

Human Rights Council, 23rd Session

Agenda Item 8: Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

**ILGA Europe,
International Lesbian and Gay Association,
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network,
COC Nederland,
Human Rights Watch,
International Service for Human Rights¹**

10th June, 2013

Delivered by: Lucas Paoli Itaborahy

Mr President

This statement is made on behalf of a group of civil society organizations, including the International Lesbian and Gay Association, the world federation of human rights-based LGBTI organizations, speaking on behalf of its 1044 members coming from 120 countries and in all regions.

Two years ago, this Council adopted Resolution 17/19 on “Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.” Since then, the High Commissioner submitted her report on Discriminatory Laws and Practices and Acts of Violence against Individuals based on their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. She noted that the mandate of this Council requires it to address this matter, and keep itself regularly informed and updated on incidents of violence and discrimination linked to sexual orientation and gender identity.

A landmark panel discussion was held during the 19th session of the Council, which highlighted the need for regular and respectful discussions on the topic, informed by the facts on the ground, and for special procedures mandate-holders to continue to include information on human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity in their reporting.

We acknowledge the commitment of the South African government on this matter over the past few years, together with that of the governments of Brazil, France, Nepal, Norway, Poland and a number of others, including through supporting the recent regional seminars. We emphasise the importance of continued strong and principled leadership to ensure that the Human Rights Council gives these priority issues the attention they deserve.

We also appreciate the willingness of other states to discuss these matters in this Council through a constructive, informed and transparent dialogue.

Mr President

Civil society, from diverse regions and with diverse voices, is committed to continue working with all states to ensure that the United Nations body dedicated to Human Rights, namely this Council, supports the protection of human rights of all people related to sexuality and gender, including sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.

¹ This statement is also supported NGOs without ECOSOC accreditation, see next page for list.

We remind states of the serious human rights violations suffered by individuals on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, including trans, lesbian, intersex, gay and bisexual persons around the world. These violations are of civil and political rights and also economic, social and cultural rights.

There is, for example, sustained physical and psychological violence, such as murder, rape and other forms of sexual violence against lesbian women; torture, criminalizing and discriminatory laws and practices, including forced sterilization for trans people; forced genital-normalizing surgery on intersex infants; and imprisonment or the death penalty for actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity. Discrimination and stigmatization of LGBTI people also prevents the realization of the rights to health, education and development for all and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

This Council voted two years ago to “remain seized of the priority issue” of human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity. We urge this Council to act on the urgent need for the follow-up resolution, which is now due at the Council, to ensure that the UN pay more systematic attention to these concerns. As the Council moves ahead, we also call upon States themselves to implement the recommendations of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and ensure protection against these often life-threatening violations.

Thank you, Mr President

Endorsed by

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ARC International

COC Netherland

Council for Global Equality

Foundation for SOGI Rights and Justice (FOR-SOGI)

Fundación Iguales

Human Rights Law Centre

Human Rights Watch

International Service for Human Rights

International Lesbian and Gay Association (on behalf of its 1044 members from 120 countries and all regions of the world)

Kaleidoscope Trust

RFSL - The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights

Spectrum Uganda Initiatives.

Runa Institute for development and gender studies

The Victorian Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby

Transgender Europe

United and Strong Inc. Saint Lucia