

# On day against homophobia, UN officials urge respect for sexual and gender diversity

17 May 2017 – Marking the international day against homophobia, senior United Nations officials today called for respect for sexual and gender diversity and urged the protection of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people from discrimination and harm.

“Today, I am deeply concerned by the excessive trivialization of insults, sexist and homophobic remarks in the media, in everyday life, on social networks, even from political leaders,” [said](#) UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) Director-General Irina Bokova in her message for the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT), commemorated annually on 17 May.

She recalled the situation of homosexuals under the Nazi regime, interned in “re-education” camps, and killed. The UN was created to prevent such crimes from happening again, she stressed, noting that UNESCO is committed to protecting the rights of homosexual and transgender people by drawing across its mandate to advance education, the sciences, culture, communication and information.

“These are powerful tools to fight the prejudice, verbal violence and stigmatization that foreshadow physical violence and that violate the equality and inherent dignity of all. This work for reason and tolerance begins on the benches of school,” [she said](#).

Research by the International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) has found that workplace policies, often designed from a hetero-normative perspective, may fall short of addressing the issues and concerns of LGBTI workers. For example, LGBTI workers may be excluded from leave and benefit entitlements, such as parental leave, because their families do not fit traditional norms.

“In keeping with the principles of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, no LGBTI worker should be left behind. Today let us stand in solidarity for the rights of LGBTI workers and their families,” [said](#) ILO Director-General Guy Ryder.

Gender identity and sexual orientation can have an impact on a migrant’s journey, unfortunately often in a negative and even dangerous way, warns the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)).

**VIDEO:** There are an estimated 500,000 homeless youth in the US of which 40 percent are identified as LGBT. In this story of Kellen, enrolled in the Ali Forney Center, the largest community centre for LGBT homeless youth in the U.S.*Credit: United Nations*

&#8220IOM has a zero tolerance policy for any type of homophobia, transphobia or biphobia and does not tolerate any abuses against migrants and host communities receiving assistance or protection from IOM,&#8221 [said](#) Director General William Lacy Swing.

A group of UN and international human rights experts [urged](#) States and other stakeholders to protect trans and gender diverse children and adolescents effectively from discrimination, exclusion, violence and stigma and to foster supportive family environments for trans and gender diverse people.

&#8220We urge States worldwide to adopt a legal and policy framework, with comprehensive implementation measures, to protect the rights of trans and gender diverse youth, respectful of gender diversity, and to enable the realization of their fullest potential,&#8221 they said in a news release from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)).

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS ([UNAIDS](#)) said that its vision of zero discrimination and ending AIDS by 2030 will only become a reality if the response to HIV reaches everyone, including LGBTI people.

&#8220Many young gay and transgender people are rejected by their families, living on the streets, facing all types of discrimination and violence,&#8221 [said](#) UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé. &#8220This is not the path to healthy and productive societies. We must encourage inclusion and compassion and ensure that networks of support are in place, including access to essential health and social services.&#8221

The Day's theme this year is 'Love Makes a Family.'

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## **Big data can have a 'big impact' on achievement of Global Goals, UN says on IT Day**

17 May 2017 – Mastering and measuring 'big data' &#8211 to map poverty from space or use mobile phones to track food security &#8211 could boost evidence-based decision-making at local and global levels and drive the implementation of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), the United Nations telecommunications agency said today.

&#8220The theme for 2017 is [Big Data for Big Impact](#), which will explore the power of big data for development and examine the opportunities to convert unprecedented quantities of data into information that can drive development,&#8221 said the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union Houlin Zhao, in his [message](#) on the Day.

Mr. Zhao projects that the insight brought about by more focused data analysis will enable evidence-based decision-making at national, regional and international levels and help to advance the UN [2030 Agenda](#) and its corresponding Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The [World Telecommunication and Information Society Day](#) is celebrated annually on 17 May to help [raise awareness](#) of the possibilities that the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies (ICT) can bring to societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide.

This year's commemoration also provides an occasion to take a closer look at the importance of governance and regulation, says Mr. Zaho, highlighting the implications for personal privacy and security given the future exponential growth in data and connectivity.

The ITU Secretary-General further states that activities undertaken by the ITU membership will contribute towards building momentum to embrace big data on a global scale and to seize new opportunities to address development challenges.

Recently ITU announced the top-90 winning Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) initiatives from around the world competing for prestigious WSIS Prizes 2017, with over a million online votes casted for 345 nominated projects. The winners will be announced during ITU's World Summit on the Information Society Forum in June.

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## **Côte d'Ivoire: UN chief welcomes country's return to calm after unrest**

17 May 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has commended the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for restoring security following a mutiny over pay, his spokesperson said.

The Secretary-General welcomes the return to calm in Côte d'Ivoire following the unacceptable acts of violence committed by soldiers of the Forces Armées de Côte d'Ivoire (FACI) over the past few days, said Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General, in a statement issued overnight.

The Secretary-General expresses the United Nations continued support to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in its efforts to sustain the hard-won gains of peace and stability in the country, including with the assistance of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire ([UNOCI](#)) and other international actors, said Mr. Dujarric.

The unrest took place as UNOCI prepares to complete its mission on 30 June. The Mission was established 13 years ago by the Security Council, following a peace agreement by parties to a civil war.

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## **Anaemic economic growth in some regions hampers progress on Global Goals, UN report finds**

16 May 2017 – Over the last six months, global economic progress has predictably picked up, but low-level growth in some regions has tempered efforts to meet globally agreed development goals, according to a new United Nations report launched today in New York.

In a statement on themed-2017 UN World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) [report](#), Lenni Montiel, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, underscored the “need to [reinvigorate global commitments](#) to international policy coordination to achieve a balanced and sustained revival of global growth, ensuring that no regions are left behind.”

The WESP report identified revived global trade, citing a tentative recovery in world industrial production driven by rising import demand from East Asia. However, economic recovery in South America is emerging more slowly than anticipated, and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is declining or stagnant in several parts of Africa.

According to the report, firmer growth in many economies, both developed and in transition, underpin global economic recovery – with East and South Asia remaining the world’s most dynamic regions.

During a press conference at UN Headquarters, Diana Alarcón, Chief of the Global Economic Monitoring Unit told journalists the report “confirms that at the global level, economic growth has strengthened in recent months in line with the forecast presented in January.”

She said “industrial production has picked up, world trade is reviving, and economic sentiment has generally improved. World Gross Product is expected to expand by 2.7 percent in 2017 and 2.9 percent in 2018.”

However, she said, “the modest strengthening of economic activity has not been evenly spread across countries” as “recovery remains insufficient in many regions for rapid progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).”