



Human Rights Council 29
Item 6 - UPR Outcomes Lesotho
Submitted by the Federatie van Nederlandse Verenigingen tot Integratie
van Homoseksualiteit – COC Nederland

Mr. President,

I'm reading this statement on behalf of The People's Matrix Association and COC Nederland.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) people face tremendous difficulties growing up in a society where heterosexuality is often presented as the only acceptable orientation and homosexuality is regarded as deviant. They continue to face discrimination and exclusion across the world in all spheres of life. Homophobic violence and abuse targeting LGBT people occur on a regular basis.

Although we have heard of serious crime committed against LGBTIs such as corrective rape, murder and the likes in most countries, in Lesotho such horrible incidents are not common. However being a novel phenomenon, there are still challenges faced by LGBTI community. They mostly suffer from discrimination and disadvantage in access to social protection schemes, such as health care and access to justice and their right privacy is seriously infringed because of their sexuality and gender identity. In the labour market, a majority of LGBT people continue to hide their sexual orientation or to endure harassment out of fear of losing their job. Particularly vulnerable are young LGBT people who experience estrangement from family and friendship networks, harassment at school and invisibility, which can lead in some cases to underachievement at school, school drop-out, mental ill-health and homelessness.

Marginalization is at the core of exclusion from fulfilling their social lives at individual, interpersonal and societal levels. People who are marginalized have relatively little control over their lives and the resources available to them; they may become stigmatized and are often at the receiving end of negative public attitudes. Their opportunities to make social contributions may be limited and they may develop low self-confidence and self esteem and may become isolated. Social policies and practices may mean they have relatively limited access to valued social resources such as education and health services, housing, income, leisure activities and work. The impacts of marginalization, the stigma attached to sexual orientation and gender identity or expression that fall outside

the expected heterosexual, non-transgender norm relegates many LGBT people to the margins of society.

The familial marginalization of LGBT youth hinders initial prevention and education efforts, encourages risk-taking behaviour that can lead to HIV infection, and places obstacles in the way of receiving proper medical treatment and psychosocial support for LGBT youth already living with HIV.

In Lesotho, the laws do no mention LGBTI group. For example, the marriage act does not include them. This means their right to family is denied and we cannot talk about universality of rights in Lesotho if some people are totally excluded from enjoying their rights. We can also not talk about eradicating HIV if LGBTI community is socially excluded from participating. We cannot also talk about development if there is a group that is being left behind.

LGBTIs are human beings like people and therefore have rights that must be respected irrespective of their sexual orientation. We therefore plead with the government to take serious steps to address these challenges because the State under international Human rights law has the right to promote, protect and respect the rights of its citizen.

I thank you, Mr. President