

37th session of the Human Rights Council – Item 6
UPR Outcomes Sri Lanka
Statement by Federatie van Nederlandse Verenigingen tot Integratie van
Homoseksualiteit - COC Nederland

Delivered by Diana Carolina Prado Mosquera

Dear Mr. President,

The following statement has been prepared in partnership with EQUAL GROUND Sri Lanka and the community this organisation represents. During the third cycle of the UPR, Sri Lanka received eleven SOGIESC recommendations of which it supported four recommendations calling for protection against non-discrimination based on one's sexual orientation and gender identity and noted seven recommendations for the decriminalisation of same-sex conduct.

During its working group session, the Government of Sri Lanka stated that actions had been taken to include their commitment in the National Human Rights Action Plan 2017-2021, which was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. As we commend Sri Lankan government's commitment therein to protect those discriminated because of their gender identity, it was, however, unfortunate to see that protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation was omitted other than specifically in the healthcare sector.

During the working group session, the Government of Sri Lanka acknowledged that “consensual sex between adults should not be policed by the state, nor should it be grounds for criminalisation.” It further emphasised that it would commit to law reform and guaranteeing non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. The Government further pledged to ensure that the ongoing constitutional reform process is inclusive, and takes into account fundamental principles of equality and non-discrimination, and that it will ensure and strengthen respect for fundamental rights of all persons, including those from the LGBTIQ community.

As per the commitments and pledge, we urge the Government of Sri Lanka to expand the fundamental rights chapter of the Sri Lankan constitution to include protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation explicitly, and further amend the Human Rights Action Plan to include protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation. Moreover, the government of Sri Lanka should set up mechanisms to address and break down the stigma around the LGBTIQ community, by initiating public awareness efforts to educate law enforcement, teachers, health care workers, public employees and the general public and call for an end to attacks, abuse and discrimination based on SOGIESC.

Thank you, Mr. President