



**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**  
**36<sup>th</sup> session, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

**Annual discussion on integration of a gender perspective**

I make this statement on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative.

We welcome the theme of this discussion as it provides an opportunity to focus on accountability mechanisms for the 2030 Agenda and States' commitments to achieving gender equality.

Data from the first two UPR cycles show that gender equality and women's rights feature prominently in State recommendations. Yet, their language and national reports regularly lack specificity on the laws, policies and budgets that are crucial for the realization of gender equality. Moreover, egregious sexual and reproductive rights violations that directly impact gender equality and the overall goals of Agenda 2030 continue to be neglected by States. Specific examples of neglected issues, derived from the SRI's Sexual Rights UPR database, include denial of safe abortion, restrictions on adolescent access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, inhumane treatment of migrants and refugees, and violence against sex workers, all of which are directly connected to treaty obligations and SDGs 1,3, 4, 5, 10 and 16. At a time when we are observing a worrying tendency to step back on women's rights, especially on reproductive and sexual rights, at national, regional and global levels, we cannot afford to ignore the opportunities presented by the UPR to hold states accountable.

We must recognize that while the SDGs present a global and forward looking agenda, they are insufficient to ensure the full range of human rights to which women and girls are entitled, especially their sexual and reproductive rights. The Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, including the UPR, can help strengthen the legitimacy of the SDG processes by aligning recommendations and reporting with SDG indicators focused on law and policy reform that meet human rights standards.

The potential exists for the SDG and UPR processes to be mutually reinforcing and complementary to the advancement of gender equality. However, for this happen States must listen to what women and girls from the country under review are telling them are the major barriers to gender equality, and deliver specific, measurable and achievable recommendations.

I thank you.