

75th FICSA Council

Statement by UN-Globe delivered by Ms. Anna Giudice

25 April 2022

Dear colleagues, dear President of FICSA,

Thank you very much for inviting UN-GLOBE to address this Plenary of the 75th FICSA Council and congratulations on this important anniversary today in Vienna and welcome to Vienna,

My name is Anna Giudice, I am currently serving as treasurer for UN-GLOBE, and today I am representing the President Ad Interim, Jenn Rumbach who was not available to speak at this event. As you may know the UN-GLOBE Board is currently in a transitional period after our former President Gurchaten (Nanoo) Sandhu left the organisation in March.

Let me remind you of what UN-GLOBE is. UN-GLOBE was initially established in 1997 with the mission of advocating for the equality and non-discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex staff in the UN common system. Today we have established chapters with coordinators in over 30 agencies, funds and programmes and duty stations and requests to establish chapters in over 10 more duty stations. Our Board and coordinators have ensured greater inclusion of issues that affect LGBTIQ+ staff in many policy process across the system, also through the important partnership with FICSA and other staff associations.

I would like to recall that in March 2020 FICSA and UN-GLOBE signed a [memorandum of understanding](#) which established the intention of the partners to collaborate in order to actively defend and advocate for LGBTI staff of the UN common system, encourage diversity across the organizations having FICSA members and combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in the workplace. The MoU recognizes the partners' universal strengths and shared commitment to their goals. The partnership itself is established on the basis of shared principles, agreed objectives and clear terms of collaboration. We agreed to work together towards the following joint goals and objectives:

1. Promotion of a more inclusive culture for LGBTI staff in the UN workplaces. We agreed to collaborate to confirm that all policies, activities and programmes of the organizations having FICSA members include and respect the needs of the LGBTI staff, and to cooperate in promoting diversity, equality and respect for peoples of all sexual and gender identities and of all gender expressions and sex characteristics. It was agreed that to fulfill these objectives, and as required, FICSA will consult UN GLOBE on issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

2. Conveying views of LGBTI staff to management. It was agreed that FICSA will consult UN GLOBE to ensure that views brought to relevant high-level bodies include those of LGBTI staff.

I would like to highlight a few points here:

First, it is important for us to see that advancing the rights and equity for LGBTIQ+ staff is advancing the rights of staff as a whole. As an example, our Guiding Principles and Proposals on an Inclusive Parental Leave Policy that were published in July 2015 have served as an important basis for discussions within the UN-system to ensure that UN policies become inclusive of all families and treat them equally. More recently we contributed to reviewing and endorsed the recommendations developed by the UN Parents group again making sure that the proposals are inclusive of all families and parents as concerns parental leave.

Second, I would like to recall that our priorities are much in line with the general priorities of many staff representative bodies while taking into account the special concerns and risks that exist for LGBTIQ+ individuals. In this regard one of our priorities is around mobility. Again, we issued proposals in 2015 which highlighted that if the UN system is to embody its core value of diversity, it must ensure that all staff, including LGBTI staff, serving in the same duty station can do so under equal conditions of service. In the context of mobility, it must be understood that conditions of service extend to life outside the office. Mobility policies must factor in the impact that mobility will have on daily life inside and outside the office for different segments of staff, including: women; staff with disabilities; staff with HIV/AIDS; staff with medical conditions; and LGBTIQ+ staff. External factors in the duty station— such as homophobia or transphobia, or criminalization of our existence, matter. The ability to bring one's partner or family to a duty station can be a key way to mitigate some of these external factors, and internal ones such as homophobia or transphobia in the office. In this regard we would like to insist on the need to take into account the rights of LGBTIQ+ personnel when classifying duty stations as family or hardship duty stations.

Inclusion of trans and gender non-conforming staff is another key priority for UN-GLOBE. Such inclusion starts before recruitment, includes use of inclusive language, moving away from binary language, recognition of self-identified name, gender and pronouns, respect for privacy and confidentiality and of course again a particular focus on mobility, access to gender affirming health care, protection against discrimination and harassment. The recent UN secretariat staff survey again showed that trans women were the group facing the highest percentage of discrimination.

Safety and security, and access to medical care are key concerns for all staff, including for LGBTIQ+ staff, and in particular for trans and gender non-conforming staff. The UN System should be knowledgeable about the particular security challenges, including risks and threats, faced by trans and gender non-conforming staff and their dependents, as well as staff members with trans or gender non-conforming spouses and dependents, and other trans and gender non-conforming stakeholders, including consultants, contractors, interns, participants, visitors, beneficiaries, clients, and other individuals who have a relationship to the UN system. In at least 57 countries around the world, trans and gender non-conforming people are criminalized and/or prosecuted on the basis of their gender identity and/or expression. Where local legislation conflicts with UN human rights standards enshrined in international law, it is the obligation of organizations of the UN system to uphold these standards, including as regards to respecting the rights and protecting the security and wellbeing of trans and gender non-conforming staff members, their family members and dependents, and other

trans stakeholders who engage with the UN. The response of the organizations of the UN system should not be that trans and gender non-conforming staff members comply with local laws, as this would mean they would have to comply with laws that prohibit cross-dressing, for example. These are just some elements from our comprehensive Recommendations for an inclusive workplace for trans and gender non-conforming staff members, dependents, and other stakeholders of the UN System.

Finally, I would like to seek your support in advocating for UN-GLOBE to have staff capacity assigned by the UN system. Until today we are all doing this work as volunteers in addition to our official duties. We need your support to change that within your organisations. Some organisations have already agreed to provide staff time for coordinators, and this should become the norm so that we can continue advancing equity and non-discrimination within the UN system. Also if there is no UN-GLOBE coordinator in your organisation please do reach out to us if there is interest to establish a chapter.

Thank you
