



**37th Session of the Human Rights Council
Item 6 – Universal Periodic Review Outcomes
Statement by the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education – RFSU**

Gracias sra. Vice-Presidenta,

RFSU delivers this statement on behalf of the Youth Harvest Foundation and the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana.

We recognise the acceptance of recommendations and Ghana's increasing commitments on political and legal measures towards achieving gender equality, protecting women and sexual minorities and fostering developmental opportunities for the young. Yet, we are concerned about stigma and rigid attitudes on gender roles as structural barriers threatening the effective implementation of those commitments. In addition, hate speech openly used by some public figures fuels the violence and widespread corruption suffered by those not fitting within the accepted gender and sexual morality.

We endorse the recent words by Ghana's Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection on the need of breaking the taboo around speaking on sexuality, as one of the crucial means for addressing the root-causes behind harmful practices, violence and discrimination. Therefore, we call upon the Government to scale up the on-going work for adopting and implementing the guidelines on **comprehensive sex education** as part of the school-curricula and to ensure the right to non-discriminatory access to sexual and reproductive health in all the national territory.

We express our disappointment for Ghana's general negative response to the recommendations calling for repealing Section 104(1)(b) of the criminal code, and we call upon the Government not waiting for a "strong current of opinion" to appear, but to opening for trustful and meaningful dialogue with the Ghanaian LGBT-community in order to finally visibilise their needs and to protect their rights. In this regard, the commitment to creating a coordination body for human rights implementation and reporting offers a relevant platform for enabling meaningful dialogue with the Ghanaian civil society.

Ghana has expressed very ambitious planes for its future, including embracing sustainable development for its population and harnessing the demographic dividend. We take this as a reflection of the gender sensitive leadership that Ghana wants to assume in the African region. As civil society, we salute those goals and reaffirm our willingness to contribute towards their achievement. But we are convinced that no development can be sustainable if gender equality is not ensured and if human development is narrowly interpreted as the capacity to engage in economic activities. We are convinced that Ghana needs to become a more inclusive, gender-equal and diversity respectful society in order to securing the sustainability of its development.

I thank you,