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DIGNITY

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PROSTITUTION: OUR POSITION

DID YOU KNOW?

Embrace Dignity believes that systems of oppression work thoroughly and effectively to limit and constrain the choices available to those it oppresses.

This oppressive system leaves prostituted people socially and economically vulnerable to a commercialised system of sexual exploitation.

We advocate for partial decriminalisation – or the Equality Model – wherein the sellers are decriminalised and offered a way out of the system through comprehensive exit programs, and the buyers and third parties are criminalised.

Adopting the structural feminist view, we believe that prostitution as a system is *inherently exploitative* for those persons who enter or are within the system. We do not accept that there is any choice or safety in the system for women and marginalised people, and therefore do not accept the system as a safe working industry. We argue that it is not only the position of the vulnerable that needs to be protected, but moreover the position of power held by the exploiters in the system that needs to be challenged and penalised.

Our view is rooted not in any notions of morality, but rather in our unequivocal belief that this system is indicative of the fact that there is no safety, equality or dignity for prostituted persons in our society.

We also recognise that by advocating for laws which aim to **shrink the demand** for prostitution and therefore compromise the income of those supplying it, we must ensure that any legal reform must include an extensive and substantial national strategy centred around providing an exit and alternative for persons in prostitution.

This is further illustrated by the SALRC, who in their report, found that:

“despite isolated cases of private and state run and funded programmes there is no national strategy to assist people out of prostitution. The Commission notes that irrespective of the policy option chosen that a national strategy should be implemented to deal with prostitution. This national strategy should seek to offer viable alternatives to prostitution; assist a person to exit prostitution should he or she¹ express a willingness to do so; support re-skilling, health and education initiative for prostitutes²; promote economic independence³ promote sexual health and safe sexual practices and provide for a review system and body to evaluate the effectiveness of the legislation in order to make recommendation for its improvement³

We strongly support these suggestions, and believe that they can be best achieved through partial decriminalisation on an adapted version of the Swedish Model: The Equality Law.

¹ Or they

² We reject the term used here because of the stigma attached – use rather prostituted persons

³ Report by Principal State Law Advisor assigned to law reform research at the SALRC, Current Status of the SALRC: Project 107 – Sexual Offences/Adult Prostitution (28 March 2012).

