

34th Human Rights Council session

22 March 2017

ITEM 10 – Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

Statement by International Lesbian and Gay Association

delivered by André du Plessis

Mr President

This Council is often reminded of LGBTI rights violations. We referenced some under Item 4. Here under item 10 we share good practices and changes to help build capacity and provide assistance to States.

Executive Action

The executive parts of government are taking action.

New Zealand¹, **Germany**² and the **UK**³ announced that people convicted of homosexuality under former laws may apply for pardons, restoring dignity to affected persons.

In **India**, the Health Ministry launched a program to train 165,000 adolescent peer educators in various sexual health issues. The training dispels gender stereotypes and calls same-sex attraction natural. This will help change attitudes.⁴

Legislative Action

Laws are changing as parliaments pass laws.

Vietnam's amended Civil Code has taken effect, allowing people who have had sex reassignment surgery to change gender in legal documentation,⁵ allowing Trans people easier daily lives.

And in **Finland**, the Parliament confirmed its earlier decision to allow marriage equality. It came into effect on 1 March.⁶

Courts ruling

¹ http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11797613

² <https://www.rt.com/news/362114-germany-compensations-gay-sex/>

³ <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2017/01/11/government-issues-apology-for-historical-anti-gay-laws-as-parliament-gives-green-light-to-pardons-law/>

⁴ <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/same-sex-attraction-is-ok-boys-can-cry-girls-no-means-no-health-ministry-sex-education-4535410/>

⁵ <http://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/vietnamese-law-to-recognize-transgender-people-in-2017-3515044.html>

⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-finland-politics-gaymarriage-vote-idUSKBN15W13K>

In many countries, it is the courts that are bringing about change.

In **Lebanon**, where the law criminalizes “sexual intercourse contrary to nature”, a judge has ruled that “homosexuality is a personal choice and not a punishable offense” opening avenues for legal reform.⁷

In **Peru**, the Constitutional Court finally determined people may request a change of name and sex in their national ID through a summary process at civil court, a welcome development for Trans persons.⁸

Voices in Surprising Places

And human rights are realized not by government action alone. Changes happen at all levels of society.

The **Zambian** Football Association is proposing to amend its constitution to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.⁹

In **Iraq**, a local group is painting murals at high schools to bring visibility to LGBTI rights, gender equality, and domestic violence with generally positive responses.¹⁰

And in **Barbados**, the Anglican Archbishop of the West Indies said publicly that those that speak against homosexuality seem to be misinterpreting the bible, and emphasized all people should be treated equally as God’s children.¹¹

These are just a few places experiencing positive changes due to innovative and often brave action. We encourage governments and others from around the world to learn from and share these with others.

⁷ https://www.pressreader.com/@chrissy_/nQBMPiVQ:Q-Pw7uZKsUbvLHYGbfL4QGWeygSM0I8Z_s1

⁸ <http://sinetiquetas.org/2016/11/08/peru-tribunal-constitucional-reconoce-derecho-la-identidad-genero/>

⁹ <http://www.mambaonline.com/2017/02/20/outrage-attempt-block-gay-discrimination-zambian-football/>

¹⁰ <http://www.washingtonblade.com/2017/01/03/kurdish-group-launches-pro-lgbt-human-rights-campaign/>

¹¹ <https://www.barbadosadvocate.com/news/all-must-be-treated-equally>