**Letter from the Executive Board.**

Greetings Delegates!

With immense enthusiasm and confidence, we welcome you to the committee of United Nations Human Rights Council at GD MUN for the session being ‘Protection of LGBTQ+ Rights with special emphasis on social acceptance’.

**KNOW YOUR CHAIRPERSONS:**

**Chairperson; Hriday Singh Sahi:** Model UNer since last 5 years. A self proclaimed Narcissist, always ready to get into a fruitful debate. Sarcasm on point. Can contact on Instagram (@hridaysinghsahi) or Whatsapp (9419251117). No drunk texts please. Cheers!

**Vice Chairperson; Arshia Gupta:**

The background guide presented here by no means borders the vastness of the agenda, rather gives a brief idea about the agenda and directs the flow of the debate. Delegates are encouraged to do in depth research and explore the ventures of the agenda and bring new ideas and solutions and have a very productive and healthy debate.

During the session, the executive board will encourage you to speak as much as possible, but on the other hand, no violation of the committee‘s decorum and etiquettes shall be tolerated. The executive board is more concerned about the content and quality presented rather than fluency and pitch. Quality research, good diplomatic skills and a solid argumentation represents an excellent performance.

We hope to have a very productive and healthy session. We are certain that this conference shall be a learning experience for both the sides of the dais.

In case of any queries, you can contact us and we shall try to help you as much as our ability permits.

With that being said, hope to see you all in the Committee! Good luck!

**Background Guide; the research and other directives:** Rights for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community vary greatly across the globe. In this increasingly globalised world, more and more people who were once isolated are becoming exposed to the views of societies around them. While some countries are of the opinion that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender lifestyles are wrong, others are becoming more tolerant of the ideology that this label means very little, and that really there should be no cause to infringe upon the rights of, or disadvantage people, who do not consider themselves to be heterosexual. Many religious communities are extremely prominent in certain Member States, to a point out where the rules of their religion dictate actual State laws. Naturally, this greatly influences the views of the people within these States. Is the UN in a position to ask them to dismiss some of the beliefs and customs they have adopted and have passed on from centuries before them? Is it even appropriate to ask them to consider it?

**Introduction**

On December 10th 1948 the UN general assembly passed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stating that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. 50 countries signed this resolution in an act of support for future policy. 23 of these countries have legalized gay marriages, and 11 have intermittently supported transgender rights. Since then, the UN has expressed grave concern for rising acts of violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity. These acts of violence occur more frequently in developing nations and our main discussion will pertain to these countries. Some of these statistics on violence and perpetual discrimination can be found in the first UN report on LGBT interaction, linked in the resources section of this background guide. Recently in 2011 the UN passed their first resolution supporting international LGBT rights. This resolution was headed by Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Uruguay.

**Background/History**

In 2015 a report by the United Nations found that 32.5% of all hate crimes were related to sexual orientation. Despite the growing amount of public awareness this statistic continues to grow. The history of LGBT violence goes as far back as 1935. Throughout the holocaust LGBT people‐ specifically gay men‐ were targeted by Nazi Germany, “The Nazis believed that male homosexuals were weak, effeminate men who could not fight for the German nation.” (Hirschfield) This history of violence is a systemic issue interconnected with modern day society and social views. Following the legalization of gay marriage in the United States, multiple cases of assault were witnessed directed towards the LGBT community. As these statistics continue to rise it is the responsibility of each nation to counteract basic human rights violations.

**Current Situation**

As previously stated only 23 signatories of the 50 who signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, have legalized gay marriage; further, only 11 of these countries have supported and incorporated transgender rights. As the goal of the UN resolution being an international acceptance of LGBT rights, these standards are not acceptable. The goal of this committee is to work a way out and protect the rights and work on their social acceptance, keeping in mind the human rights violations they go through; some examples being: forced anal exams, hate crimes, and military involvement in personal identity and orientation.

**Countries in Support of Promoting Rights of LGBTs**

Generally, Westernized countries are seen as more accepting to varying gender identities and sexuality lifestyles. For example the UK is considered to be one of the countries at the world’s forefront of equality in legislation, however same sex marriages are still not legal there and sexually active homosexual men are completely ruled out for blood donation. Only seven European Member States have legalised same-sex marriage, while thirteen others have legalised partnerships for homosexuals. There are six states in the USA where same sex marriages are legal, however at the same time many other states have legislation against any form of union between same sex persons. Sadly, we cannot deny that a number of people have suffered because of this. 20% of gay teens in the USA have attempted suicide, which is over four times the proportion of heterosexual teens. And yet, some governments have refused to do anything to reduce these rates. They are more focused on the reasoning behind why differing sexualities cannot be accepted, than the consequences of not accepting them. Not recognising these unions can lead to various social injustices such as the failure to recognise decisions by someone’s partner when s/he is incapacitated, representation in sickness, and the receipt of benefits and assets in life and death. Certain governments will feel that by accepting varying gender identities and sexualities, they are allowing society to develop as a whole and are creating a level playing field among all members of society.

**Countries in Opposition to Promoting Rights of LGBTs**

In a lot of countries, LGBTs face harsh discrimination due to the criminalisation of their sexual orientation and gender identity. In areas in which homosexuality and unorthodox gender identities are not favoured, we have seen laws concerning sodomy; varying ages of sexual consent depending on sexual orientation; legislation banning the acceptance, promotion and activities of non-heterosexuals sometimes resulting in punishment by death. Nine European countries have no legislation to protect LGBT persons at all. Some Muslim majority nations, such as Turkey, Jordan and Egypt have legislation against same sex intercourse. Even though legislation in places is beginning to tolerate differing sexual and gender identities, if a state is trying to achieve complete equality for LGBTs they would need to do more to influence people that they should not discriminate on this basis. For example, during the last two years there have been eight transgender people murdered in Istanbul and Ankaraand. Some of the predominantly Catholic influenced areas of Latin America are struggling to quash these views. Statistics show that between 1997 and 2007, 2509 gay men were murdered there, so many of these governments are making greater efforts to guide people away from these traditional views, and have been seen to promote rights for LGBTs. Other countries that currently oppose varying gender identities and sexualities are refusing to change their ways. The Indian Health Minister recently commented that he considers homosexuality ‘a disease’, regardless of the fact that India legalised homosexuality years ago. A Ugandan Bill submitted in 2009 originally suggested the death penalty as an appropriate way of prosecuting homosexual persons. The bill has consequently sparked much controversy that has lead to assassinations, and the press encouraging the hunting and killing of certain homosexuals. They thought the anti-homosexuality law would “protect” their children by preventing them from being subject to homosexual recruitment. Homosexuality is illegal in all African countries except South Africa, and yet even there a prominent Reverend said that homosexuality ‘is an abomination before the eyes of God’. His and many other Christians’ interpretation of the Bible and other religious scriptures is that is homosexuality is a sin. Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran (even though Iran does recognise the transgender community) and Yemen, all find homosexuality punishable by death. LGBTs in a situation where the majority of the population disagree with homosexuality will even go so far as to brave gender-reassignment surgery, just so that their community does not see them as a “disgrace”, or so they are not victimised due to their ‘unorthodox’ orientation. So while some countries are making efforts to increase rights for LGBTs, others are actually reducing them and trying to further criminalise LGBTs.

**Bloc Positions:**

United States: Having gay marriage legalized in 2015, and including violence based on gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation as a hate crime in 2009, the United States are considered the among the most advanced in terms of LGBT rights, despite gay men being prohibited from donating blood. Russia: One of many countries where gay marriage is illegal and partnerships between two same sex individuals is not recognized by the state. Gay and trans individuals are not allowed to serve in the country’s military. A majority of this thought is religiously based and enacted through the federal government.

Argentina: A flagship country in LGBT rights having same sex relations legalized since 1887 and same sex marriage legalized since 2010. They do not have any type of anti‐discrimination laws in place.

China: In the eyes of the law lesbian, gay and trans people have no protection, while participating in same sex activities is not illegal, that is the only right homosexual individuals have

Germany: LGBT individuals are protected by the law and are permitted to adopted children in partnerships but they are not technically married or even permitted to marry.

Morocco: Same sex activities are illegal and punishable with up to a 3 years in prison. There is no recognition of homosexual relationships and LGBT individuals are outlawed in morocco.

**Cultural Relativism & UN’s Role**

Cultural relativism is the view that all countries’ beliefs, cultures, laws and politics are equal. It is the ideology that everyone’s views are relative to their environment and upbringing, and so are relevant to them and therefore as valid as anyone else’s views. This can be a difficult view for the United Nations to accommodate because it means creating legislation applicable to all. However if your country does adopt this ideology, it would be extremely interesting to hear how you propose to provide a resolution to the controversy surrounding this topic. The United Nations are faced with the challenge of maintaining a safe situation for all people regardless of sexuality, while maintaining a person’s right to follow a belief system or religion of their own free will. In a world that is becoming increasingly politically volatile, the task to keep peace among all nations, no matter their opinions, may prove to be extremely difficult.

**Social Acceptance**

Talking about social acceptance, the above mentioned countries need to rise up from their cultural, social and religious beliefs. We need to understand the fact that just because someone who doesn’t wear like us or perceive the opposite sex like the majority of us doesn’t mean they should be aliened. In this conference, as the part of the United Nations we hope that by the end of the session we come to a resolution which brings rainbows and fairies to the lives of those who seek freedom and are scared to love.

**Questions to Consider**

1.) How are nations violating the rights of LGBT individuals, and how do these violations encourage violence? And how can we stop this?

2.) How do these human rights violations relate to a country’s culture and societal values?

**Directives for delegates**

The information provided above is there to help you with your research and by no means the delegates should limit their research to the above mentioned issues, as earlier mentioned that the agenda covers a wide range of spectrum, some of which are not mentioned here but the delegates should research well so as to take the committee to all the areas which need our focus and need to be worked upon. During the flow of debate, if any motion is raised about any topic which is not covered here but the committee feels is a necessity in regard to the agenda of the conference, the executive board will gladly take it up as learning works both ways. All the delegates are advised to keep a check on the countries who are their allies as diplomatic skills play a very crucial role in the conference. Delegates should have ample research and facts to support their statements. Aspects such as lobbying and foreign policies shall be considered well. In case of any dispute or issue, the chairperson can take a decision at any point of time.

**LINKS TO HELP FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

For Country Profiles and lots of other useful information:

<http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/default.stm>

For issues of current international debate:

<http://www.newint.org/>

<http://www.idebate.org/>

<http://www.amnesty.org/>

Useful links for LGBT topic

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/lgbt-rights>

<http://www.lgbt-ep.eu/>

<http://www.coe.int/t/Commissioner/Source/LGBT/LGBTStudy2011_en.pdf>

<http://www.publicagenda.org/charts/countries-where-homosexuality-illegal>

<http://www.debatewise.com/debates/1047>

<http://www.ilga-europe.org/>

<http://pewforum.org/Gay-Marriage-and-Homosexuality/Gay-Marriage-Around-the-World.aspx>

<http://www.avert.org/age-of-consent.htm>

<http://pcsproud.org.uk/reps_black_members_feature28.html>

<http://www.islamic.org.uk/homosex.html>

<http://www.religionfacts.com/homosexuality/islam.htm>