Speaking notes *(5 minutes)*

Esteemed delegates and participants to this session,

Slide 1

Representing Suriname Men United, Caribbean Forum for the Liberation & Acceptance of Genders & Sexualities, ILGA North America & Caribbean, and The Advocates for Human Rights, I gladly take this opportunity to reiterate and highlight the issues and recommendations for the State of Suriname, regarding **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity-based rights violations** and **violations of the Right to Family Life**, as addressed by our Joint Stakeholder's contribution, which is available at the OHCHR website.

Slide 2

Since 2010, there has been reasonable legislative improvements on the topic of sexual orientation in Suriname. However, no policies and mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that these laws and regulations are effective in practice. Also, significant gaps remain in legislation regarding gender identity and same-sex relationships, consequently hampering the legitimate interests of those involved. Fortunately, the judiciary offers a solution to enforce

compliance with rights, and the private sector is becoming increasingly inclusive.

Slide 3

Suriname received recommendations on **the eradication of all forms of violence and discrimination on the grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity** and recommendations for **the enhancement of law enforcement and judicial officers to ensure accountability for gender-based violence and discrimination**. However, a 2024 Suriname Men United-study and the Action Plan 2020-2024 of the Ministry of Labor Employment and Youth Affairs show that 67% of LGBTIQ+ youth aged 16 to 25, were discriminated against by State and non-state actors related to employment, housing and other social securities. Suriname has no police oversight body to independently handle complains thereof.

Slide 4

I respectfully call upon Recommending States to adopt and raise the carefully formulated recommendation **to enact and enforce comprehensive legislation prohibiting discrimination by State and non-State actors** and the recommendation **to establish an independent police oversight body to investigate all claims of human rights violations**.

Slide 5

Suriname also received recommendations on **the eradication of all forms of violence and discrimination, of in particularly LGBTIQ+ youth on the grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**. According to the earlier mentioned study and Action Plan, around 86% of LGBTIQ+ youth,

aged 16 to 25, in Suriname are struggling with the far-reaching consequences of bullying and discrimination. 57% struggled with suicide. Specialized shelters, family mediation mechanisms, or coordinated social services and mechanisms are lacking for these youngsters.

Slide 6

I respectfully call upon Recommending States to adopt and raise the carefully formulated recommendation **to develop targeted protection and support mechanisms, to explicitly prohibit conversion practices** and **to develop fully public funded targeted human rights education campaigns**.

Slide 7

Suriname furthermore received a recommendation on **the full enjoyment of the right to family life by LGBTIQ+ individuals**. In May 2025 the revised Surinamese Civil Code entered into force. Also, this Code defines marriage exclusively from a heteronormative perspective as a union solely between a man and a woman. This is incompatible with the American Convention on Human Rights, and jurisprudence of local courts, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

Slide 8

Therefore, I respectfully call upon Recommending States to adopt and raise the carefully formulated recommendation **to amend Article 33, in Book 1 of the Civil Code of Suriname to permit same-sex marriage, and by doing so, making it compatible with applicable Treaty law and case law**.

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Esteemed delegates, following this week, my colleagues and I will remain available for bilateral meetings, virtually and again in the week of the 21st of September in person.

I thank you for the opportunity given and for your attention!