

**Statement on the situation with LGBT inclusion in 2030 AGENDA in Central Asia.**

“*Leave no one behind*” - the main principle of realizing Sustainable Development Goals. However, due to their identities, some communities are excluded from discussing and implementing the 2030 Agenda in Central Asia.

Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan have prepared Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2023 to share the successes and struggles those governments face. None of them included information regarding the LGBT community and their inclusion in the 2030 Agenda.

It is crucial to notice that in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, there is a criminalization of consent sex relationships between adult men. As a consequence, queer people are not able to participate in VNR discussions or be involved in the realization of SDGs. In Tajikistan, there is no criminalization; however, in practice, LGBT people face discrimination and violence, especially by law enforcement, and as a result, there are no LGBT organizations in the country.

Most civil society organizations in Central Asia are afraid to be associated with LGBT as it means being excluded from interactions with the Government. This led to the fact that LGBT issues were difficult to raise during the Major Groups and other Stakeholders’ Statement drafting, and people who have intersectional identities are not covered, lesbian, bisexual, and trans\* women, for instance.

Some international institutions and civil society organizations try not to cover LGBT issues and only work with safe topics. Still, the practice shows that it does not help other communities to promote their agenda. It only moves the line of marginalization to others when most marginalized are not protected. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, LGBT rights were an unsafe topic to cover, but HIV services were a safe one. And when the government did not see enough solidarity from international institutions and civil society to protect LGBT rights, it moved to HIV services.

The theme of HLPF this year is “*The full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels*.” However, if there is no space to reflect LGBT inclusion in Central Asia, we cannot discuss the full implementation of the SDGs. Or the main principle of the 2030 Agenda should be changed to: “*Some might be left behind*.”

**ECOM - Eurasian Coalition for Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity**