



## **DAWN WELCOMES HISTORIC REPORT ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY**

### **End discrimination and violence against LGBTI people, says UN Report!**

*December 16, 2011*

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), an economic south feminist network celebrates the release of the very first United Nations report on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity.

The report documents widespread discrimination and violence faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people worldwide, and calls on States to apply the international legal framework to end these human rights violations.

The mandate for the report came from the UN Human Rights Council, after South Africa took leadership on the issue by coordinating a resolution at the world human rights body in June. The call was supported by a majority of the Council, from all UN regions.

DAWN Global Coordinator Gigi Francisco says: *“We recognize in this victory, the relentless work over decades of human rights advocates, sexuality rights activists and feminists, facing harsh pushback and requiring real solidarity work across a wide spectrum networks. Allow us to use this moment to pay tribute to the bravery of LGBTIQ activists in the global south.”*

Whilst the publication of the report and the increased support for rights related to sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) at the UN marks significant progress, DAWN sees this as a moment to call for increased and broader urgent action to stop the rapes, killings and everyday exclusion and ostracism occurring the world over, as highlighted in the report.

The report calls on all governments to implement their commitments and obligations under international law, by protecting the rights of all persons, regardless of their sexuality, gender identity or expression. As UN human rights chief Navi Pillay highlights in the report, this includes protection and recognition of the self-identified gender of trans persons. It also includes protection from violence, killings, torture and abuse, including at the hands of family and community-members. The report calls for decriminalization of same-sex relations between consenting adults, and granting asylum to LGBTI individuals at risk, while also emphasizing the importance of freedom of expression and assembly, and non-discrimination in accessing employment, health care and education.

*“As a human rights challenge, countering discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity should be non-controversial”,* the High Commissioner has stated. *“We are not*

*trying to create new rights or extend human rights into new, uncharted territory. What we are doing is insisting that all people are entitled to the same rights and to the equal protection of international human rights law.”<sup>1</sup>*

Pillay is expected to present the report to the Human Rights Council at its next scheduled meeting in March 2012.

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The report (document number A/HRC/19/41) is available at:

[www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/19session/reports.htm](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/19session/reports.htm)

or: [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/19session/A.HRC.19.41\\_English.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/19session/A.HRC.19.41_English.pdf)

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<sup>1</sup> UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay. Remarks during an interactive dialogue with the UN Third Committee in New York, 19 October 2011.

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