CONCEPT NOTE

High-level side event of the LGBTI Core Group

Ending hate speech against LGBTI people in social and traditional media

Freedom of speech vs. license to hate?

Tuesday, 24 September 2019
CR 4 - United Nations Headquarters, New York

Topic

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI) people face abhorrent levels of discrimination, violence and murder simply based on who they are or whom they love. Violations include killings, violent attacks, torture, arbitrary detention, forced marriage, denial of rights to assembly and expression, medical violence and discrimination in accessing health care, education, employment, and housing. Still, only one UN General Assembly resolution addressing violence includes explicit reference to sexual orientation and gender identity, while non refer to sex characteristics.

Since the creation of the LGBTI Core Group, almost ten years ago, several positive steps have been taken at the United Nations to address the human rights of individuals based on their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity/expression or sex characteristics.

The United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action against Hate Speech, recently launched by the Secretary-General, is a call to action to respect human rights, without discrimination based on race, sex, language or religion. It reminds everyone that the United Nations was founded as a direct response to racism, genocide, and hate speech. As the Secretary-General describes, “Hate speech is in itself an attack on tolerance, inclusion, diversity, and the very essence of our human rights norms and principles. More broadly, it undermines social cohesion, erodes shared values, and

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1 The United Nations LGBTI Core Group is an informal cross regional group of United Nations Member States established in 2008. The group is co-chaired by Argentina and The Netherlands, and includes Albania, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uruguay, and the European Union as well as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the non-governmental organizations Human Rights Watch and Outright Action International.
can lay the foundation for violence, setting back the cause of peace, stability, sustainable development and the fulfillment of human rights for all.” Hate speech is one of the main causes of the verbal and physical violence that LGBTI people face all over the world.

Therefore, the Core Group will organize a high-level discussion during the high-level segment of the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly, on how different stakeholders can contribute to ending hate speech against LGBTI people on social media platforms and in traditional media and ensure support to the victims of hate crimes.

**Date, time and venue**

Tuesday, 24 September 2019, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
CR 4
United Nations Headquarters, New York

**Background**

**Focus and objectives**

This meeting will serve as an opportunity to recommit to ending the violence experienced by LGBTI people globally and to advocate for action to tackle these human rights violations. The event will pay particular attention to hate speech on- and offline and the steps that Governments, United Nations and corporate actors can take to address human rights violations against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics.

The objective will be to show high level political commitment from the members of the LGBTI Core Group and like-minded Member States, along with private sector and civil society partners to support effective and inclusive policies nationally and internationally and to promote a space for constructive and respectful dialogue.

**Format**

Participation will be at the highest possible level, including Ministers and high-level officials representing the countries and organizations that are member of the LGBTI Core Group. Heads of State and Government and Ministers of Foreign Affairs will have a speaking role and a prominent seating.

At the beginning of the event there will be a group photo with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and ministers attending. The entire event is
expected to last approximately 90 minutes. A press statement about the event will also be released.

**Provisional outline of the event**

3:00 pm Arrival of high level participants
3:02-3:05 pm Family photo (ministerial level participants along with High Commissioner and panelists)
3:05-3:08 pm Opening remarks (Global North or South Core Group Member)
3:08-3:13 pm Video message UN Secretary-General
3:15-3:45 pm Interactive panel with UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, representatives of the private sector and civil society
3:45-4:25 pm Interactive Dialogue between panel and Ministers
4:25-4:30 pm Concluding remarks (Global North or South Core Group Member)

**Background documents**

- Joint UN statement on ending violence and discrimination against LGBTI persons, endorsed by 12 UN agencies and issued in September 2015, available [here](#).
- Factsheets and other materials produced as part of the OHCHR-led UN Free & Equal campaign for LGBT equality – available at [www.unfe.org](http://www.unfe.org)