

54th Human Rights Council session

20 September 2023, 10:00hr

ITEM 3 – Interactive dialogue with the Expert Mechanism on the right to development

Statement by **Federatie van Nederlandse Verenigingen tot Integratie van Homoseksualiteit - COC Nederland**

*Delivered by Ioulianna Hionidou-Mooney*

Mr. President,

This statement is co-sponsored by the International Lesbian and Gay Association

We commend the intentions and efforts of the Expert Mechanism to focus on the impact of discrimination against women and gender gaps on the realization of the right to development for all. However, significant steps must be taken to realise Article 1 of the Declaration of the Right to Development for all women and sexual and gender minorities globally.<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, the concept of 'gender' itself, which had been firmly entrenched in international human rights since the Beijing Conference,<sup>2</sup> has been challenged, misunderstood and misused to fragment and weaken the human rights system<sup>3</sup> and to undermine the struggle towards the elimination of gender-based discrimination and towards gender equality.<sup>4</sup> For instance, attempts to erase language related to gender equality and sexual and gender-based violence have occurred in processes such as the drafting of the Convention on the Right to Development<sup>5</sup> and the implementation of the Agenda 2030.<sup>6</sup>

The Expert Mechanism has a crucial role to tackle the controversies around gender equality interpretation and usages in the development framework and produce specific guidelines on how to address the advancement of gender equality and the full development of all women and girls and LGBTI persons without leaving anyone behind.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 1 of the Declaration of the Right to Development outlines that the right to development is 'an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development.' Declaration on the Right to Development, General Assembly resolution 41/128 (1986). <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/rtd.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Mandate of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, Radačić, I., & Facio, A. (2022). Gender equality and gender backlash. In *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner*, pg. 1. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Women/WG/Gender-equality-and-gender-backlash.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pg. 14.

<sup>5</sup> [Report of the Working Group on the Right to Development on its twenty-fourth session](#) (Geneva, 15–19 May 2023)

<sup>6</sup> [Ministerial declaration](#) of the high-level segment of the 2022 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development.

We encourage the Expert Mechanism to:

First, implement in its work the appliance and interpretation of the notions of “gender” and “gender equality” in international human rights law and other agreed language in documents produced by ECOSOC processes.

Secondly, gender equality and the elimination of all forms of gender-based discrimination should be at the core of the development framework. Thus, the Expert mechanism should adopt an intersectional gender perspective and tackle the root causes of the inequalities and imbalance that affect us all in different levels and proportions to ensure the right to development.

I thank you, Mr. President.