Agenda 3: School-to-Work
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It is both essential and necessary for Member States in our region to close the unemployment gap by making sure that for every young person who graduates, there is an appropriate and decent job that awaits for him or her. We would like to reiterate the point yesterday especially of not leaving anyone behind and this includes the LGBTQI community.

Transitioning from school to work is particularly challenging to LGBTI students who face a several layers of stigma, discrimination and bullying ranging from verbal abuse to all the way to sexual harassments. From Insult to Inclusion, the report on School Bullying based on SOGI by UNESCO has highlighted that 90% of LGBTI students have reported some kind of bullying (verbal, physical, psycho-social and sexual). In particular, 50% have faced physical bullying and over 25% have faced sexual harassment.

Current SDGs do not specifically address the sustainable development of LGBTI people in any of its targets. In order to achieve SGD4 (education), it is vital that bullying based on SOGI is addressed as part of SDGs. Only a handful of countries address SOGI and SOGI based bullying in school setting, including the Philippines, Australia, Japan, India, and Fiji. We need more of these kinds of countries that take action against bullying including addressing homophobic remarks.

There is also a need to recognize the positive correlation between women’s education and the reduction of poverty. This has been highlighted in the Beijing Platform for Action and the Regional Pacific Plan for Action: by improving women’s access to quality education for girls and young women we are contributing to increasing their social and political participation and empowerment, and opportunities.

There is also a need to monitor the planning and implementation of comprehensive sexuality education and related programmes. Where there are gaps, take immediate steps towards reviewing and improving sexuality education to empower women and girls, in a way that is rights-based, non-discriminatory, non-judgmental, consistent with evolving capacities, gender-sensitive, women-friendly and evidence based.