



**32nd Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 6: Universal Periodic Review plenary on Singapore**

**Oral Statement Delivered by Jean Chong Yan Lih
On behalf of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**

Friday, 24 June 2016

Mr President, FORUM-ASIA makes this statement in association with Sayoni, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus and ALMOS, and the LGBT community in Singapore.

We are alarmed that Singapore has rejected nearly half of the 236 recommendations it received. This sets a negative precedence regionally and globally for the UPR process and is a disturbing indication of the country's unwillingness to cooperate with international human rights processes.

Those rejected include key recommendations¹ to review or repeal restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly and association. We note that existing legal restrictions in Singapore on these rights far exceed extents permissible under international human rights law. We call the Singapore government to review all existing laws and policies that impose undue restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly and association and comply with international law.

We regret that Singapore has merely noted recommendations on censorship of LGBT content in the media and the continued criminalization of sex between consenting men under Section 377A.

Despite reassurances that Section 377A is not proactively enforced, the state appears to conveniently ignore the cascading and intersectional effects of this law that encourages discrimination by the State.

The claim that LGBT media content is allowed as long as guidelines are followed, is a fallacy. Guidelines prevent all positive or neutral portrayals of LGBT people, even when it includes comments on TV related to history and social change in other countries. In reality only stigmatization of LGBT people is permitted.

Although the state has been quick to cite the annual pride event PinkDot, as evidence of tolerance and inclusiveness, on 7 June 2016 the Ministry of Home Affairs announced restrictions on foreign sponsorship for the event.

While welcoming the 14 June 2016 statement of the Minister of Home Affairs Mr K Shanmugan that everyone must be protected against violence regardless of sexual orientation, we note that this would remain as lip service as long as the state retains laws and guidelines that promote violence and discrimination against LGBT people. Section 377A and stigmatization through censorship makes LGBT people reluctant to report violence and discrimination against them.

We call on the government to take concrete steps and decriminalize and remove all policies that discriminate against LGBT persons living in Singapore.

Thank you.

¹ Recommendations 166.86, 166.87, 166.88, 166.90, 166.92, 166.200, 166.204, 166.205, and 166.206