

**On international human rights day, 10 December 2009, the Delegation of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York delivered this statement:**

Mr. Moderator,

Thank you for convening this panel discussion and for providing the opportunity to hear some very serious concerns raised this afternoon. My comments are more in the form of a statement rather than a question.

As stated during the debate of the General Assembly last year, the Holy See continues to oppose all grave violations of human rights against homosexual persons, such as the use of the death penalty, torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

The Holy See also opposes all forms of violence and unjust discrimination against homosexual persons, including discriminatory penal legislation which undermines the inherent dignity of the human person.

As raised by some of the panelists today, the murder and abuse of homosexual persons are to be confronted on all levels, especially when such violence is perpetrated by the State.

While the Holy See's position on the concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity remains well known, we continue to call on all States and individuals to respect the rights of all persons and to work to promote their inherent dignity and worth.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.