

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Group Statement on Political Declaration and Follow-up and Review Mechanisms of SDG Zero Draft Outcome Document - Long Version

Dear Co-facilitators and distinguished colleagues,

My name is Micah Grzywnowicz and I have the honor of presenting this statement on behalf of numerous organizations, faith and secular alike, who together represent a Post-2015 LGBTQI/SOGI constituency. I would like to thank the co-facilitators for their continued effort to engage civil society during this process.

As a coalition of concerned human rights organizations working to counter the exclusion of persons due to real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and bodily diversity, we attribute particular significance to the retention of a human rights imperative in the Political Declaration. Language in the declaration should be consistent with accepted international terminology and should reflect the realities of inequality on the ground, in all of its forms.

This is particularly important when countering discrimination. All UN major human rights conventions prohibit discrimination on any ground, including on any “other status” among lists of prohibited grounds of discrimination, underlining that these conventions are living instruments that retain relevance in all contexts. This sentiment must not be lost in these negotiations. A closed list of prohibited grounds for discrimination, as listed in paragraphs 17 and 22 of the zero draft, would be counter-productive and would undermine the integrity of the OWG’s proposal. Prohibition of *all forms of discrimination* is critical.

Furthermore, we caution that unconditional respect for national policies and priorities, as currently contained in paragraph 19 of the zero draft, is incompatible with the universal and global nature of a transformative and sustainable development agenda. While it is reasonable to note that development policies obviously are implemented in a local context (national or subnational), it has always been a principle of international agreements that the obligations remain universal and global. This should be retained in the context of the SDGs.

Participation in review mechanisms should not be predicated on cultural/societal realities nor should national discriminatory policies bar participation in monitoring and review mechanisms for an *international* development agenda. Rather it must be universal and transparent in nature and driven by principles of non-discrimination, equality, and existing human rights commitments. It is alarming and quite objectionable that LGBTQI constituencies on the ground are institutionally denied participation in follow-up and review mechanisms because of governmentally ascribed “statelessness” and or “lack of personhood.” To this end, qualitative and quantitative data are vital and we affirm that data should be made disaggregated by age, sex, **gender and gender identity**, race, ethnicity, income level, geography, and **sexual orientation** in contexts where this disaggregation poses no threat to the security and livelihoods of citizens. Indicators must also measure structural barriers to development, such as the existence of discriminatory laws and policies.

Co-Chairs, I understand the sensitivity of the matters I bring to your attention today. Sensitive as they are, they cannot be ignored. For this agenda to be truly inclusive “leaving no one behind” and grounded in equality and the universality of human dignity there is an absolute need to address the systematic and political marginalization of persons due to real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and bodily diversity, at both the policy and grassroots levels.

On behalf of the following organizations, I thank you Co-Chairs:

Global
Interfaith
Network



**FOR
YOUTH &
SEXUALITY**



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