



Global Network of Sex Work Projects

Promoting Health and Human Rights

Michelle Bachelet
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
CH-1201 Geneva
Switzerland

7 October 2020

Dear Ms Bachelet,

The Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) would like to take this opportunity to express its support for Dr. Tlaleng Mofokeng, who in July 2020 was appointed as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

NSWP is a global network of sex worker-led organisations, with 309 members in 95 countries, that exists to uphold the voice of sex workers globally and connect regional networks advocating for the rights of female, male and transgender sex workers. It advocates for rights-based health and social services, freedom from abuse and discrimination, and self-determination for sex workers.

NSWP applauds the appointment of Dr. Mofokeng as Special Rapporteur on the right to health and is concerned by the onslaught of opposition which has been directed towards her on [PassBlue](#), [Twitter](#), and other online platforms. These criticisms have unjustly sought to discredit Dr. Mofokeng's expertise due to her advocacy for the human rights of sex workers and support for the decriminalisation of sex work and the sex workers' rights movement.

Dr Mofokeng is aligned with [the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS \(UNAIDS\)](#), [UNFPA](#), [WHO](#), [UNDP](#), [the World Bank](#), [Amnesty International](#), [Médecins Du Monde](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), the [Global Commission on HIV and the Law](#), [Open Society Foundations](#), the [Global Network of People Living with HIV](#), the [Global Action for Gay Men's Health & Rights \(MPact\)](#), the International Women's Health Coalition, the [Association for Women's Rights in Development](#), the [American Jewish World Service](#), the [Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women \(GAATW\)](#), [The Lancet](#), The Global Fund for Women, the Elton John AIDS Foundation, [Frontline AIDS](#), the [International Community of Women Living with HIV](#), [Global Health Justice Partnership of the Yale Law School and Yale School of Public Health](#), [European AIDS Treatment Group](#), [ILGA-Europe](#), the [Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants \(PIKUM\)](#), [STOPAIDS](#) and [ILGA World](#) in calling for the full decriminalisation of sex work.

There is growing evidence that criminalisation and the conflation of sex work with exploitation and trafficking undermine the protection of the human rights of both sex workers and victims of trafficking and impede sex workers' access to fundamental human rights, including the right to be free from discrimination, the right to be free from violence, and the right to health. Dr. Mofokeng's unwavering support for the decriminalisation of sex work, including as chair of the Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) in South Africa, demonstrates her commitment to advancing the health and human rights of society's most marginalised individuals. With her combined expertise in medicine, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights, Dr. Mofokeng is ideally qualified to fulfil the mandate of Special Rapporteur for Health.

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NSWP wholeheartedly reaffirms its support for Dr. Mofokeng and is confident that her positions on sex work will be an asset to the UN Human Rights Council and to the advancement of health and human rights worldwide.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth Morgan Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ruth Morgan Thomas
Global Coordinator