

Human Rights Council

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Item 3: Clustered interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to health and the Independent Expert on international solidarity - Interactive Dialogue

06 June 2017

Statement delivered by Allied Rainbow Communities International.

Mr President

My name is Manisha Dhakal and I am speaking on behalf of a coalition of transgender activists. We welcome the report presented by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health.

We agree with the Special Rapporteur on the need for mental health services to be culturally appropriate and acceptable to transgender persons.

In most countries in every region trans people are “needlessly medicalized and suffer from coercive practices, based on inappropriate and harmful gender stereotypes”, including psychiatric diagnoses required to access legal gender recognition and gender affirming treatment. Consequences include exclusion, sterilization, conversion therapies and torture in healthcare settings.

We share the concern expressed by the Special Rapporteur on the preconditions of poor mental health, including violence, disempowerment, social exclusion, isolation, socioeconomic injustice, and harmful conditions at work and in schools. Those preconditions have an extremely negative impact on trans people’s mental health, especially on trans people of color, trans people living with HIV, trans who are sex workers, migrants or in prison.

Trans people’s mental health is impacted by human rights violations, lack of access to healthcare services and legal recognition, and by the experience of stigma and discrimination in all stages of life. Violations occur in all institutional and social contexts, including families, schools, communities, religious institutions and traditional practices, hospitals and workplaces, and in access to housing, bathrooms, shelter and justice.

We agree with the Special Rapporteur: mental health diagnoses, including those affecting trans people, have been misused to pathologize identities and other diversities. Being pathologized because of who we are reduces our identities to diseases, which violates our human rights.

Thank you, Mr. President.