

32^h session of the Human Rights Council

Item 6 – Universal Periodic Review of Palau

Statement by the Allied Rainbow Communities (ARC) International and Pacific Sexual Diversity Network (PSDN)

Delivered by Joleen Mataele

Mr. President,

We are pleased to see small Pacific Island Countries (PICs) like Palau engaging actively with the UPR process and we can appreciate the challenges for us in the Pacific to engage in these spaces.

We commend Palau for its continued commitment to equality and non-discrimination, and its leadership within the region for implementing UPR recommendations that are deeply important for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. We welcome the fact that new criminal laws, which came into force at the end of July 2014, no longer criminalize same-sex consensual conduct in Palau.

While highlighting the above accomplishment, we would also like to note that we have observed very limited development between the last two UPR cycles, regarding another accepted recommendation to combat discrimination against LGBT persons through political, legislative and administrative measures. The issue was raised a number of times in submissions and during the working group review this year, by both States and stakeholders.

The LGBTI community in Palau face discrimination and security threats, and require the government to fulfill their commitments to combat discrimination and ensure the safety of all its citizens.

We urge Palau to bring its legislation into conformity with its commitment to equality and non-discrimination, and its international human rights obligations, by developing anti-discrimination laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and inter sex status. We also recommend that the Human Rights Council urge Palau to develop or support initiatives regarding “hate crimes”, such as legislation, which references sexual orientation and gender identity.

Thank you, Mr. President