

Human Rights Council 30th session

ITEM 8

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Speaker: Check against delivery

Mr President,

This is a joint statement.

The Vienna Declaration affirmed that human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. Unquestionably, this includes the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.

The Vienna Declaration also condemned gross and systematic violations of human rights. It is disturbing that 22 years on people continue to suffer systemic discrimination, violence and persecution as a result of their sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status, or because of their work to *stand up and* speak out for equal rights.

Because of their work and because of their identities and characteristics, LGBTI human rights defenders are exposed to heightened levels of violence, stigmatisation, discrimination, attacks and other human rights violations. In his current report to the UN General Assembly, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, confirms that LGBTI defenders are among those most exposed and at risk of all defenders.

Mr President, it is the duty of States, *regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems*, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms¹. In this regard, we are deeply concerned about restrictions imposed on LGBTI persons and those advocating for them, including anti-cross-dressing legislation in Malaysia, legislation criminalising homosexuality in Uganda, and laws effectively criminalising LGBTI rights advocacy *that have been enacted* in Russia and proposed in Kyrgyzstan.

In addition to being incompatible with international human rights standards, there is overwhelming evidence that such laws also license and lead to attacks and abuse. *Across the world*, LGBTI defenders are subjected to harassment and violence when convening meetings, *cultural events* and pride marches or simply walking down the street. We call on States to repeal these laws and ensure *effective* protection and *real* accountability for attacks against LGBTI persons, defenders and associations.

Mr President, *in addition to repealing restrictive laws*, States should enact enabling legislation which promotes and protects equal rights for LGBTI persons. In this regard, we welcome recent moves by Australia and the United Kingdom to expunge historic convictions for consensual homosexual conduct, recent reforms in Malta and Ireland to ensure access to identity documents for transgender and intersex people without invasive medical treatment, and improved responses to LGBTI hate crime, including training of *law enforcement* officials and *specific taskforces or prosecuting teams* dedicated to tackling bias-motivated violence such as in Spain, Honduras and South Africa.

¹ Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

Mr President, former High Commissioner for Human Rights and ISHR Board member, Navi Pillay said in a vision statement at Vienna+20 that ‘a huge amount of work remains to be done at the international level to transform human rights from abstract promises to genuine improvement in the daily lives of all people, especially those who are currently marginalized or excluded.’² The lives of LGBTI defenders, those most exposed and at risk, need to be protected.

² <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14074#sthash.ij81XQ5d.dpuf>