



**#WeBelongAfrica**  
Inclusive Governance Initiative

## **LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: THE SDGS AND LGBTI INCLUSION WEBINAR SERIES**

### **WEBINAR 1 REPORT: 'WHAT'S IN IT FOR LGBTI COMMUNITIES.'**

#### Introduction

The webinar was co-sponsored by CIVICUS, Pan Africa ILGA, Positive Vibes, and UNDP Regional team for HIV, health, and development. It took place via Zoom on Friday, 11 December 2020 from 11:00am to 12:30pm South Africa Time. It was moderated by Anthony Oluoch and had 3 panelists.

- Kene Esom (UNDP),
- Joe Bonga (Executive Director at Africa for SDGs), and
- Achieng' Akena (Executive Director at International Refugee Rights Initiative).

There were 170 registrations and a total of 123 users who joined the webinar on Zoom. The webinar was also live on We Belong Africa's Facebook page, which "reached" a further 711 people and led to 91 "engagements". The participants were from all over the world with many of those who remained in the session being from Africa. Eastern and Southern Africa recorded most of the attendants. To cater to the different language needs of the continent, the whole webinar was simultaneously interpreted into French and Portuguese. It was recorded and the whole webinar is available on the link below.

#### [What's in it for LGBTI communities? - Zoom](#)

#### Target audience, focus and discussion

The target audience for the webinar was LGBTI leaders and activists from across the African region, and the focus was:

1. To introduce the history and purpose of the SDGs and their relevance to, and for, sexual and gender minorities.
2. To understand SDG processes and structures and what these mean for LGBTI participation and inclusion: including national, sub-regional, regional, and global indicators, data collection, monitoring, and reporting; stakeholder participation and engagement processes; key implementing structures, sector representation and related implications.
3. To share perspectives on the implications of the SDGs for LGBTI-related accountability and influence in the region: from an activist vantage point in the region and setting out some broad ideas/provocations that link directly to issues of inclusive governance and influencing African state decision-makers.

Kene Esom gave a brief introduction and history of the SDGs speaking on the fact that the goals are underpinned by the pledge to “leave no-one behind”. He gave an outline of factors that affect inequality in a population. These are discrimination, vulnerability, governance, socio-economic status, and geography. The extent to which one or more of these factors intersect with one another increases the extent of inequality for the population. In giving the outline of the 17 goals, he highlighted that SDGs present an entry point for sexual and gender minorities to achieve inclusion and non-discrimination in mainstream sectors of the society.

In his presentation, Joe Bonga stated that the SDGs present a more united front for inclusion especially from non-state actors. Despite the broad concerns on the necessity for action from these actors, the mechanisms that exist to do more are still unclear. He highlighted the need to look at the policy gaps, opportunities for synergy, and tradeoffs that exist to create a concerted effort to synthesize the channels for interconnection. He urged the audience to borrow lessons from contexts in which these efforts have had some success.

Achieng’ Akena noted the anti-LGBTI stances that governments take to avoid broader accountability around human rights issues. Despite this, she explained that the SDGs are easily distillable across different frameworks and different mechanisms. They can be nationalized and therefore can easily be engaged with. She added that they give LGBTI activists an open platform where we can engage on various human rights issues from a non-sexualized position and from the very human nature of the SDGs by building a future that is better not only for ourselves but for those around us.

The audience engagement brought out issues around religion and “African Values”. There were questions around how best to engage with the SDGs as LGBTI youth and strategies for inclusion in regions that are less represented across Africa such as Francophone, Lusophone, and Northern African countries. The panelists in response noted that there are certain goals that may provide more accessible opportunities and entry points to get on the table and speak to decision makers. It is important however to show that all the goals are interconnected and why it is important to be intersectional.

#### Feedback and Debrief

Participant in the post webinar survey was incredibly positive with the participants asking for more information and requesting for more conversational time in the future sessions to increase interaction and to explore ways to include more interactive elements into the discussion. There were 22 respondents in the survey. The survey was run in all the languages and participants found it difficult to answer all the questions in the different languages. Further interaction could be facilitated by using technologies such as polls and the mentimeter. There was a request for more information on the role of non-LGBTI organizations in pushing for the rights of LGBTI people. There was also a specific request for more focus on the integration of LGBTI issues within gender, private sector and more mainstream organizing including targeting government officials. Emphasis could be given to how, very practically, SDG mechanisms and processes are made sense of and interacted with on the ground in Africa. This could include sharing practical examples of how particular challenges have been dealt with in different country contexts.

The co-sponsors and the panelists had an opportunity to debrief after the webinar. It was suggested to include a slide at the start of upcoming webinars with clear instructions on how to access interpretation services. There were some difficulties experienced in terms of communication which included getting the link to join the webinar as panellists. It was suggested that in future, the link comes from a project email (such as ‘#WeBelongAfrica’) rather than a personalised email to avoid confusion, and that the

technological preparations be streamlined and confirmed ahead of time. It was also recommended that for future co-hosted sessions, further consideration be given to how the external communications for the webinar can reflect all the hosting partners. It was also suggested that we include panellist inputs in more than one language to enhance linguistic balance.