Thank you Mr. President,

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

The Special Rapporteur’s report on violence against women, its causes and consequences and its broad focus on shelters and protection orders is another important step towards eliminating violence against women. We appreciate the human rights based approach to the integrated services and protection measures in response to violence against women.

Violations of women’s rights are most often multiple and of an intersecting nature. This is also true in regards to access to shelters and other state funded facilities providing women care and support. Economic insecurity, lack of safe and affordable housing, precarious migration status, stigma related to sex work and drug use, sexuality and gender identity based discrimination, are among the barriers women face when seeking refuge from violence. Policies and programs designed to increase access to shelters must also address these underlying and concurrent factors.

While emphasizing reforms to service provision and protection orders aimed at supporting individual survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence, we must also name, expose and work to dismantle the root causes – patriarchal norms which devalue women’s lives and safety. Further, States have a clear obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent violence against women from occurring in the first place, to guarantee access to all health, legal and social services necessary in the aftermath of violence, to end impunity for violence against women and to provide effective remedies when the State fails survivors.

States must not be lulled into complacency by the dealing with the symptoms of violence and not the causes.

Thank you.