

Statement on Bangladesh

I am a Bangladeshi human rights defender working on rights related to gender and sexual diversity in collaboration with Action Canada for Population and Development<sup>1</sup>. We express our gratitude to the Working Group for facilitating the universal periodic review on Bangladesh. The report of the working group clearly shows the commitment of Bangladesh to protect the rights of its citizens in many ways. Nevertheless we would like to draw the council's attention to a few issues.

In response to recommendation 27 in the working group's report Bangladesh acknowledges the need of special training for the law enforcement agencies. In this connection we request Bangladesh to incorporate into its training program issues of the 'transgender'/hijra/ kothi community who often fall prey to police violence. Moreover we are deeply concerned that Bangladesh in response to the aforesaid recommendation says that sexual orientation is not an issue. But the summary of the stakeholder's information submitted by the OHCHR has already made clear references to the existence of same sex sexualities and the violence faced by the marginal sex/gender community in Bangladesh<sup>2</sup>.

We heartily acknowledge Bangladesh's acceptance of recommendations 6 and 7 on the formation of an effective human rights commission. In this connection we request the government to have a special gender/sexual minority cell within the National Human rights commission and undertake systematic documentations of the rights violations they face.

With reference to the recommendation 18 on vulnerable groups Bangladesh has clearly identified women as a special group. In this regard we call upon Bangladesh to consider the same sex attracted women and men living in poverty, intersex, 'hijra', 'kothi' as special groups and bring them under safety net packages.

We thank Bangladesh for accepting recommendation 23 on the setting up of a national plan of action against sexual abuse. In this regard we request you to take into consideration the particular vulnerabilities of the intersex and 'effeminate' children, the violence they face in the schools and the traumatic effects this violence has on their lives.

Finally let us bring to your attention the fact that there are a few organized groups of Hijra, Kothi, Gay, and Lesbian people in Bangladesh willing to work closely with the government to implement the suggestions made above.

Thank you.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sexual Rights Initiative (a collaborative project of ACPD, Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA: India), Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), Federation for Women and Family Planning (Poland), and Mulabi - Espacio Latinoamericano de Sexualidades y Derechos).

<sup>2</sup> See Paragraphs 25,30,40,45 of the stakeholder's summary prepared by the office of the high commissioner for the human rights.