

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
58TH SESSION, 20 MARCH, 2014, NEW YORK

Statement for General Discussion on behalf of the Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Caucus

Delivered by: Kenita Placide, United and Strong, Saint Lucia

Distinguished delegates and friends,

Globally, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender people and others with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities face brutal physical and psychological violence. We are subjected to harassment, assault and discrimination in the global North and South alike. These violations are often perpetrated in the name of “religion” and “the state”, with the intention of political gain, or to distract from state responsibility to deal with corruption, misuse of resources and poverty.

“Development” under these conditions means that people’s rights to decent work, access to health care, education, and housing are compromised. Realities and fears of violence and discrimination have direct impact on people’s ability to live safely, earn a living, have roofs over their heads and to be healthy. When people are persecuted because of their real *or perceived* sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity, they will be forced to recede, go underground, forfeit privacy and personal and family safety, even as they resist, organize and fight for justice at great personal risk in the North and South alike.

The criminalization of adult consensual sexual activity and our communities, along with efforts by political and religious authorities to manipulate and stoke fears about sexual orientation and gender identity, only makes matters worse. Whether at the national level or at the CSW, decision makers *must* stop using these issues and our lives for their geopolitical gain.

Around the world gender non-conforming people face abuses: young people are forced out of and bullied in schools; people lose or don’t get jobs; they are kicked out of homes or not taken in; lesbians are denied health services; and transgender people are denied access to

many services for having identification that is judged as “wrong”. What do the terms “sustainable development”, “universal human rights”, ”social justice” and “equality” mean under these circumstances? How can inequalities be addressed, so really ‘no-one is left behind’, *ever*? In the Post 2015 process we call for better data collection and analysis, so no communities are made invisible, excluded or overlooked.

Within the CSW and other global negotiations, delegations must stop manipulating discussions about sexual orientation, gender identity and bodily autonomy. Any new development paradigm *must* address experiences of *all* people. States must show *real* political will to ensure development is just, sustainable and universal. People will face poverty and be targets for brutal oppression, violence and discrimination until you do.

Thank you.

This statement was delivered on behalf of the Lesbian, Bi and Transgender Caucus at CSW58 and the following 76 organizations:

Action Canada for Population and Development, Canada
AIDS Accountability International, South Africa
AIDS Action Foundation, St. Lucia
AIDS Legal Network, South Africa
AKAHATA AC, Latin America and Caribbean
All Out, USA
American Jewish World Service, USA
Amnesty International
ARC International, Canada/Switzerland
Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, USA
ATHENA Network, Global
AWID, Spain / USA
Balance, Mexico
Bi-Alliance Victoria, Australia
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Canada
Caribbean Drug and Alcohol Research Institute, LAC
CatchAFyah Caribbean Feminist network, Caribbean
Center for Women's Global Leadership, USA
Coalition of African Lesbians, Africa
COC Netherlands, The Netherlands
Common Language, China
Council for Global Equality, USA
CREA, India
Diverse Voices and Action for Equality, Fiji, Pacific
DomChap, Dominica
Drodrolagi Movement, Fiji

ECPI-Euroregional Center for Public Initiatives, Romania/Eastern Europe
Elles, Cameroon
Espacio de Mujeres Lesbianas Salvadoreñas por la Diversidad - ESMULES, El Salvador
European Forum of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Christian Groups, The Netherlands
FemLINKPACIFIC, Fiji, Pacific
FIJI WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT, FIJI
FOKUS - Forum for Women and Development, Norway
French Family Planning Movement, France
Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya (GALCK), Kenya
Global Faith and Justice Project, USA
Global Justice Institute, USA
Haus of Khameleon, Fiji
Hivos, The Netherlands
Human Rights Law Centre, Australia / Oceania
ILGA Latin America & Caribbean
ILGA, International Lesbian and Gay Association
International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission
International Women's Health Coalition
Ipas, Global
Iranti-Org, South Africa
LGBT Denmark, Denmark
LGBT organisation "Labrys", Kyrgyzstan
Metropolitan Community Churches, USA
MiRiDom, Dominica / Caribbean
National alliance of grassroots activist in Kenya/bunge la mwananchi, Kenya
Oceania Pride, Fiji Pacific Islands
Pacific Islands Safety & Prevention Project Inc.(The PROJECT), New Zealand
Pacific Sexual Diversity Network, Tonga/Pacific
Rainbow Rights Project, Philippines/Southeast Asia
Reproductive Health Matters, UK/Europe
Research Institute Without Walls, USA
RESURJ - Feminist Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Justice, international
Seta, Finland
Sexuality and Policy Watch, Brazil and Global
Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination (SASOD), Guyana
Space Allies/Allies Law Office, Japan
The Norwegian Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender organisation (LLH), Norway/Europe
Tonga Leitis Association, Tonga
Transgender Victoria, Australia
United and Strong, Saint Lucia
United Belize Advocacy Movement, Belize
Urgent Action Fund-Africa
Victorian Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby, Australia/Oceania
Voice for Change, Jiwaka Province - Papua New Guinea
WISH 2.0, Belgium
Women and Media Collective, Sri Lanka
Women International for a Common Future, Germany
Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR), Global
Women's Studies Program, The City College of New York, USA
Women'S Way Foundation, Suriname/Caribbean