

## Speech of Ruby Kenny

In behalf of NAPY, the Network of Asia Pacific Youth, we would like to thank the organizers for giving NAPY the chance to speak on this issue...questioning heteronormativity in the women's movement. Basically, the topic itself is quite complex. As most of us, our second language is English, so when I saw what I was going to speak, I was quite confused on what I will talk about. But as I thought further, I started getting the picture of what I was gonna speak about. And basically, being a heterosexual or being straight...how can I speak about this issue, how can I really put myself in that situation to really speak about it...and the factor is I'm not so much of an expert in the women's movement and how can I really relate that. I was thinking along that. But my question is do you really have to be lesbian to talk about heteronormativity in the women's movement? Do you really have to be lesbian to speak about that? No. You don't really have to be a lesbian that. You could be a heterosexual, bisexual or whoever, whatever sexual orientation you may have but you can speak about that issue. The Network of Asia Pacific Youth, which has a membership of young people from all over 17 countries from the Asia Pacific region has identified sexual orientation as one of the primary issues. It has been one of the important issues, even from the Beijing up until now. Recently, there was a commission on human rights, ...discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation but conservative forces have blocked it or were against it. In my presentation today, I will be raising some points, as well as critical issues, and which I hope will initiate discussions. Now, let's think about what is a woman? The image of one has, when we talk about a young woman, what is it? A young woman with long hair, dressed up in a petite way, well disciplined, may be from a rural or urban setting, but overall and the most important is that she has to be straight or a heterosexual. That is what most people think of a young woman. On the other hand, let's also consider a young woman that comes from a rural setting, a poor rural set-up and uneducated woman, wears long pants, has maybe long or short hair but above all is a lesbian. Just think about that. There are multiple barriers on being a young woman in today's society. Firstly, in being a woman itself has multiple barriers associated with it. And also being a young woman has barriers associated with it in today's society that we live in. Above all, the factor of being a lesbian adds on to that. There are so many oppressions that are on being a young woman alone, as well as a lesbian and a woman. My question is...my question to the women's movement is, who are all the woman in the women's movement? Well, what I basically mean is that is the women movement all inclusive, in terms of sexual orientation? In this forum, for example, there are sessions on globalization, poverty, politics, war, etc. But, where are the lesbian issues addressed here? I don't see any sessions. This is my question. Except now that I'm presenting something on lesbianism. Maybe because I arrived yesterday, I came very late yesterday and I was looking through the program and saw that there wasn't anything but maybe if I'm wrong. One of you can correct me. But I haven't seen anything or any session that is addressing lesbian issues in this forum. Maybe because of the word heteronormativity that's quite complex for us all to really address and analyze what that word means. Maybe there needs to be a simplified version of what the word means for us to understand what it really means. I have also noticed that there is a lack of visibility of lesbians in this forum. And I believe that there are lesbians out there amongst us. But these lesbians are not representing their issues here but their organizations in this forum. If so, I would like to raise another question

why are they not representing their issue. If you also take a closer look at the Beijing document, it does not comprehensively address the rights of lesbians and the lesbian issues are invisible in there. If it's not comprehensively addressed in there, lesbians can't actually own the document. If their issues are addressed in the document...as a result of that, of not getting their issues highlighted in the women's movement, the lesbian movement has got separated. And also the woman is also joining lesbian groups, gay groups, bisexual groups and transgender groups. They call it the LGBT group. Why? Because they want to have a space for themselves so that they can put their points and issues out. The Network of Asia Pacific Youth has identified sexual orientation as one of the primary issues in the AP region. And the Network of Asia Pacific Youth would therefore call upon the women's movement to embrace the issue of all women and make the issues all inclusive and make space for lesbians. From the youth perspective, I have raised some questions as well as some critical issues but I would like to conclude by saying that, the gains and to confront emerging issues, let's also ask ourselves, are we all inclusive? Thank you.