



# UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT STRATEGY ON PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, INTERSEX AND QUEER (LGBTIQ+) PERSONS

## A. Background, Scope and Coverage

- 1 The respect, protection and fulfilment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of every person, without exception, is at the heart of the work of the United Nations and is essential to the advancement of development, peace, security and in humanitarian responses, in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international treaties and instruments. All persons have an equal right to live free from violence, persecution, discrimination, harassment and stigma, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons.
- 2 This Strategy covers the UN Secretariat. It is primarily focused on internal efforts of the Secretariat to protect and promote the human rights and fundamental freedoms of every person without exception, identify gaps and put forward concrete recommendations and proposals to the Executive Committee that will protect specifically the fundamental human rights of the LGBTIQ+ community. The Strategy also aims to strengthen the external approaches of the UN Secretariat to these issues as part of our efforts to leave no one behind.
- 3 In recent decades, there has been progress in the United Nations Secretariat in promoting a safe and inclusive work environment that is free of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority, and in which all people are treated with dignity and respect, including LGBTIQ+ people. There has also been progress in the implementation of a number of policies and initiatives to advance a more inclusive environment for LGBTIQ+ personnel and build internal capacity, and programmes to address these issues. Gaps remain, however.
- 4 Globally, LGBTIQ+ persons continue to face social, political and economic exclusion and human rights violations in all regions of the world. This has resulted in far-reaching negative impacts on families, communities and society, also creating obstacles to the realization of sustainable peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>1</sup> Positive changes have taken place in recent years, with advances in decriminalizing consensual same-sex relations, protection of LGBTIQ+ persons from discrimination, hate crimes, and harmful practices, advances in social and economic inclusion and recognition of same-sex relationships and the gender identity of transgender persons. However, significant gaps remain in the protection of LGBTIQ+ persons from violence, discrimination and exclusion, worldwide.

## B. Commitments

- 5 Internally, we commit to providing a safe, enabling, welcoming and supportive environment that values all United Nations personnel, irrespective of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation or sex characteristics. We will advance equal opportunities, non-discrimination, zero tolerance for prohibited conduct, respect for dignity and rights and effective participation and identify and address barriers that impede the recruitment, retention, mobility and advancement of LGBTIQ+ persons on an equal basis with others, while respecting privacy and confidentiality.

<sup>1</sup> See also [Joint United Nations statement on ending violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people](#), September 2015.

- 6 Externally, we commit, in line with our respective mandates, international law, norms and standards and other globally agreed commitments including the 2030 Agenda, to prevent, mitigate and address exclusion, violence, stigma and discrimination, and to advance the protection and realization of the human rights, of LGBTIQ+ persons.
- 7 We will provide strong leadership and accountability within the Secretariat to reflect these commitments in our organizational practices, policies and programmes, in line with our respective mandates, operational contexts and leadership and decision-making structures, to allow for safe, inclusive and effective implementation. We will strengthen partnerships, including between Secretariat entities and with States, civil society and other stakeholders and meaningfully engage with LGBTIQ+ persons in the implementation of this strategy.

## C. Strategy

- 8 This strategy will be implemented by each Secretariat entity, through targeted actions, as appropriate. A Secretariat for the strategy will provide support and guidance and promote coherent implementation through an operational and monitoring framework. Senior managers will provide strong leadership and ensure oversight and monitoring for implementation of this strategy in line with respective mandates.
- 9 Key elements of the strategy are:

**Internal actions, in line with the United Nations' absolute commitment to the safety and well-being of staff and zero tolerance policy in relation to discrimination and harassment.**

- (a) **Safety and security.** United Nations Secretariat entities will seek to address issues related to protection, safety and security faced by personnel and their family members who identify as LGBTIQ+ or work on related issues. We will, as appropriate to our respective mandates, seek to ensure that United Nations Secretariat services and premises including facilities, events, systems, forms, data systems and digital spaces are accessible to and inclusive and respectful of all persons, including LGBTIQ+ persons, providing a safe, secure and non-discriminatory environment. We will ensure sound risk assessments, protection and mitigation measures, effective accountability mechanisms and respect for privacy and confidentiality, including in relation to personal data protection.
- (b) **Equal treatment and inclusive organizational culture.** United Nations Secretariat entities will ensure an inclusive organizational culture, that recognizes, respects and values the participation of all persons, including LGBTIQ+ persons, and provides an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment. We will ensure the equal treatment of all personnel and their family members, including LGBTIQ+ personnel and their family members, through relevant internal policies, procedures and practices; prevent and address prohibited conduct; tackle barriers that impede the recruitment, retention and advancement of LGBTIQ+ persons on an equal basis with others; strengthen the capacity of personnel on these issues; and, ensure that the views of LGBTIQ+ personnel are considered in the development and revision of internal policies that impact on them.

**External actions, recognizing the need for adaptation, depending on each entity's mandate, operational context, leadership and decision-making structure, to allow for safe and effective implementation, in line with a "do no harm" approach that is responsive to the situation and needs of LGBTIQ+ persons in each context.**

- (c) **Programming.** United Nations Secretariat entities, in line with our respective mandates, and as appropriate, will include in our programmes action for the protection and promotion of the human rights of LGBTIQ+ persons.
- (d) **Inclusiveness, safety and participation.** United Nations Secretariat entities will ensure safe and meaningful engagement of LGBTIQ+ persons in programmes and policies that impact them, including by strengthening partnerships with diverse representative organizations of LGBTIQ+ persons. Entities will also address issues related to protection, safety and security faced by external stakeholders and populations of concern, who identify as LGBTIQ+ or work on related issues.

## D. Implementation

- 10 A Steering Group will be established at Principals level to support implementation of this strategy. The Steering Group will be chaired by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and be composed of a representative of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, and representatives of UN entities, and will meet annually.
- 11 The High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the support of the Steering Group, will provide leadership and strategic direction to deliver the strategy's vision, assess progress, ensure regular consultations with relevant stakeholders, ensure alignment, linkages and synergies with relevant UN processes and reforms, mobilize support and leverage partnerships.
- 12 An Inter-Agency Network at the technical level will support coordination and implementation and will report to the Steering Group.
- 13 A Secretariat for the strategy will be hosted by OHCHR and will ensure regular consultations with relevant stakeholders, including the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Member States, civil society, staff representatives and UN-GLOBE, as appropriate.
- 14 While this strategy applies to the UN Secretariat, other UN system entities may accept coverage of the Strategy, in which case they will become members of the Inter-Agency Network.

## E. Operational and Monitoring Framework

- 15 A draft operational and monitoring framework will be developed to track the implementation of the strategy and identify gaps that need to be addressed. This draft framework will be presented to the Executive Committee for consideration and decision.
- 16 A separate draft operational and monitoring framework will be developed for the Special Political Missions (SPMs), Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs), and the Resident Coordinator System in alignment with their specific mandates and operational contexts and in consultation with them. This separate draft framework will be consulted and validated by SPMs, PKOs and Resident Coordinators to ensure consistency in the implementation of the Strategy in integrated settings, including vis-à-vis UN personnel. Until this framework is approved by the Executive Committee, SPMs, PKOs and Resident Coordinators will be exempt from reporting on this strategy but may do so if they so wish.

## F. Review

- 17 This strategy will be subject to a review after six years.