



33rd session of the Human Rights Council

Item 3 - Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation

Statement by the International Lesbian and Gay Association

Delivered by Zhan Chiam

Mr. President,

We warmly welcome the thematic report on gender equality presented by the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation.

In his report, the Special Rapporteur highlights that inequalities based on gender which exist in every country and in all aspects of social life, not only negatively impact on women and girls, but also violate lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and gender non-conforming people's human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mr President,

We commend the Special Rapporteur's identification that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and gender non-conforming people have unequal access to sanitation, menstrual hygiene and toilets, and that they face an increased risk of gender-based violence in accessing these basic human services.

Gender-based violence infringes the right to life, personal safety and freedom of movement. The Special Rapporteur highlights in his report that for gender non-conforming persons, segregation by gender in places such as public toilets, detention centres, relief camps and schools, pose a risk of exclusion, humiliation and violence. Transgender girls who use boys' toilets and transgender boys who use girls' toilets in schools are highly vulnerable to bullying, harassment and assaults by other students. LGBTI people face additional challenges in areas affected by disaster.

To ensure privacy in these public places, service centres and institutions is not only to provide individual toilet stalls, showers and changing facilities with doors and locks, but also to make sure that harmful gender stereotypes are not policed in these social settings.

The Special Rapporteur notes that progress towards gender equality in practice requires the identification of root causes of inequalities, and the dismantling of structural barriers, taboos, stereotypes and social norms that prevent the equal enjoyment of rights on the basis of gender.

We welcome the call for States to train and support teachers and administrators on non-violent learning environments. For example, Malta has enacted guidelines for schools to promote the learning of human diversity that is inclusive of trans, gender-variant and intersex students, and which promotes social awareness, acceptance and respect.

In India, transgender people face difficulty finding housing and are forced to live in remote slum areas, where access to water and sanitation facilities is poor. We therefore welcome the Special Rapporteur's call for States to take all measures necessary to remove the barriers that deter people from using sanitation facilities.



In some parts of the United States, people are obliged to use public toilets that correspond to the sex listed on a person's birth certificate, greatly preventing some trans people from living safely and free from violence and discrimination. We welcome the Special Rapporteur's call for States to identify and rectify all laws that have direct or indirect discriminatory consequences on the human rights of water and sanitation.

Mr President,

We ask the Special Rapporteur whether he agrees that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and gender non-conforming people persons should also be counted in any collection of disaggregated data in order to assess the impact of policies aimed at mainstreaming gender equality and enhancing their enjoyment of the human rights to water and sanitation.

I thank you Mr. President,