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**UN Human Rights Council
Twenty-seventh session, 8-26 September 2014**

**Item 8:
General Debate**

Mr. President,

The Human Rights Council is a forum where all human rights issues should be discussed in an open and cooperative way to enable action to promote and protect human rights of all persons. Non-selectivity and constructive international dialogue and cooperation in the consideration of human rights issues are among the principles that the General Assembly has decided should guide the Council. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action places considerable emphasis on combatting discrimination. It is central to this Council's contribution to promoting and protecting human rights that it addresses discrimination and violence on any ground.

Amnesty International has documented homophobic and transphobic violence in numerous countries. Human rights violations and abuses on the grounds of real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity continue in all regions of the world.

Since the adoption of Council's groundbreaking resolution 17/19 on 'Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity' in June 2011, there have also been some positive developments, namely in regional organisations, that the Council should recognise and encourage. In particular, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights' resolution on 'Protection against Violence and other Human Rights Violations against Persons on the basis of their real or imputed Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity,' and the General Assembly of the Organization of American States seventh resolution on 'Human Rights, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity and Expression,' both adopted in 2014.

Amnesty International welcomes these developments.

We also welcome the proposed resolution to ensure reporting to the Human Rights Council on good practices and ways to overcome violence and discrimination against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. This initiative will help ensure that the Council plays its proper role in giving sustained attention to and discussing constructively human rights violations and abuses on grounds of real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

As the Council has done in relation to discrimination and violence on other grounds, it is by giving *explicit attention* to issues of sexual orientation and gender identity that it can help address and prevent violations and abuses on those bases and provide LGBTI individuals with the protection and attention they need and to which they are entitled under international human rights law.. For this reason, Amnesty International urges Members and Observers of the Council to:

- ensure that this proposed resolution keeps a *specific focus* on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity; and

- to work to ensure that the Council is able to consider and act on the *substance* of this initiative.

Thank you, Mr. President.