



UN-GLOBE IDAHOBIT 2021 STATEMENT

Together: Resisting, Supporting, Healing!

Throughout the history of our existence LGBTIQ+ people have confronted adversity. In the face of this, we have come together to resist atrocities, support one another, and heal from the physical and mental scars left with us. The past year has presented unparalleled challenges. Everyone has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in common and distinct ways. For LGBTIQ+ people, new and existing inequalities and risks have surfaced and been magnified. Despite this, many responses globally fail to consider our specific needs and challenges, let alone be guided by our diversity of voices. The United Nations has a critical role in spotlighting these shortcomings.

Yet, we at UN-GLOBE – the inter-agency group representing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex personnel and dependents in the UN system – witness these patterns replicated in our workplaces. Internal approaches often overlook the contexts and realities that confront us. For example:

- Many of our personnel live and work in countries that criminalize LGBTIQ+ people. For some, the office has served as a reprieve from hostile households and family members. Yet, under quarantine, many LGBTIQ+ personnel are forced to not only live in silence but are alienated and live in fear of abuse without access to adequate supports and unable to reach out for fear of being outed and further abused.
- Some LGBTIQ+ personnel are separated from their partners and families for extended periods. Personal security fears can prevent us from registering our partnerships with our UN entity owing to inadequate data storage and poorly enforced data protection policies. Without evidence of a legal relationship, personnel are unable to be with their partners under new travel restrictions.
- Internal support services mostly fail to take into account the nuances of our lived experiences. Consequently, UN-GLOBE fills these support gaps and helps identify



solutions to meet the needs of LGBTIQ+ personnel as well as LGBTIQ+ children and other dependents. We depend on collaborations with local civil society organizations, despite our collectively limited volunteer capacity, when in fact this is the responsibility of our employer.

- While UN-GLOBE commends the UN entities that have conducted surveys to assess the impact of COVID-19 on staff well-being, we are concerned that these efforts fall short from an LGBTIQ+ perspective, effectively invisibilizing our personnel. We call on all entities to properly consult with UN-GLOBE to ensure the highest standards are met in data collection and analysis of LGBTIQ+ personnel.

These are just some of the concrete challenges that LGBTIQ+ personnel face, often adding to and exacerbating the mental health challenges we live with.

While we are cognizant of our relative privilege as LGBTIQ+ people working at the UN, we also recognise when familiar patterns of discrimination and hostility are at play within our organizations, putting us at a comparative disadvantage. Heteronormative, cisgendered, endosexist, and Western and colonial approaches internally prevent the UN from addressing the needs of personnel with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics. UN-GLOBE calls on all members of the UN family, especially those in positions of power, to learn more about our experiences and adopt an intersectional approach in policies and practices to ensure LGBTIQ+ personnel are not left behind their colleagues. Resisting, supporting and healing together will get us further. This IDAHOBIT, we invite you to join us in creating a more equal, safe and accountable UN system.