INTERVENCION DE LA EXCMA. SEÑORA PRESIDENTA DE LA REPUBLICA

MICHELLE BACHELET JERIA

EVENTO DE ALTO NIVEL "PATH2EQUALITY: GLOBAL LEADERS DISCUSS PROGRESS TOWARDS LGBT EQUALITY"

Nueva York, 21 de Septiembre 2016

STATEMENT BY H. E. PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE

MS. MICHELLE BACHELET JERIA

HIGH LEVEL SIDE EVENT "PATH2EQUALITY: GLOBAL LEADERS DISCUSS PROGRESS TOWARDS LGBT EQUALITY"

New York, September 21st, 2016

Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations  885 2nd Avenue, 40th Floor, New York, NY 10017 • Tel (917) 322-6800 • Fax (917) 322-6891E-mail: chile.un@minrel.gov.cl • Website: http://chileabroad.gov.cl/onus/en
Initial Remarks by H.E. President Michelle Bachelet  
High Level Event UN LGBT Core Group  
UNGA September 21, 2016

H.E. Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon  
H.E. Mr. Joe Biden, Vicepresident of the United States of America  
H.E. Ms. Erna Soldberg, Prime Minister of Norway  
H. E. Mr. Bert Reynders, Minister of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands  
H.E. Mr. Gustavo Zlauvinen, Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Argentina

It is an honor to be a part of this now traditional High Level event of the UN LGBT Core Group, at the General Assembly.

Defending, protecting and broadening the spectrum of rights for the LGBT community is a duty that our nations must assume. Here at the UN we have led efforts on behalf of sexual minorities.

**Fighting for LGBT rights is fighting for human rights.**

Whenever a teenager is struggling in school against homophobic bullying, we must protect him.

Whenever a transgender woman is being discriminated at work because of her gender identity, our institutions must prevent and correct such discrimination.

Whenever a same-sex couple wishes to form a family, our legal system must grant that family and its members equal protection as every family.

We must fight every kind of violence, especially the brutal acts that on a daily basis pose a threat for members of the LGBT community, and many of which, remain unpunished.

This is not an easy task, of course. Throughout history, breaking the barriers of discrimination has required governments to hear the voices of those who have been discriminated, and to lead the whole national society towards inclusion, diversity and integration.

When we talk about protecting the rights of LGBT communities, we are in fact speaking of building a more harmonious, peaceful, caring, and
inclusive world, where everyone can be a part of a community that is enriched by divergence and diversity.

The central message of equality in the UN Free and Equal Campaign, launched by the Secretary General, must prevail for all human beings, and permanently inspire the work of this organization.

In Chile, the visibility of the LGBT community and the social support to the LGBT cause is a recent process. Just around 3 decades ago, the first gay activists started to protest, demanding visibilization and public health policies against AIDS.

In the recent past, several LGBT organizations have been fighting for changes, and demanding our political leaders to do something about it. Protection against discrimination, general health policies, legal recognition for same-sex couples and families and legal protection for gender identity, have been the expression of a greater fight: the fight for dignity.

Our nation has taken part in such fight. We have good news for the protection of the Human Rights and Dignity of LGBT people:

In 2012, and due to the sad killing of a young man by homophobic aggressors that shocked our nation, our Congress passed an anti-discrimination act, which fights and creates a legal action against arbitrary discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, among other categories.

Also, in the last years our public health system has taken relevant steps protecting our LGBT community, adapting administrative and operative procedures to the reality and needs of LGBT people.

Last year, I had the privilege to enact the law that created the Civil Union Agreement, which allows same-sex and different-sex couples to be recognized as a family, to have a marital status and to receive public protection and benefits. As of today, 7,827 couples have celebrated this agreement.

I know these advances are just the beginning, which is why our Senate is currently discussing a gender identity protection bill, that will allow transgender people to rectify their legal identification documents through and administrative procedure, without being obligated to have medical treatments.

Also, my government has committed to submit to Congress a bill on marriage equality during the first half of 2017. Furthermore, it will also consider governmental support for several measures destined to strengthen
the rights of the LGBT community, including reforms to the anti-discrimination laws.

We know we have multiple challenges regarding this matter. We know that we face a long road to achieve complete equality. But we are working for it.

We invite all members of the LGBT Core Group and of the UN to continue their efforts and to highlight their achievements, because when it comes to protect LGBT people, there is no step too small.

Finally, I would like to thank Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for his important support and leadership in this cause. We trust this will also be a priority for his successor.

Thank you very much.