Research Report

Committee: ECOSOC

Issue: Reducing inequalities and discrimination against the LGBT community.

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Introduction:

Under what is known as "sexual and reproductive rights", everyone should have the right to choose: their partner, their way of living, whether to marry or not, having children or not... These choices must be freely available without constraint, and without the fear of violence, threats or legal proceedings.

However, inequalities and discriminations against the LGBT community are a problem that affect every country of the world. People belonging to this community are estimated to be between 3 to 10% of the total population; and these figures, determined by self-declaration, are probably lower than the real number. On a global scale, this is a problem that affects hundreds of millions of people. The particular problems differ between countries, also between local region, the cultural context, the personal situation...

But there is no country in the world where anti-LGBT discrimination is not a problem. Although it is not direct homophobia or transphobia facilitated by the law, more complex and often intersectional problems still exist in the most developed and progressive countries.

The history of LGBT people is very different from one country to another one: in the countries of the West, LGBT rights movement, really started in the 19th century, has been gaining importance after the Second World War, and many countries installed decriminalizing and even protective measures towards LGBT people in the late 20th century and especially in the 21st century. Some countries, such as Vietnam, has never in their history criminalized homosexual relationships, as has been the case in Europe. Unfortunately, in 72 countries, those relationships remain criminal even today.

The only common point of all countries is probably that this history is still evolving. Popular attitudes and governmental policies are constantly in change. And the condition of LGBT people is improving, overall, little by little.

Definitions of key terms:

LGBT: Acronym used to collectively refer to "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender" people.

Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia: acts of rejection and violence against homosexual, bisexual and/or transgender people. These can be instituted by the state, but are also related to social norms and dynamics.

Intersectionality: A notion used in sociology and political reflection, which refers to the situation of people simultaneously undergoing several forms of domination or discrimination in society. This is the case, for instance, of lesbophobia or transmisogyny, cases in which homophobia and transphobia exist in "intersection" with misogyny, and which cause particular problems for those affected.

General overview:

In general, progress towards equality for LGBT people can move forward, directly related with the development level. However, even in the most developed countries, anti-LGBT discrimination still exists in many forms: rejection, violence...

The majority of countries in the world where same-sex marriage is legal are located in Europe; but rights of individuals vary between countries. The western and northern EU countries all have legal same-sex marriage, with the exception of Northern Ireland; transgender people generally have the right to change gender on official documents; and legal protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity are accorded in most European countries. However, the Eastern and Southern European countries offer much less legal freedoms for LGBT people.

In Asian countries, LGBT rights remain a very taboo subject. Homosexuality illegal in 23 Asian countries, and same-sex marriage is only recognized in two countries (Taiwan and Israël). The biggest countries in Asia, such as China and India, generally act without any regard to LGBT rights. Homosexual activity is legal in countries, 27 Asian gender identity and expression are recognized in



19 countries, but LGBT individuals generally have very restricted freedoms, for instance with strong limitations of the free expression on LGBT topics.

More than half of the countries in the African continent still criminalize homosexuality, and in some countries (Mauritania, Sudan, North Nigeria, South Somalia), homosexuality is punishable by death. LGBT people have the right to marry, adopt children, and serve in the military in only one country (South Africa), and gender identity and free expression is legal in only two countries. However, several countries are now developing a rather tolerant and accepting legal system towards LGBT community. In view of the immense growth of the African population predicted in the coming decades, Africa is one of the biggest stakes on this subject.

In America, great progress has already been made towards equality for LGBT people. In North America, same-sex marriage is legal in Canada and in the USA, and in several districts in Mexico. Rights in Central America and in South America are more limited, but America still have a total of 10 countries where same-sex marriage is legal. Identity and free expression of gender are legal in 15 countries. South American countries are also affected by a strong evolution, with the population growth and economic strength, which promises big changes in the future.

Organizations involved:

- The International Association of lesbians, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (ILGA), and other activists for LGBT rights associations
- The High Commission for the UN Human Rights

International documents:

- Council Resolution on Rights humans of 17 June 2011, submitted by South Africa, requesting a study on discrimination and sexual orientation (a / HRC / 17/19)
- Report of the High Commission for human Rights of 4 May 2015, on the discrimination and violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity (A / HRC / 29/23)

possible solutions:

- Legal issues: decriminalization of relations or the existence of LGBT people; marriage rights and adoption for same-sex couples; legal sex change;
- The legal and social protections against discrimination;
- The right of expression and non-censorship on LGBT issues;
- How to deal with "sources" or "rationale" social homophobia and transphobia (religion, popular myths, stereotypes ...), for example through public education, outreach or other methods;
- The protection and assistance to LGBT minors, particularly vulnerable;

References:

- Amnesty International
 https://www.amnesty.fr/droits-sexuels?gclid=CjoKCQjwzcbWBRDmARIsAM6uChU
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- High Commission for Human Rights: http://search.ohchr.org/results.aspx?k=lgbt
- The International Association of lesbians, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex: www.ilga.org