to empower lesbians and other women and to improve the position of women in many unequal societies and cultures.

Barriers to resistance

However, Women's Declaration International and other organisations like Coalition of Activist Lesbians – Australia struggle in the face of powerful and heavily cashed up forces that have devised strategies to exploit notions of social justice, human rights and the symbolic power of the UN (Trans rights 2022). Furthermore, a medical-pharmaceutical industry has been eager to benefit financially and

professionally (Bilek 2021). Unethical gender clinics have become widespread, especially in the United States of America, although Vanderbilt University Medical Centre recently ‘paused’ its transgender programme in response to public outcry (CNN News 2022), although we are pleased to learn that the notorious UK gender identity service that has recently been ordered to close (NHS gender identity service to close 2022).

A particularly successful strategy of the transgender movement has been to attach itself to lesbian and gay rights. Although it is not a sexuality, a transgender identity can be used to avoid a homosexual identity. Transgenderism has received further support through a ‘queer’ movement that originated in the United States of America, where queer theory has been promoted by academics such as Judith Butler, espousing radical relativist theories of sex-gender as performative and fluid, in order to undermine enlightenment values of scientific truth (Xie 2014).

In response to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex+ and other groups in Australia, amendments to sex discrimination legislation have been brought in without significant debate or input from lesbians and other women and have introduced unworkable tensions between Federal and State legislation in what Coalition of Activist Lesbians – Australia has identified as a process of “exclusion (of women) by inclusion (of transgender identified men and women)” (Women's Declaration International in press). The Federal Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth of Australia 1984) was a watershed for women’s rights in Australia. Among other things, it provided for special measures to advance women’s substantive equality. It was more recently amended to protect sexual orientation, ‘gender identity’ and intersex status (Australian Government Federal Register of Legislation. 2013). The definitions of ‘woman’ and ‘man’ were removed; ‘gender’ was given the same status as ‘sex’, with neither term being defined; but ‘gender identity’ (even though given the circular definition of ‘gender-related identity’) was included, thus enabling ‘gender self-identification’ legislation. The amended Sex Discrimination Act offers no guidance concerning legal procedures if there is a conflict between gender-based and sex-based rights claims.

Outcomes of the problem

Transgender rights now trump women’s rights. Lesbians are being driven underground because we risk expensive lawsuits or government prohibitions against us if we wish to organise women-only events. Such a retrograde return to secrecy (the ‘closet’) means that lesbians who come out nowadays cannot access alternative narratives to mainstream lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual+ dogma under which younger lesbians risk being “transed” (identified as trans men) for want of any other form of validation, or socialisation. Many older lesbian members of Coalition of Activist Lesbians and elsewhere, who enjoyed the emotional and political support of the women’s liberation movement during the 1960s and 1970s, are pleased to note its resurgence in response to the contemporary undermining of lesbian and other women’s rights.

A small number of cases, mainly in the UK, of legislative action by gender critical plaintiffs have been successful recently at great expense to the plaintiffs, such as lack of safeguarding of minors with the UK court case of Keira Bell (Smith 2021), discrimination in employment such as of the barrister Allison Bailey in the UK (BBC News 2022) and no-platforming of speakers at universities (University of Essex 2021). A currently active case in Australia is that of Jessica Hoyle’s appeal to the High Court against the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commissioner who ruled it was discriminatory to hold a lesbian event that excludes men (Macpherson 2022). Trans-ideology has captured once respected public institutions, such as the Australian Broadcasting Commission. So much so that, last year, it broadcast an episode of You

Can't Ask That that was about lesbians and included a male speaker who identified as a trans woman and a lesbian. Coalition of Activist Lesbians - Australia refutes such beliefs about identity as delusional arising from a sexual fetish in males of all ages (Jeffries 2014) or from gender dysphoria via social contagion, mainly of young women and girls using the internet (Littman 2018). The latter phenomenon was researched and identified as rapid-onset gender dysphoria and diagnosed as the product of social contagion among young women and girls, often involving internet technologies (Littman 2018). The result has been immeasurable harm to young women, many of whom are lesbian, from unnecessary medical interventions (puberty blockers, surgery).
