



ASIA PACIFIC  
TRANSGENDER  
NETWORK

## 56th Human Rights Council session

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### ITEM 3 – Interactive dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women

#### Statement by APTN

*Delivered by Jonathan Wala*

Mr President,

This statement is made on behalf of APTN and has been drafted in collaboration with 15 transgender and gender-diverse activists from the Global South and East.

As trans and gender-diverse people, we stand in solidarity with sex workers as our communities overlap and share common oppression, including discrimination, and attacks against our bodily autonomy and fundamental human rights.

We denounce the report's use of the harmful term 'prostitution' that ostracizes sex workers. We promote the term 'Sex Work' as used by the communities recognising our right to work. It is also widely used by UN special procedures mandate holders, including the Special Rapporteurs on Trafficking and the Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls. Thus, I will replace the term 'prostitution' with 'sex work'.

Sex work implies the voluntary consent of adult sex workers, whereas trafficking involves coercion and deceit, resulting in loss of agency by the trafficked person. The report conflates trafficking with sex work, which misrepresents sex workers and leads to mismatched solutions. Assuming that all sex workers are trafficked also denies the autonomy and agency of people who sell sex. My question to the mandate is: How does the SR see the difference between sex work and trafficking, rather than harmfully conflating the two?

We have observed that this report lacks the voices of the sex workers' communities despite numerous inputs submitted. How will the SR ensure the meaningful participation of the communities you report on?

Trans and sex workers' communities have both suffered from the criminalisation of our bodily autonomy. We call accountability of States to our demand for full decriminalisation of all aspects of sex work to return to sex workers the right to make decisions about their bodies and livelihoods, which are fundamental human rights.

I thank you.