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Appendix B:

STATEMENT READ AT THE NOVEMBER  
1993 NGO SYMPOSIUM

Manila, Philippines

The lesbians of the Asia-Pacific Region are happy to be in this crucial meeting of women's NGOs in Women in Development. However, except for one person, we are all here not as lesbians but as women activists and members of groups involved in issues of violence, health, human rights, culture, education and media, family, labor, economic empowerment, political empowerment, environment, science and technology, indigenous women and agriculture. Lesbians have been at the core of the women's movement all over the world. And yet, most of us have had to hide a large part of our humanity because of fear of disempowerment and discrimination. We had hoped that this Asia-Pacific symposium of NGO's in WID would provide all women a forum of brave, free and encouraging discussions. But this is not necessarily the case for lesbians in Asia and the Pacific region, and that is why we have decided to forward this resolution from the floor.

RESOLUTION AGAINST THE ASSUMPTIONS OF HETEROSEXUALITY AND THE MARGINALIZATION OF LESBIANS IN THE SYMPOSIUM

A group of more than twenty-five women from the Asia and Pacific region met on the 18th of November to discuss their concern over assumptions of heterosexuality and the marginalization of lesbians in this symposium.

We therefore request that the UN ESCAP, Secretariat of this symposium and the organizers of all activities in preparation for the 1995 World Conference of Women in Beijing acknowledge the disadvantaged position of a large number of women who choose to have primary relationships with women by ensuring:

- 1) That a proper analysis and documentation be made of discrimination against lesbians in policies and programmes which either by omission or commission exclude, marginalize and discriminate against lesbians.
- 2) That reference to lesbians not be removed from documents and the wording of these documents and resolutions not covertly or overtly disadvantage or marginalize lesbians.
- 3) That there is recognition of the right of women to choose lifestyles and partners without discrimination.
- 4) That the treatment of women's issues does not silence individual women who choose not to marry and not to live with a male partner.
- 5) That violence and discrimination against lesbians perpetrated by homophobia and sanctioned by institutions of the state, of religious and of cultures be condemned and, further, that steps be taken to stop this violence.

We therefore conclude by saying that should this forum, all other fora and the women's movement continue to remain silent about homophobia and discrimination against