

BEST PRACTICES IN THE GLOBAL ARENA: ENGAGING PARLIAMENTARIANS



**Regional Parliamentarians Forum
Kingston, Jamaica
May 30-31, 2017**



Parliamentarians *for Global Action*
Parlamentarios para la Acción Global
Action Mondiale des Parlementaires
برلمانيون من أجل التحرك العالمي

Topics:

1. About PGA and its SOGI Campaign
2. Best practices by MPs on equality and non-discrimination





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PGA is a dynamic non-profit, non-partisan network of 1,400+ individual legislators in 143 parliaments around the world committed to protecting human rights

Mission:

To inform and mobilize parliamentarians worldwide to advocate for human rights and the rule of law, democracy, human security, non-discrimination, and gender equality.

Vision:

To contribute to an international system based on the rule of law in order to create a more equitable, safe and democratic world.

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ABOUT PGA



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PGA's methodology is based on peer-to-peer sharing of best practices among parliamentarians, providing fact-based and adequate information in accordance to intl. human rights law, as well as to experts working in the field, and fostering dialogue with civil society representatives and other relevant stakeholders.

PGA's Programmes and Campaigns:

International Law and Human Rights Programme

- Campaign for the Universality and Effectiveness of the Rome Statute of the ICC
- Platform for the Abolition of the Death Penalty

Peace and Democracy Programme

- Campaign for the Universality and Implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention

Gender Equality and Population Programme

- Campaign to End Child, Early and Forced Marriage
- Campaign against Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)

SOGI CAMPAIGN



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Goal:

To mobilize parliamentarians in order to guarantee that every individual is able to achieve their highest potential free from all forms of violence and discrimination, including on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).

Key achievements since 2013:

- Sensitized 200+ parliamentarians from 32 countries around the world
- Facilitated dialogue between parliamentarians and LGBTI activists, mostly from Latin America and the Caribbean
- Contributed to El Salvador's increasing of sanctions on hate crimes, including on the basis of SOGI
- Supported PGA's members initiatives to decriminalize same-sex consensual conduct in Mozambique and the Republic of Seychelles
- Produced jointly with UNDP "Advancing the Human Rights & Inclusion of LGBTI People: a Handbook for Parliamentarians"

BEST PRACTICES



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- 1. Ongoing education and sensitization** of the general population, including decision-makers, about the human rights of LGBTI people.
 - Providing adequate tools to MPs, such as the Handbook for Parliamentarians, to address the challenges affecting LGBTI people and encourage action.
- 2. Creating safe spaces and opportunities for dialogue between parliamentarians and civil society activists** to discuss equality and non-discrimination of key populations, particularly LGBTI people.
- 3. Establishing and maintaining collaboration and communication with civil society representatives in-country** to bring attention to the lived realities of LGBTI people through personal stories and testimonies.
- 4. Strengthening coordination between Parliament, NHRIs and regional bodies.**
- 5. Framing messages from a human rights standpoint to emphasize the supremacy and centrality of human rights**, which should be a non-negotiable priority, above and beyond party affiliation or religious and cultural considerations.

PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS, COMBATING DISCRIMINATION AND ADDRESSING HIV/AIDS

OF PERSONS WITH DIVERSE SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS AND GENDER IDENTITIES

- First seminar bringing together MPs and Dominican & Caribbean LGBTI activists + people living with HIV/AIDS hosted by the Chamber of Deputies of Dominican Republic in October 2013.
- Collaboration with the National Council on HIV & AIDS, CSOs & other stakeholders to work on anti-discriminatory legislation.
- Project of General Law on Equality and Non-discrimination expected being introduced in Congress by President Medina during current term in office.



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ADVOCACY & MOBILIZATION

- Convening of MPs has contributed to **building a network of support** to facilitate sharing best practices and drawing experiences from others on equality and non-discrimination.
- Collaborative approach between MPs, CSO representatives & human rights experts increases accountability.
- Use forum discussions, like this one, to encourage peers to review and reform legislation that may create barriers or reinforce stigma and discrimination - in line with SDGs 3 (Good Health) and 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions)



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HANDBOOK FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS



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Key Contents:

- International human rights framework
- Actions that parliamentarians can take
- Myths vs. realities about LGBTI people
- How to speak about LGBTI issues
- Legal assessment tool for countries
- Sample questions for decision-makers
- Inspiring actions by parliamentarians



Advancing the Human Rights and
Inclusion of LGBTI People:
A Handbook for Parliamentarians

KEY ROLES OF PARLIAMENTARIANS



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Legislative

Enact comprehensive laws that prohibit discrimination based on SOGIE & HIV status & promote HR & inclusion such as gender identity laws

Repeal laws that criminalize trans people & same-sex consensual conduct bet. adults

Representation

Use your voice to raise awareness about stigma, marginalization, violence & discrimination suffered by key populations

Establish a dialogue with CSOs to learn about their experiences in accessing healthcare, education, housing, justice, etc.

Oversight

Ensure adequate budgetary allocations to programs & policies that address the needs of LGBTI people, people living with HIV/AIDS

Monitor & oversee implementation of govt. policies aimed at inclusion & non-discrimination of all key populations

SAN JOSE COMMITMENTS TO ACTION



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- MPs from Antigua & Barbuda, Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago met with LGBTI activists from Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, St. Lucia and Suriname.
- Guided by the Handbook, and in coordination with activists, MPs adopted concrete actions to undertake upon return to Parliament.



Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica,
San José | March 10-11, 2017

ADVOCACY ACTIONS



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- **Antigua & Barbuda** – Reported to President of Senate on Seminar's outcomes & delivered Handbook
- **Belize** – Presented Seminar's results to Executive Committee of political party
- **Costa Rica** – Delivered Handbook to all 57 legislators in the Assembly
- **Dominican Republic** – Requested assistance to hold a workshop on the Handbook for members of Parliamentary Committees on Human Rights and Gender Equality (date TBC)

ENGAGEMENT MPs & CSOs IN-COUNTRY



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- Personal stories and testimonies are powerful means to improve understanding, build empathy and prompt action → public statements from MPs, interest from media & education campaigns.
- CSOs can provide specialized technical assistance, for example, in drafting specific language for a bill and in sharing recommendations from the UPR process.
- Collect data and information about stigma and discrimination in access to healthcare, education, housing, justice, among other areas, to assist in designing public policies and programs that effectively address discriminatory practices.
- Strengthen implementation of UN Development Agenda 2030.



NHRI_s & REGIONAL BODIES

- Advocate for establishment of an independent National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), or where it exists, including as the Office of the Public Defender, allocate adequate resources for their work and support the implementation of their recommendations.
- Coordinate public messages at the national & regional levels framed **from a human rights standpoint** and taking into account the **specificities of the different groups within the LGBTI community paying attention to the intersectionality** of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics with other factors such as race, socioeconomic status, health status, level of education, etc.
- Advocate for the signature of the Inter-American Convention against all Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance (2013) and then promote its ratification in Parliament.

TO CONCLUDE...

- Support PANCAP's initiatives, recommendations by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the work of the Rapporteurship on the Rights of LGBTI Persons, to improve the legal environment and remove discriminatory laws.
- Distinguish between a private sphere where people are free to practice their religion and a public sphere where **the rule of law must take precedence over religious beliefs**. The State must guarantee the fundamental rights of all, without discrimination.



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Visit us at:

<http://pgaction.org/inclusion/>

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