

Equal Rights Coalition – Global LGBTI Conference Declaration

*Buenos Aires, Argentina – 8 & 9 September 2022*

We, the ministers and representatives of the member countries of the Equal Rights Coalition, have come together in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 8-9 September 2022, and pledged to work together to build a world where the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all are respected, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics. We aim to ensure that all LGBTI+ persons have decent living conditions, that they can play a full and active part in society, and that no one is left behind.

Since our last in-person Conference in Vancouver in 2018, some welcome progress has been made, including the decriminalisation of consensual same-sex acts in six countries. However, progress is far from universal or consistent. There is growing evidence of movements that seek to undermine the freedoms and human rights of LGBTI+ persons. This is putting lives and communities at risk. More needs to be done, at every level of society and internationally, to help ensure LGBTI+ persons are safe and their rights are respected. As members of the Equal Rights Coalition, we will not stop working until this is achieved.

These human rights abuses and violations – which we condemn unequivocally – are on the rise. They include discrimination, violence and arbitrary arrests, based on real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics. Several actors, including states, are mobilising narratives which appeal to “traditional

values” and cultural divisions to justify new anti-LGBTI+ legislation, often referred to as the global anti-gender movement.

In recent years, we have worked together to take action – through public pronouncements, diplomatic interventions and knowledge sharing – in response to reports of LGBTI+ persons facing abuses and violations of their human rights in every corner of the world. All groups in vulnerable situations, including LGBTI+ persons, face a disproportionate humanitarian impact from conflict, such as in Afghanistan and Ukraine among other parts of the world, and crises, such as the ongoing challenges of addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing the unique needs of LGBTI+ persons within broader humanitarian responses is critical to effective recovery and resilience against future crises. The ERC remains committed to facing these challenges together and mobilising quickly, when required, to face future challenges.

We have also strengthened the ERC’s existing role in the multilateral system. We are proud of the role ERC member states, and civil society partners, played in securing the renewal of the mandate of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (‘IE SOGI’) at the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council in July 2022. We will continue working together to strengthen the representation of SOGI in the UN and other regional and multilateral fora, working closely with the UN LGBTI+ Core Groups and the Group of Friends of the UN SOGI Independent Expert.

At this year’s ERC conference, we welcome the presence of observer states from different regions, whose perspectives enrich our work. We are committed to bringing

in new voices, particularly those from the Global South, to consider the economic and legal inequalities, varied educational opportunities, and social exclusions that exacerbate challenges faced by LGBTI+ people, and whose specific knowledge and experiences should be taken into consideration. We also commit to strengthening existing participation, as current members of the ERC, so as to concretely engage in the work of the Coalition.

Our discussions in Buenos Aires built on our shared principles and on our collective efforts to date. We have reviewed the ERC Strategic Plan and 5 Year Implementation Plan that were signed in July 2021. We have agreed to continue delivering against this plan and we have renewed the pledges we made at the founding of the ERC in Montevideo in 2016 and our Vancouver conference in 2018.

Following Argentina and the UK's extended tenure as co-chairs, the ERC is now in a stronger and more sustainable position to fulfil its potential. Specifically, we are motivated by the work done to establish soon an ERC administrative unit. This will support the new ERC co-chairs, Germany and Mexico, and those who follow, to deliver effectively and efficiently in accordance to the ERC Strategy and Implementation Plan. We thank Mexico for leading the consultation process and welcome the pledges from the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands to fund this unit.

Based on our deliberations at the Global LGBTI+ Conference in Buenos Aires, we commit to advancing the work of the ERC by further strengthening its collaboration with its key partners, including civil society, international organisations, multilateral and development agencies, academia, the private sector and all others working to promote

and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of LGBTI+ persons. Over the coming years, we commit to:

- Proudly championing the human rights, fundamental freedoms and decent living conditions of all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and sex characteristics.
- Strengthening cooperation to end violence against LGBTI+ people by building an evidence base of the key issues that contribute to this violence and working together, at all levels, to tackle them.
- Advancing the rights of LGBTI+ persons as part of the international and domestic policies of our governments, by sharing knowledge from the ERC across our institutions and highlighting the importance of policymaking that addresses intersectionality.
- Strengthening our support for civil society organisations, human rights defenders, and community leaders who are making a positive impact on the ground, often at great personal risk.
- Providing technical advice, capacity building and exchanges of best practice, in order to support legislative and policy changes within ERC member states and other countries around the world.
- Listening to the experiences of LGBTI+ persons, through consultation with LGBTI+ civil society, to inform our policies and programmes and ensure they

are country specific and effectively targeted at the areas that will achieve the strongest outcomes.

- Strengthening the role of the Equal Rights Coalition, through a dedicated administrative unit and renewed focus from member states to contribute to the priorities of the thematic groups.
- Seeking to strengthen the presence and the voices of the Global South through its sovereign states and its civil social organizations.
- Countering the negative impacts of the global anti-gender movement, which threatens to undermine human rights and restrict the work of civil society organisations supporting women and girls and vulnerable groups, including LGBTI+ persons.
- Strengthening our ability to quickly and effectively mobilise in response to crises and conflict due to the more unstable world in which we now live.
- Strengthening relations with the private sector and to work together to foster in all sectors of society, including workplaces, the human rights of LGBTI+ persons.
- Applying an analysis of intersectionality when working for the human rights and inclusive development of LGBTI+ persons, as applicable.
- Identifying and designing targeted initiatives to support and empower LGBTI+ persons across both women’s rights and LGBTI+ policies and programmes, as

this populations is at heightened risk due to the intersections of gender-based oppressions, anti-LGBTI+ violence, and the invisibility of LGBTI+ women.

- Encouraging the establishment of specific policies for transgender and non-binary persons to live their lives fully, freely and without the threat of violence or persecution, particularly in workplaces.
- Working together to advocate appropriate protections for intersex persons and encourage states to implement policies and procedures, as appropriate, to ensure that medical practices are consistent with international human rights obligations.
- Encouraging States to strengthen information gathering on the number, diversity, and needs of LGBTI+ individuals and communities, with special attention on official documentation and reports of human rights abuses and violations based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics, including through collaboration with civil society to develop and implement human rights-based and evidence-based policies.

To ensure effective and timely delivery against these pledges, we will review progress on these commitments and on our program of work in our periodic meetings during the next two years, culminating in our next global conference in 2024.

Fully aware that all our countries face different challenges in their paths towards equality, we hereby reiterate our unwavering commitment to protecting and promoting the human rights of all LGBTI+ persons both within our countries and beyond.