

**37th Human Rights Council Session
March 21, 2018**

**Annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming: The promotion and protection of human rights in the light of the universal periodic review mechanism: challenges and opportunities
Statement by the International Lesbian and Gay Association**

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Thank you, Mr. President,

We would like to thank the panelists for sharing their perspectives today on the challenges and opportunities of the UPR. We would like to share some perspectives from the global LGBTI movements that have utilised the UPR since its inception.

We welcome the fact that throughout the 29 UPR Working Group sessions, 1,475 recommendations addressed sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics - or SOGIESC - issues in 158 countries. Even more encouraging is that more than 110 countries have accepted recommendations on these issues. Together, this shows that the human rights of LGBTI persons is a truly global concern.

The beginning of the third cycle has been an opportunity for governments to dig deeper into these concerns. We have seen an increase in the recommendations specifically on intersex issues. For the first time, governments have recommended the prohibition of the requirement of sterilization for transgender people prior to having their gender legally recognized, and also have also made recommendations to outlaw forced anal examinations. We encourage governments to continue addressing the violations that LGBTI people face because of their SOGIESC.

For up-coming UPR sessions we would like to see:

1. Recommendations addressing the specific needs of groups within the LGBTI acronym even more, including recommendations specifically targeting gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, lesbians, and persons who are bisexual.
2. Continued attention on the root causes of violence and discrimination on the basis of SOGIESC. This intersects with many other forms of deep-rooted fear and hate such as racism, islamophobia, xenophobia and sexism.
3. Recommendations not only for the executive branch of government, but also the legislative and the judicial. Human rights are the responsibility of all parts of government and legal and policy change can happen in many different ways.
4. More mid-term reports that are built in consultation with civil society organizations, including those working on SOGIESC issues. These reports should include the level of implementation of recommendations.
5. The creation by this Council of a formal follow-up mechanism on the status of the implementation of recommendations.
6. The UPR utilised as one way to help persons realize their economic, social and cultural rights by cross-linking it with the SDGs and, crucially, ensuring that the SDGs are implemented in a way that as human-rights at their core: a way to realise the often-quoted promise of "leaving no one behind".

A question to the panelists. While these recommendations come from our perspective on LGBTI issues, are these recommendations that also resonate with you?

We look forward for the upcoming sessions of the third cycle and encourage governments to continue accepting and more importantly implementing SOGIESC recommendations. Civil society is here to play its crucial role.

I thank you, Mr. President.