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UN Human Rights Council
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Item 3: General debate

**Joint Oral Statement delivered by Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD),
World YWCA and World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)**

Mr. Chairperson and distinguished members of the Human Rights Council,

I take the floor on behalf of the APWLD, World YWCA, OMCT and the 60 undersigned organisations across the globe.

The last two decades have seen important developments at the international level in the struggle to free women's lives of violence. The establishment in 1994 of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (SRVAW) was a historic milestone in this fight against violence.

During its 15 years of existence, the mandate has accorded attention to grave and systemic manifestations of violence, elaborating on existing legal standards with recommendations for their effective implementation by the international community, individual States and private actors within the family, community and transnational arenas. The mandate has consistently brought out the effect of multiple layers of discrimination resulting from the intersection of gender with other systems of power, such as race, class/caste, rural location, ethnicity, immigrant status and armed conflict to draw attention to the most marginalized and vulnerable women. Indeed, the understanding that violence against women is not static or fragmented but an outcome of structures that result in a continuum of violence is very critical to the formulation of effective responses.

We especially commend the contribution of the current mandate holder, Ms. Yakin Ertürk, in establishing the linkages of violence against women with social, legal, economic, cultural and political structures. In elaborating and emphasizing on the obligation to address the structural causes of violence against women, the mandate holders have significantly contributed to increase the focus on states' legal obligation to prevent violence against women in addition to their strict legal duty to effectively protect women against such violence and provide them with full redress. We call for support of the international community in addressing laws and policies that contribute to violence, rather than limiting state action to penal and palliative responses towards violence against women. In this regard, we fully support the mandate holder's report to the Human Rights Council on "Political Economy of Women's Human Rights" (UN doc. A/HRC/11/6)" that provides a critical analysis of the current political economy that obstructs the enjoyment of all rights of women.

Mr. Chairperson,

We express our deep concern about the increasing levels and new and emerging forms of violence against women, the serious inadequacy of national responses and the vast gap between standards and practice despite the efforts undertaken by the mandate-holders to advance women's human rights. The relevance of the mandate is more critical today to address emerging manifestations of violence against

women, enable prevention approaches and monitor implementation. We take this opportunity to remind governments of their obligation to effectively ensure the elimination of not only manifestations of violence but its **root causes**. We also urge states to fully assume their legal obligations under international law with regard to violence against women by holding all relevant actors fully accountable for violations of women's right to human dignity as well as their right at all times to effectively enjoy the right to physical and mental integrity. This legal duty to hold perpetrators of violence accountable for their acts, include both state and non-state actors. States must moreover considerably increase their efforts in combating rights violations perpetrated by transnational actors, who far too often manage to avoid being brought to justice. This will however also require that all states concerned afford one another the greatest measure of assistance in connection with criminal proceedings brought in respect of violence against women.

In conclusion Mr. Chairperson,

We believe that the United Nations and the Human Rights Council in particular, play a critical role in addressing and promoting the eradication of violence against women around the globe.

We therefore encourage the Human Rights Council to proactively monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the UNSRVAW and to urge governments to ensure that women's human rights are effectively promoted, protected and fully realised in all circumstances

Further, we urge the Human Rights Council to:

1. Strengthen the UNSRVAW mandate by facilitating an organic collaboration with different UN mechanisms, in particular other Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies, the Universal Periodic Review and, when relevant, the UN Security Council;
2. Strengthen its support to the UNSRVAW's collaboration with women's human rights groups that has always been a venue for women to dialogue and bring their issues to the attention of the mandate holder;
3. Ensure consistent and effective follow-up measures for the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Special Procedures; and
4. Hold a special session on how to effectively implement the right of women to be free from violence and ensure full accountability of both state and non-state actors - including transnational actors - with regard to violence against women, with the full participation of women's human rights groups.

Thank you.

ECOSOC accredited signatories:

1. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
2. Asian Women's Human Rights Council (AWHRC)
3. Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)
4. Center Prodh
5. Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas (FAWCO)
6. Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)
7. Human Rights Advocates
8. International Association of Women in Radio and Television
9. International Institute for Human Rights, Environment and Development (INHURED) International
10. International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)
11. International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP Asia Pacific)
12. Isis International
13. Korean Federation for Environmental Movement (KFEM)
14. National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO), UK
15. Shirkat Gah: Women's Resource Centre
16. The International Fellowship of Reconciliation - Women Peacemakers Program

17. The Tandem Project

Supported by:

1. AMIHAN: National Federation of Peasant Women – Philippines
2. Asian Migrant Coordinating Body
3. Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)
4. Asian Peasant Women Network (APWN)
5. Association SOS Help Line for Women and Children - Victims of Violence - Slovenia
6. Australian National Committee on Refugee Women (ANCORW) - Australia
7. Bangsa Adat Alifuru (the indigenous Alifuru people) from Maluku
8. Bina Desa – Indonesia
9. Centre for Human Rights and Development (CHRD) - Mongolia
10. Citizens Alliance in Reforms for Efficient and Equitable Development (CREED) - Pakistan
11. Committee for Asian Women (CAW)
12. Feminist League - Kazakhstan
13. Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) - Fiji Islands
14. Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) - Fiji Islands
15. GABRIELA – Australia
16. Gabriela Women's Party – Philippines
17. Human Rights Education and Information Centre – Cameroon
18. Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) – Nepal
19. Innabuyog - Philippines
20. Institute for National and Democracy Studies (INDIES) – Indonesia
21. Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM) - Pune, India
22. Messrs. Vasudevan and Priya, Advocates - Chennai, India
23. Mission For Migrant Workers (MFMW) - Hong Kong
24. National Fisheries Society (NAFSO) - Sri Lanka
25. Nijera Kori – Bangladesh
26. Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand) Inc.
27. Pakistan Institute of Labour Education & Research - Pakistan
28. Partners for Law in Development (PLD) - India
29. Pax Romana – International Movement of Catholic Students Asia Pacific
30. Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific (PAN AP)
31. Programme on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (PWESCR) – India
32. Sisters in Islam (SIS) – Malaysia
33. Society For Rural Education and Development (SRED), India
34. Solidaritas Perempuan: Women's Solidarity for Human Rights – Indonesia
35. Survivors Justice Japan – Japan
36. Talking About Reproductive and Sexual Health Issues (TARSHI) – India
37. Tamil Nadu Women's Forum (TNWF), India
38. United Filipinos in Hong Kong (UNIFIL-MIGRANTE-HK) - Hong Kong
39. Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) - Malaysia
40. Women's Leadership And Support Network
41. Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC) – Nepal
42. World Health Organization (WHO) – Sri Lanka
43. Zambia Media Women Association (ZAMWA) – Zambia

Subsequent endorsements:

1. Aim for human rights, The Netherlands
2. BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, Nigeria
3. BAYAN USA
4. Canada-Philippines Solidarity for Human Rights
5. Engender, Scotland

6. European Policy Action Centre on Violence Against Women (EPAC VAW)
7. European Women's Lobby (EWL)
8. Filipino Migrant Workers' Union - Hong Kong (FMWU)
9. Global Welfare Association (GLOWA), Cameroon
10. MADRE
11. Migrante International
12. National Organization for Women (NOW), USA
13. NY Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines
14. Philippines Australia Solidarity Association (PASA), Australia
15. PILIPINA Legal Resources Center, Philippines
16. PINAY: Filipino Women's Organization in Quebec
17. Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy (PODA), Pakistan
18. The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)
19. Women In Need, Sri Lanka

Personal endorsements:

1. Andrea Lakios, USA
2. S.K. Priya, India
3. Wanee Thitprasert, Thailand