

## **Intervention by Alejandra Sardá on behalf of Action Canada for Population and Development and Federation for Women and Family Planning, on the Report of the Special Rapporteur on Torture**

This statement is delivered on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative and partners including 7 organizations engaged in human rights activism coming from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America, North America and Europe<sup>1</sup>.

We would like to commend the Special Rapporteur on his report, and specifically, his recommendation that women at risk of becoming victims of honour crimes not be held in protective custody. We stress the importance of taking measures to address the root causes of honour crimes, including steps to ensure equal relations between men and women at all levels of society. We also commend the Special Rapporteur on his statement of March 12, 2007 where he condemned Sharia-related provisions on sodomy and adultery as discriminatory against women and same-sex couples.

Gender equality requires that discriminatory laws and practices against women, including torture, and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment are abolished. In this respect, we would like to draw attention to the 2004 concluding observations of the Committee Against Torture. The Committee found that refusal of life-saving medical care to women suffering complications after illegal abortions on condition that they testify in subsequent legal proceedings constitutes the violation of articles 11 and 14 of the Convention.

We would like to ask whether the Special Rapporteur will continue to address violations of sexual rights, which include reproductive rights, by reviewing legislation and practices that result in gender-specific forms of torture, for example, punitive measures against women who undergo illegal abortions.

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<sup>1</sup> The Sexual Rights Initiative: Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD; Canada), Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA; India), International Centre for Reproductive Health and Sexual Rights (INCREASE; Nigeria), Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice (Netherlands). Partners: Positive Women's Network (South Africa), Mulabi – Espacio Latinoamericano de Sexualidades y Derechos (Argentina), Federation for Women and Family Planning (Poland).