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**This IFSW statement has been withdrawn, since Brazil withdrew its proposal at the Commissions meeting 29 March 2004 saying it did not have sufficient international support.**

**STATEMENT  
of the  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS  
International Non-Governmental Organization  
in Special Consultative Status  
with the UN Economic and Social Council  
  
to the  
60<sup>th</sup> Session of the  
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

Mr. Chairman,

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), a federation of 77 national associations of social workers representing a total of over 470,000 individual social workers living and working on all continents of the world wishes to lend its strong support to the resolution tabled by Brazil concerning the need to address the question of discrimination against persons and groups on account of their sexual orientation.

While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed and adopted 56 years ago states in its Article 2 that 'Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration without distinction of any kind' ..., there is still a long way to go until discrimination in many areas is overcome. The area of sexual orientation is a case in point, and although it often arouses strong emotions, it must be addressed in a rational way based on the United Nations principle of the inalienable human rights for all.

Over past decades, many forms of discrimination have been overcome in national and international legislation, and the time has come to address also the upholding of rights in matters of sexual orientation. One sign that the time is ripe for such consideration is the repeated reference to the issue in reports of human rights monitoring mechanisms, in documents of the III World Conference against Racism and in the Durban Declaration.

Social workers everywhere are conscious of gender issues and are trained to respect their individual or group clients irrespective of their nationality, race, religion, creed, opinion, sexual orientation and their social, financial, health or other status. The international federation that represents them hopes that the human rights of all people will ultimately be respected in all national and international legislation and custom. We therefore consider that the resolution proposed by Brazil to address the matter of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation to be a major step towards this goal, and hope that the 60<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Human Rights will accept it. Finally, we would like to believe that future work on this issue will pave the way towards an end of discrimination and serious human rights violations based on sexual orientation.

Thank you, Mr. President.