

**H.E. Mr Joaquín Alexander Maza Martelli**  
**President UN Human Rights Council**  
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Palais Wilson  
United Nations Office in Geneva  
CH-1211 Geneva 10  
Switzerland

21<sup>st</sup> May 2017

Dear Sir,

**Re: Working Group on the Issue of Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice (Asia Pacific representative)**

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, endorses Zarizana Abdul Aziz from Malaysia as the candidate for the Asia representative of the UN Working Group on the Issue of Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice.

Aziz has over 25 years of experience engaging in human rights work, from the perspective of national and international law. She has been an active networker of the Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) International Solidarity Network since 1994. In 1991 WLUML launched International Women & Laws Initiative in the Muslim World, looking at discriminatory laws justified in the name of religion and custom across more than 30 countries and communities. Aziz has played an important and active role in the implementation and oversight of the program since 1994, and has continued to work with the network since.

She was President of the Women's Centre for Change for 3 years, and led initiatives by the coalition of women's rights groups in Malaysia to advocate for amendments to the rape, family and sexual harassment laws as well as advocating for a (then) new domestic violence law (now passed) and gender equality (gender anti-discrimination) law.

She has served as an expert and/or consultant for United Nations agencies such as (then) Division for the Advancement of Women, (then) UNIFEM, UN Women, UNFPA, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Commission of Jurists. This included serving as an expert at the Expert Group Meeting on CEDAW Compliance Legislative Indicators for Asia Pacific in February 2008 and the Expert Group Meeting on National Action Plans on Violence Against Women in September 2010. She had remained active in the legal profession in Malaysia, and through her partnership with M/s K Ahmad & Yong, Advocates & Solicitors, Malaysia, between 1992 to 2016.

Aziz also focused on international human rights in her Master of Laws at Columbia University Law School, USA where she was awarded a human rights fellowship. From 2008-2009 she was the Human Rights Committee Co-Chairperson of the Malaysian Bar Council. Presently, she is the Director and primary researcher/investigator of a research project on "[Developing Due Diligence Framework on Violence against Women](#)" which aims to facilitate evidence-based analysis of good practices in addressing violence against women globally, initially housed at Northeastern University, Boston, USA and now known as the Due Diligence Project.

Aziz has been visiting scholar and then Adjunct Professor (in human rights) at the School of Law, Northeastern University in Boston, 2011-2013. She had been invited as a Visiting Scholar by the Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University, New York (2010-2012), and also taught at University Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia (1992-1993), She continues to be a consultant with the Centre for Women's Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia since 2012. She has published influential, research-based articles and chapters of books. Her 2008 article, "Mechanisms to Promote Gender Equality: The Need for Legislation", which was published in the WLUML Dossier 29 (2008), has been translated into Arabic, Persian, and French.

Zarizana Abdul Aziz, with her decades of accomplishments, makes the perfect candidate for this role, and we firmly believe that if she is selected, she will carry out her mandate in a way that is unparalleled by her peers.

Sincerely,

[Write yours and your organisation's name here]