



# Recommendations to promote the participation and rights of LGBTI+ persons in political and electoral processes

This document is a compilation of recommendations addressed to the main stakeholders involved in political and electoral processes, with the purpose of promoting the participation and rights of LGBTI+ persons. When considering these strategies and approaches, stakeholders should assess the context and specific needs of the LGBTI+ community and analyse the possible effects of their actions, with particular attention to adhering to the 'do no harm' principle.

This document is part of a longer and more detailed United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) publication, **'Building inclusive democracies: A guide to strengthening the participation of LGBTI+ persons in political and electoral processes'**, released in November 2023 and authored by Lluís Juan Rodríguez. Extensive background and supportive information are available in the main publication, including descriptions of and links to many resources available online.

## Target

## Recommendations

### LGBTI+ political leaders

- > Take all required security measures and precautions to ensure personal safety and be aware of reputational risks and potential attacks in the public space and the digital sphere.
- > Be open to continued learning, to improve knowledge and skills, and seek mentorship and leadership opportunities.
- > Take care to avoid burnout and stress, especially in contexts of hostility towards gender and sexual diversity.
- > When in office, promote inclusive laws and policies that improve the rights and lives of all people, including those of historically marginalized communities such as LGBTI+ persons.
- > Be as visible and open about your gender and sexuality as is comfortable, taking into account context and political and personal priorities.
- > Be aware of tokenistic practices, which give visibility to LGBTI+ persons in a symbolic role to create the impression of diversity and equality and hide lack of real change.
- > Value diversity within the LGBTI+ community and take into account the needs of different groups, considering gender, ethnicity, age, disability and other conditions.
- > Build a supportive network of friends and allies.
- > Promote positive change and the rights of LGBTI+ persons when the opportunity arises.

### Political parties

- > Include provisions on non-discrimination and LGBTI+ rights in foundational documents and internal rules and develop effective mechanisms for resolution of discrimination cases.
- > Create and strengthen LGBTI+ networks within the party or as associated entities to help increase the influence and voice of members of the community and to ensure safe spaces.
- > Provide training and sensitization to party members and leaders to raise awareness of LGBTI+ rights.
- > Promote the participation of LGBTI+ leaders in governing boards and internal decision-making, and make sure that candidate lists include LGBTI+ leaders in winnable positions.
- > Ensure that LGBTI+ candidates get appropriate funding for campaign costs so that they can compete on a level playing field.

- > Include concrete policy measures in electoral platforms to advance the rights of LGBTI+ persons and communicate these directly to LGBTI+ persons and communities.
- > Support campaign activities of LGBTI+ candidates and ensure they receive good visibility.
- > Subscribe to electoral codes of conduct for political parties banning discrimination and violence against LGBTI+ persons.
- > Develop party policies and plans to advance LGBTI+ rights and create a culture of inclusion.
- > Engage in inter-party dialogue and build consensus to promote LGBTI+ rights through policy and legislation.

### **Electoral management bodies (EMBs)**

- > Establish anti-harassment policies and ban discrimination based on sex characteristics, gender identity and sexual orientation in recruitment and personnel policies to ensure safe spaces.
- > Ensure that all internal policies, strategies and action plans support the participation and rights of LGBTI+ persons and create a culture of inclusion.
- > Mainstream LGBTI+ rights into the work of different units within the secretariat and consider creating specific institutional mechanisms to facilitate the participation of LGBTI+ persons.
- > Provide training and sensitization to electoral staff, polling officers and other field staff to raise awareness of gender and sexual diversity, the rights of LGBTI+ persons, and identification procedures for trans and non-binary voters that meet their needs.
- > Partner with LGBTI+ groups to identify barriers to their participation in the electoral process, and jointly design strategies to promote the participation of LGBTI+ citizens.
- > Allow trans, non-binary and intersex candidates to register with their affirmed name and, to the extent permitted by law, with their gender identity.
- > To the extent permitted by law, allow trans, non-binary and intersex voters to register with their gender identity and affirmed name and issue voter credentials that match their preferences.
- > To the extent permitted by law, establish regulations allowing trans and non-binary candidates to have access to gender quotas according to their gender identity.
- > Strengthen the capacities and leadership skills of LGBTI+ persons and organizations.

- > Conduct civic and voter education campaigns to promote the engagement and electoral participation of LGBTI+ citizens and to raise awareness of sexual and gender diversity among the public.
- > On election day, make sure that polling stations are a safe environment for LGBTI+ persons and ensure that voting identification procedures are respectful of trans, non-binary and intersex voters.
- > Assess the participation and rights of LGBTI+ persons in post-election reviews through quantitative and qualitative methods, and identify lessons learned on this matter.

## Parliaments and legislators

- > Include protections for members of parliament (MPs) and parliamentary staff in standing orders, codes of conduct and other internal rules.
- > Establish anti-harassment and anti-discrimination internal policies that consider sexual orientation, sex characteristics and gender identity as protected characteristics, and provide MPs and parliamentary staff with training and sensitization.
- > Mainstream LGBTI+ issues into the work of all committees.
- > Create and strengthen inter-party groups and caucuses on LGBTI+ rights.
- > Address the participation and rights of LGBTI+ persons in parliamentary regional and international forums.
- > Initiate and participate in efforts within parties ahead of candidate selection to ensure that parliament mirrors society as closely and fairly as possible in terms of representation of different population groups, including LGBTI+ persons.
- > Integrate the needs of LGBTI+ persons in the general law-making process and pass targeted laws to promote and protect the rights of LGBTI+ persons.
- > Use available institutional mechanisms to review and examine government policies that particularly affect LGBTI+ persons.
- > Welcome LGBTI+ organizations to participate in the legislative process through committee submissions and public hearings.
- > Build partnerships with LGBTI+ organizations to promote dialogue, community and movement building, and awareness raising.
- > Conduct outreach campaigns to raise awareness of LGBTI+ rights among the public.

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### **Civil society organizations (CSOs) and movements**

- > Take all required security measures and precautions to make sure activists are safe, especially in contexts of hostility and violence against LGBTI+ persons.
- > Strengthen LGBTI+ communities and movements in the long term through education initiatives, dialogue, activism and public gatherings, including 'pride' marches.
- > Engage in voter education and information campaigns during the electoral process and in broader civic education efforts to promote the participation of LGBTI+ persons and sensitize the public about LGBTI+ rights.
- > Look into the possibility of supporting LGBTI+ leaders and candidates through training and capacity-building initiatives.
- > Consider engaging in election observation initiatives with a focus on gender and sexual diversity to assess the participation of LGBTI+ persons in the electoral process.
- > Advocate for the recognition of LGBTI+ rights and the adoption of inclusive laws and public policies that take into account the needs and interests of LGBTI+ persons.
- > When appropriate, engage in litigation strategies to promote the recognition of LGBTI+ rights through court decisions.
- > Engage with UN human rights mechanisms and bodies and follow up on their recommendations dealing with sexual orientation, sex characteristics and gender identity and expression.

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### **Journalists and media organizations**

- > Integrate LGBTI+ issues and topics into journalistic work, following a human rights approach.
- > Give visibility to LGBTI+ persons and organizations and consult them as information sources.
- > Avoid reproducing negative stereotypes against LGBTI+ persons and try to reflect the realities and complexities of gender and sexual diversity, as part of efforts to pursue accuracy and breadth in reporting.
- > In political and electoral processes, give voice to LGBTI+ politicians and candidates and give visibility to LGBTI+ issues during election campaigns.
- > Use gender-sensitive language and avoid expressions of prejudice and hate speech against LGBTI+ persons, women, persons with disabilities or other groups.
- > Educate the public on gender and sexual diversity, taking care to counter stereotypes and promote the rights of LGBTI+ persons.

- > Put in place strategies and action plans within media organizations to support an inclusive working environment and to prevent, counter and sanction discrimination based on sex characteristics, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.
- > Consider joining, supporting, or creating a network of LGBTI+ journalists.
- > Promote sensitization, training and capacity-building initiatives on gender and sexual diversity for journalists and media professionals within media organizations and more broadly, following a human rights approach.
- > Build bridges with LGBTI+ organizations and consider supporting activists through training and capacity-strengthening initiatives on communication skills and media relations.
- > Monitor comments on online portals and social networks to prevent and remove attacks against LGBTI+ persons, including those containing hate speech and incitement to violence.
- > When appropriate, consider conducting or engaging in media monitoring initiatives with a gender and sexual diversity perspective to assess the quantity and quality of media coverage given to LGBTI+ persons and topics.

#### **International election observation and electoral assistance**

#### ***International election observation***

- > Forbid discrimination based on sexual orientation, sex characteristics and gender identity and expression, and develop protocols against workplace harassment, in line with the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers and the policies of the main international organizations conducting election observation.
- > In trainings for election observers, provide guidelines on how to observe the participation of LGBTI+ persons in politics and elections and share standards of conduct, in line with the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers.
- > Meet with LGBTI+ civil society organizations and public authorities to gather information on the participation of persons with diverse genders and sexualities in the political and electoral process.
- > Include findings and recommendations on the electoral participation of LGBTI+ persons in election observation reports, in line with international human rights principles.
- > Develop election observation methodologies and guidelines to gather and analyse information on the political and electoral participation of LGBTI+ persons.

### **International electoral assistance**

- > Identify barriers, risks, and areas of opportunity regarding the participation of LGBTI+ persons in the political and electoral process.
- > During the project design phase, consider, as appropriate, including specific activities to promote the participation of LGBTI+ persons and other underrepresented groups, and allocate adequate resources.
- > Consult with LGBTI+ activists and organizations to identify priorities, where appropriate, in the design and implementation of potential activities.
- > Invite LGBTI+ organizations to participate in activities with civil society, where relevant, such as training workshops, conferences, and dialogue processes, among others.
- > Work with EMBs and other key stakeholders to promote the inclusive participation of LGBTI+ persons in the electoral process, based on need, request and demand.

### **All stakeholders with an interest in preventing and countering violence against LGBTI+ persons in politics and elections**

- > Promote both civil society and government-led initiatives to collect data on, analyse and monitor violence against LGBTI+ persons, especially in political and electoral contexts.
- > Promote and lead the consideration of possible legal reform to include hate crimes and hate speech in the legal framework, ensuring adequate investigation, prosecution and sanction mechanisms are specified.
- > Support and provide sensitization training to police and security forces and criminal justice personnel to promote a better understanding of hate crimes and provide dignified treatment to victims.
- > Promote and provide adequate support to victims of LGBTIphobic hate crimes, including health care and psychological assistance, legal support and shelter when needed.
- > Promote and conduct civil society and government-led awareness-raising campaigns to sensitize the public about gender and sexual diversity, human rights and the need to counter LGBTIphobic violence.
- > Promote and conduct civil society and government-led campaigns to inform LGBTI+ persons about reporting procedures, assistance and resources for victims in cases of LGBTIphobic violence.



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