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Media Advisory

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Intersex Activists to Hold Historic First Event at UN

Activists will discuss human rights violations
faced by intersex people around the globe

Tuesday 11 March
10.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.
Room VIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

For the first time intersex activists from around the world will hold an event at the United Nations on the particular human rights violations and challenges faced by intersex people. At a side event to the 25th Session of the Human Rights Council, activists from four countries will discuss the genital mutilation, torture, psychological trauma, and discrimination that intersex people face because of our bodily diversity. During this groundbreaking event, presenters will call for concrete action that states and the international community must take to protect this here-to silenced population.

I was born with so called ambiguous genitalia. The doctors couldn't tell if I was a boy or a girl. At two and a half months they castrated me, they threw my testicles in the garbage bin. When I was seven they cut my genitals to make me look more like a girl. The doctors always lied to me and my parents. I spent my life in fear, pain and shame. I wish I could have grown up without surgery and decided myself.
- Daniela Truffer, Zwischengeschlecht.org

Panelists will also discuss progress that has been made in some countries, urging UN member states and the UN human rights mechanisms to enact similar action to protect human rights for everyone, everywhere. For example, presenters will underscore the urgent need to depathologise variations of physical sex characteristics in medical guidelines, protocols and classifications, like the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases.

Australia has adopted many reforms in the past year, including intersex inclusion in anti-discrimination legislation, and improved access to health care. A major Parliamentary committee report on the involuntary or coerced sterilisation of intersex people remains to be implemented.
- Morgan Carpenter, OII Australia

This side event will give an opportunity to hear from some people working on the human rights of intersex persons, the challenges we face and some of the assistance needed from the United Nations and others. The side event will be in English.

Panelists include the following intersex activists:

- Holly Greenberry, IntersexUK (United Kingdom)
- Mauro Cabral, Global Action for Trans* Equality (GATE) and El Consorcio Latinoamericano de Trabajo sobre Intersexualidad (Argentina)
- Morgan Carpenter, Organisation Intersex International Australia (Australia)
- Daniela Truffer, Zwischengeschlecht.org (Switzerland)
- Markus Bauer, Zwischengeschlecht.org (Switzerland)

The event is co-organized by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA), ARC International, El Consorcio Latinoamericano de Trabajo sobre Intersexualidad, Organisation Intersex International (OII) Australia, IntersexUK, Zwischengeschlecht.org, Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, and Global Action for Trans* Equality (GATE)

Notes for Editors:

- *Intersex people are born with bodies that vary from female or male standards, including our chromosomes, hormones, gonads and/or genitals. All around the world we face gross human rights violations.*
- *Population figures for intersex people vary depending on definitions. According to some definitions, up to 1.7 percent of live births exhibit some degree of variation from female or male standards. Between 0.1% and 0.2% of live births show a degree of bodily variance enough to become the subject of specialist medical attention, including surgical intervention.*
- *Intersex Activists have been meeting at a global level for each of the past three years. At our latest meeting we released the following statement:
<http://ilga.org/ilga/en/article/op4kdOR1SR>*