

Secretary-General's video message to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Core Group Ministerial Event

New York, 25 September 2014

Welcome to the United Nations. I thank all of the leaders of this valuable initiative.

I wanted to co-host this meaningful gathering but I could not because of a scheduling conflict. Please know that I send my full solidarity to all of our friends gathered here today.

I strongly support equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people everywhere.

I speak out against the appallingly high levels of stigma, discrimination and violence people suffer because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The fight for human rights – and the fight against discrimination – lies at the core of the mission of the United Nations. I am proud that this year, we took another step towards eliminating discrimination within the UN with measures that ensure fairer treatment of gay and lesbian UN staff and their families.

But the fight for equal rights demands global engagement. That is why the United Nations actively works to tackle homophobia and transphobia around the world.

We are joining forces with governments and activists to support changes in discriminatory laws. Our Free & Equal Campaign is opening people's hearts and minds.

It may be tough – but that will never stop us from pressing ahead. We cannot back off from human rights protection just because Governments differ on certain issues. We are not here to tackle only easy matters, or to discuss only what everyone agrees on already. We are here to protect the rights of all people, everywhere.

I deeply appreciate the LGBT Core Group for raising the profile of this issue at the United Nations. Thanks in part to your efforts, awareness is growing – and so is support for action.

I say to all people: raise your voices. Ending homophobia and transphobia is a great human rights cause. It brings together millions of people of all different ages, nationalities and backgrounds.

Together, we can – and we will – make a safe, fair and just world for everyone, no matter who they are or whom they love.