

HRC62 Statement for the Interactive Dialogue with the SR VAWG

On behalf of the Center for Reproductive Rights, CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, Global Action for Trans* Equality Inc., Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, Global Justice Center, International Federation for Human Rights Leagues, ILGA World, Just Future Collaboratives, MenEngage Global Alliance, Woodhull Freedom Foundation

Mr. President,

Defining women exclusively in their role as “mothers” strips them of their full, diverse identities and humanity, reduces women to their reproductive role, and reinforces the patriarchal gender stereotypes that drive violence and discrimination against women and girls. It also reinforces these stereotypes by solely focusing on women’s experience of “motherhood” to the exclusion of their other varied identities, characteristics and roles in societies.

Gender stereotypes, not biological reproductive capacity, drives discrimination against any reproductive choice a woman makes about if, when and how to bear children. Women face discriminatory stereotypes for virtually every decision they make around reproduction: for having children, or choosing not to; for doing so too early or too late, for working too little or too much while pregnant or parenting. Similar forms of stigma and discrimination can also affect trans men and other gender diverse people who experience pregnancy, childbirth, or parenting.

Rather than simply “valuing mothers” more and leaving them with a disproportionate burden for unpaid and undervalued care work, a proposal which reinforces the harmful stereotype that this is “women’s work,” State policies should aim to more equitably distribute and value care and support work, including through affordable childcare, equitable parental leave policies, engaging men and boys to take up their fair share of unpaid care and household work, and addressing the root causes of gender stereotypes, including addressing stereotypes around patriarchal masculinities which continue to sustain these discriminatory beliefs

If we truly want to support mothers, we need to support *women and girls, as well as trans men and gender diverse people who experience pregnancy and childbirth* in the fullness of their humanity. This requires social support policies, laws and policies which respect bodily autonomy, value and equitably distribute care and support work, and actively combat discriminatory narratives about women's value being linked to their reproductive roles.

Thank you.