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**OEA** | Más derechos  
para más gente

**Dialogue between heads of delegations, Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General, civil society organizations, workers, private sector representatives and other social actors**

**STATEMENT BY THE COALITION FOR THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS ENGAGED IN SEX WORK IN THE AMERICAS BEFORE THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Guatemala, November 9 2021

Mr. Secretary General, Ministers, official delegation members, civil society colleagues:

We want to start with a question: Will governments in the region truly work to leave no one behind, as the 2030 Agenda proposes?

This is the third time we are addressing this Assembly. Until now we have not seen any concrete measures showing interest in our petitions..

The COVID pandemic intensified violations against our human rights: the lack of recognition of our work excluded us from any public welfare policies and forced us to break lockdown norms to go out and work at the worst time of the pandemic. We had to choose between staying at home without money to eat, pay for services and rent, and going out to earn our livelihoods and suffering violence from security forces who unleash the worst acts of repression on us.

The system that documents violence against women sex workers registered 1,270 cases of rights violations in 14 countries across the region between September 2020 and September 2021. Most of those cases are directly related to lockdown measures that security forces leveraged to increase repression. 40% of those incidents took place in the streets while 26% took place in workplaces. In more than half of the cases (54%), the perpetrators were State officers. Only 15% of those reporting to our system had also

submitted a formal complaint; 9 of them got a response and in only 3 of those cases the responses were aimed at protecting their rights.

We live in the most unequal of continents and COVID does not affect all of us equally. Poverty levels are alarming and in this context we continue being unrecognized as rights holders.

Another issue that has been aggravated is the migratory mobility of those who, due to economic reasons, violence or political instability, are subjected to violence and whose rights are trampled on.

We heard that there are abolitionist stances with regard to our work but what happens in reality is that it would be a mistake to adopt the measures advocated by abolitionist sectors. We are being exterminated and States have the obligation to guarantee our rights to life, education, housing, work and – above all – to freely make decisions about our bodies.

We insist that officers at the OAS, United Nations and other regional bodies cannot ignore their mandate and let their personal positions prevail. In practice, the latter excludes us from discussing public policies, recommendations and even laws that could recognize the rights that are currently denied to us.

***This is why we request the General Assembly:***

To mandate the immediate creation of a Rapporteurship that can promote, through research and evidence compilation, the drafting of resolutions needed to put an end to human rights violations against persons engaged in sex work in order to build a genuinely renewed and inclusive American continent.

