

Plenary session MGoS
Friday 12 July
10:00-11:30
Conference Room 4

Perspectives from major groups and other stakeholders: Partnerships for transformative and urgent actions

How are stakeholders playing a critical role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda? What are some good examples and case studies of stakeholder implementation? b) What do you recommend to strengthen the role of stakeholders in participation and implementation?

Representing LGBTIQ+ stakeholder group, as proud parent, feminist, pansexual, nonbinary person am honoured to be in your midst today to share my experiences and because for a long time, these kinds of spaces were unimaginable for us as LGBTIQ+ persons from the rural grassroots like myself.

Kenya has one of the best democratic constitutions in the world, while also ratifying most human rights treaties and mechanisms. LGBTQI organizations and activists have been able to take advantage of the decentralized government model to champion for domestication of inclusive policies within the grassroots.

Despite this, LGBTIQ+ persons in my country continue to operate in an environment that criminalises same-sex relationships, and discrimination and violence is rampant and extreme. Unfortunately and increasingly, these same sentiments permeate the walls of the United Nations. But we refuse to be silenced, invisibilized, and politicised.

As SDG 16 is being reviewed, let us remind ourselves that punitive laws directly affect how persons in society can reach their full potential and access opportunities, while increasing barriers to accessing development needs – exacerbating experiences of poverty, hunger, and preventing access to justice. Our communities, our organizations, continue to persevere and push progress on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and build more inclusive institutions and social good for all.

LGBTIQ Organizations have been able to use strategic litigation and advocacy to challenge the constitutionality of the penal code, challenged the NGO board for registration of LGBTIQ+ organisations, resulting in a supreme court decision to allow for freedom of association. When barriers to participation and the right to assemble are lowered, all of society prospers, not just one community.

My organization has been very intentional to partner with academia like the Maseno, Nairobi, Aga Khan University to conduct ethically approved research for data that highlights the disparities and issues faced by our populations — filling in the large data gaps and promoting the collection of disaggregated data, so that we can have public programs and policies that meet the needs of all. These are good practices that can be fostered and shared.

Kenya is the first of many to include Intersex persons as part of our last census, as a result of immense advocacy from intersex communities and organisations like NTAN. This has led to intersex recognition and registration of intersex persons at birth. This data is crucial for informing policies and tracking progress towards the SDGs.

The resilience of the LGBTIQ community in Kenya is a beacon of hope. We are building movements of support, solidarity, and building partnerships across stakeholders and sectors. We are helping to create an environment of greater inclusivity, freedom and participation for all.

Let me end by saying, LGBTIQ+ stakeholders are integral to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and must not be left behind.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

The UN should commit to real actions that address structural and historical inequalities and make sure that all populations are included in solutions to today's most pressing crises.

We need to address the deeper roots and causes of discrimination, ensuring that efforts go beyond superficial reparations.

The very minimum action to address this is to repeal criminalization laws that are driving many of our communities to the margins and implement comprehensive anti discrimination laws, including those that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, class, caste, race, disability, among others.

To advance the attainment of SDGs and realise vision 2030, all of us need to be deliberate and intentional about not leaving anyone behind. Civil society should be recognized and financed for our actions on driving sustainable development, and our value as stakeholders promoted.

So long as a fraction of persons are left behind because of who they are or who they love, the SDGs and vision 2030 will remain an illusion.

Thank you.