

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (post National Day Rally)

Sayoni Supports the Repeal of Section 377A, Highlights Exclusion of Rights of LGBTIQ Persons

Sayoni, a queer rights organisation, celebrates the historic news that Singapore will repeal Section 377A of the Penal Code, and urges the government to go further to recognise LGBTIQ persons as equal members of society.

Jean Chong, Sayoni's co-founder, said, "By criminalising acts of 'gross indecency' among men, Section 377A signals that gay and bisexual men, and by extension all persons of minority status in LGBTIQ communities, are unequal members of society. It creates a social context in which legislative and administrative discrimination based on sexuality and gender are legitimised. This climate of hostility disproportionately affects LGBTIQ persons, who are already disadvantaged in multiple and intersectional ways (due to their race, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity, expression and sex characteristics). The repeal is an important step forward towards equality."

We want to acknowledge the work of all LGBTIQ organisations and individuals, past and present, who have worked tirelessly to advocate for the repeal of 377A.

377A has caused immeasurable pain and suffering for LGBTIQ persons. We applaud the Singapore government for taking this important step to address the cascading effects of this unjust law, which includes violence against LGBTIQ persons, and discrimination that results in a limited experience of what their future will be like in Singapore.

However, Chong continues, "We express deep regret about the suggested changes to the constitution on the protection of heterosexual marriages by the Prime Minister. This will continue to render LGBTIQ persons unequal members of society. Such discriminatory protections will continue to threaten the basic dignity of LGBTIQ persons, sending a powerful message that their families are not valued and that their rights are contingent on the benefit and readiness of the majority.

"We call on the government to hold true to its promise of equality and non-discrimination towards all persons, including those with diverse sexual orientations, and gender identities, expression and sex characteristics. We look forward to further partnership with the government

towards its aim of promoting a secular and democratic society that prioritises the sanctity and equity of all human lives.”