

**42<sup>nd</sup> Human Rights Council Session  
9<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

**Statement by: Swedish Federation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights – RFSL**

**Joined by: the International Lesbian and Gay Association**

Thank you, Mr President,

I am Akani Shimange from South Africa and I am making this statement on behalf of LGBTI activists from 17 countries here today.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex, or LGBTI, people, face barriers to accessing safe and adequate facilities of drinking water and sanitation. This is a MAJOR human rights violation, which subsequently prevents us from exercising our rights to EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE, and EMPLOYMENT, among others and ultimately leads to increased marginalization and economic disempowerment in our daily lives.

LGBTI individuals lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation in ALL regions of the world.

When we use the bathroom we are victims of violence, including by being harassed, verbally, physically, or sexually assaulted, solely based on our gender identity and expression. LGBTI youth are particularly vulnerable and face grave health issues, high rates of school drop-out, and live in fear as a result.

Fearing and experiencing stigmatization, exclusion, harassment, and violence at school, a place that is supposed to be safe for all youth, greatly contributes to the high rates of mental health problems and suicidal tendencies amongst LGBTI youth.

Alarmingly, a number of states have adopted laws that ban and criminalize trans and gender non-conforming people from using public bathrooms that do not correspond with their gender assigned at birth. As a result, we face increased levels of violence, discrimination, and even arrest.

We commend the Special Rapporteur on his continuous recognition of the need for safe access to water and sanitation in public spaces for LGBTI individuals.

In line with his recommendations, in order to achieve an end to inequality and discrimination we urge all member states to adopt laws and policies that protect the rights of LGBTI people to access safe water and sanitation, without discrimination.

As Mr. Heller highlighted, States must include LGBTI groups in the planning and implementation of all policies and programs that impact our lives. Policies should always ensure privacy and dignity.

In this manner, we can ALL live up to the Agenda 2030 and ensure that NO ONE will be left behind.

A question to Mr. Heller - Will you address in any of your future reports, the interlinkages between criminalization of LGBTI persons and the barriers to the right to access safe water and sanitation?

Thank you.