

**23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council**  
**Statement by the Canadian HIV AIDS Network**  
**Item 3 – Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Health**

*- Delivered by Arvind Narrain*

Thank you Mr President,

We welcome the report of the Special Rapporteur on Health with its systematic focus on both the rights of migrant workers as well as the rights of workers in what he calls '*dirty, dangerous and degrading (3D) industries.*' The focus on the precarious health situation of construction workers, domestic workers, agricultural workers as well as sex workers is to be welcomed.

We commend in particular the sustained focus on the unique vulnerabilities which sex workers face. The Special Rapporteur has rightly observed that, '*Criminalization perpetuates discrimination, stigma and violence towards sex workers and is a barrier to accessing health-care services, which leads to poorer health outcomes.*'

The Special Rapporteur has sensitively drawn attention to the 'gendered power imbalances' which affects the ability of women, especially sex workers, to negotiate safe sex, which increases their vulnerability to HIV.

The Special Rapporteur has shown great empathy in focussing on the unique vulnerabilities of '*transgender sex workers who may face severe discrimination and abuse in their home country.*'

The Special Rapporteur in his report has done justice to the principle of universality which is at the core of the meaning of human rights. He has not shied away from focussing on the rights of human beings who we all too often see solely within the prejudiced frames of morality.

By clearly and unequivocally stating that both sex workers and the even more marginalized category of transgender sex workers should enjoy the right to the highest attainable standard of health, attention is drawn to those who have been for far too long on the fringes of the human rights discourse.

The question is what can States do to better address these issues, and how can the Council give more systematic attention to the rights of sex workers, including those marginalised because of their sexual orientation or gender identity?

Thank you.