December 21st, 2016

LGBTIQ Regional Organizations from Asia Pacific
Welcome the Decision of UNGA Plenary Meeting to
Safeguard the Mandate of Independent Expert on Sexual
Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)

On Monday, December 19th, a group of states attempted to halt the
mandate of the Independent Expert on the “protection against
violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender
identity (SOGI). The position of Independent Expert in SOGI was
created by the passing of UN Human Rights Council resolution
A/HRC/RES/32/2 in June of this year and is held by Vitit
Muntarbhorn, a Thai human rights expert. The Independent Expert
began his work in November. The first attempt to block this resolution
was during the UNGA third committee meeting in November. The
mandate of IE on SOGIE was safeguarded with 84 countries voting in
favour, 77 against and 17 abstentions. The vote on Monday will be
the second hostile attempt to defer the mandate by introducing the
amendment A/71/45.
We welcome the decision of the United Nations General Assembly once again safeguarded the mandate. Today’s defeat of the hostile amendment was remarkable and brought impact (84 voted against, 77 voted in favour and 16 abstentions on the proposed amendment A/71/45). The SOGI Independent Expert will continue with his work to document LGBTIQ human rights violations globally. With the increasing of threats and violence against LGBTIQ persons in many countries, the role of Independent Expert on SOGI becomes more important to bring these issues within then international level. The established mechanism will give assurance to LGBTIQ persons worldwide that we are fully entitled for protection under the international human rights law. We would convey our huge appreciation for the Asia Pacific countries who decided to stand with us and voted against the hostile amendment¹. We, the undersigned below, are committed to support the mandate holder to end discrimination and violence as well as to achieve the enjoyment of human rights for LGBTIQ persons.

Signed by:
Ryan Silverio, Regional Coordinator, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC)
Hiker Chiu, Co-Chair, ILGA ASIA
Abhina Aher, Chair Person, Regional Steering Committee, APTN
Joey Joleen Mataele, President, Pacific Sexual Diversity Network
Midnight Poonkasetwattana, Executive Director, APCOM

¹ Voted against the amendment: Australia, Cambodia, Fiji, Japan, Kiribati, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Vietnam. Voted in favour the amendment: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, China, DPR of Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nauru, Pakistan, Singapore. Voted to abstain/did not vote: Bhutan, India, Lao DPR, Micronesia (FS), Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Tonga.