

April 2018
Volume 6

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Editorial

PAI will be convening its 4th Regional Conference in Gaborone, Botswana, from 31 May – 4 June, in partnership with LEGABIBO. The Pan Africa ILGA (International Lesbian and Gay Association) five-day encounter is vital for building the LGBTI movement across the continent according to PAI Co-chair, Richard Lusimbo.

Applications to attend the conference have been received from 37 countries, with the highest number coming from Botswana, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda. This year's conference will offer an opportunity for young LGBTI people to meet, share ideas, celebrate their diversity, get support for efforts in their home contexts acknowledge achievements made in the sector, and put their heads together for a workable strategy for the road ahead.

Significant gains in Botswana and Kenya over the past few years are cause for celebration by the LGBTI community as a whole, Lusimbo says. LEGABIBO, the leading LGBTI organisation in Botswana, has been registered as an LGBTI organisation and the battle to have transgender people's legal documents changed to reflect their gender has been won. Kenya has had similar successes with freedom of association, change of legal identities for trans persons and the declaration of invasive anal examinations to prove homosexuality as illegal. Victories such as these may be few and far between, but, as Lusimbo points out, "what has been happening in Botswana and what is happening in Kenya gives us hope."

The theme of this year's conference: Empowering LGBTI Youth: Uniting for an Inclusive Future is particularly pertinent. Over 60% of the population of Africa falls below the age of 25. Frustration, anxiety and mental health issues, such as depression and substance abuse among Africa's youth are widespread. Issues such as limited economic opportunities, rising corruption, unemployment and diminishing opportunities for political participation are of concern to youth throughout the continent. LGBTI youth carry the added burden of the struggle to have their sexual and gender identities recognised and respected. The efforts of LGBTI youth who survive and thrive on the continent must be celebrated. People, especially youth who lost their lives due to the prevalently difficult and intolerant environment must be honoured!

The conference also needs to give attention to sustaining the movement, through deliberations on how senior LGBTI people can pass on the mantle to the next generation of LGBTI activists, support them in their activism and prime them to make their voices heard. For many LGBTI youth on the continent, dropping out of school because of discrimination against their sexuality and gender identity, and being forced to leave home because families refuse to accept their sexual and gender identity are pervasive themes that will come up for discussion. It is crucial to voice experiences and survival strategies, and to build solidarity between youth who have similar experiences in different contexts.

Access to and sharing information across LGBTI youth communities will be given attention. We all know that LGBTI people – and perhaps youth in particular – are more vulnerable when their sexual orientation and gender identity becomes public. LGBTI youth need to know where to turn to and what strategies to employ. Understanding the history of the movement and learning from successful activism in the past is part of this. We have seen issues around difficulties in getting access to health services and political circumstances in which young people have been arrested because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. As an LGBTI movement, we have developed some understanding of how to address these issues, who to turn to, how to make use of the media, and how to forge relationships with other sectors that will be supportive. This information must be shared.

Information has tended to trickle down. This is not good enough: what we need is an avalanche of information and resources to support LGBTI youth, which is why this conversation is so important. We need to be involved; we need to get the work done and get the messages across; we need to develop more effective strategies for reaching out and finding solutions. Currently, most decisions regarding LGBTI policy changes and debates are the preserve of seasoned activists who have been 'out' for a while. This has to change. Young people must step up to the plate and make their voices heard. How do we make changes? These concerns, of course, speak to the relevance of PAI and the need for an African network of LGBTI organisations, across the continent.

Key pointers for discussion and resolution at the conference are:

- Building a more unified LGBTI youth voice.
- Increasing the participation of LGBTI youth in decision-making, particularly in Pan Africa ILGA.
- Establishing clear communication channels.
- Forging a unified and clear message from young people and guidelines on activism going forward.

A new PAI Board of Directors will be elected at the Annual General Meeting, which is part of the conference. Members will also debate and agree on new mandates for growing the sector on the African continent and addressing the challenges confronted by LGBTI youth.

Watch the PAI Website and [Facebook page](#) for weekly updates. We share the conference programme with you on the last pages of this newsletter. Successful applicants will be notified during the week of 7-11 May about their registration and scholarship applications.

Cameroon – Arbitrary incarcerations

On the 20th of April, at the premises of Avenir Jeune de l'Ouest (LAO), the staff were accosted by unknown men in civilian clothes, asking them to present their identities. The staff were then physically attacked and taken to the Dschang Central Police Station. 5 People, including the Executive Director are in detention and have not been given a reason for their arrest.

PAI stands in solidarity with our colleagues in Cameroon and ask that our members and fellow activists share this information and aid in any way that they can to aid in the release of the detained. These unlawful arrests in countries like Egypt and Tunisia continue to happen and we need to hold African leaders and governments accountable for these actions and call for the government to end arbitrary arrests such as these.

[Read the press release.](#)

Update: the arrested were released on the 27th of April and appeared in court on the 2nd of May to face the charges against them.

Kenya – Story in Kenyan newspaper leads to anti-gay abuses

After an article in the Sunday Standard on the 15th of April entitled “Gays make inroads in Kisumu”, a series of human rights abuses ensued. The online headline is as inflammatory, entitled “Uproar as homosexuality spreads across Kisumu.”

According to an activist in Kisumu, these unfounded statements, since the article:

- “Ten cases of threats and intimidation were reported to Nyarwek (the Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western Kenya Coalition), which seeks recognition of the human rights of LGBT people.
- Eight of the people who were threatened are hiding out and two have been temporarily relocated to safe locations.
- Preachers devoted their sermons to condemnations of homosexuality.
- Families threw their gay children out of their homes after identifying them by the clothing that’s visible in the photo that the Standard’s photographer took in the waiting room of the Men Against Aids Youth Organisation (MAAYGO) clinic.
- The clinic was closed, at least temporarily.”

[Read more.](#)

Morocco – Homosexuality ban hidden in World Cup submission

In the 483 pages submitted by Morocco to FIFA, an Associated Press review found that Morocco had failed to declare its anti-LGBT law in contravention of bidding requirements.

[Read more.](#)

Uganda – MPs vow to pass anti-homosexuality law

MPs in Ugandan Parliament have spoken out about homosexuality as un-African, threatening to pass a new anti-gay law.

[Read more.](#)

Kenya – Love story to premiere at Cannes

“Rafiki” (Friend), a film by multi-award-winning Kenyan filmmaker, Wanuri Kahiu, will make its world premiere at this year’s Cannes Film Festival. Rafiki centres around the love story between two girls, set in Kenya in a community that forces the girls to choose between love and their own safety.

[Read more.](#)

South Africa – Report released on the promotion and protection of intersex human rights

On World Health Day, organisations released the report, reflecting on conversations in December 2017 at a meeting co-hosted by Intersex South Africa, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, the Foundation for Human Rights and Iranti-org.

[Read more.](#)

North Africa – New report and video series focused on lived realities of LGBT persons

Based on interviews with 34 activists, the Human Rights Watch (HRW)’s “Audacity in Adversity” focuses on grassroots movements in Arab-speaking countries in the North African and region and the Middle East.

[Watch the series.](#)

Cape Verde joins the Equal Rights Coalition

In good news for the African continent, Cape Verde has joined the Equal Rights Coalition (ERC). Canada and Chile are co-chairs of the ERC – the first-ever intergovernmental coalition dedicated to the protection of the rights of LGBTI people around the world. Canada and Chile are working together to organize this flagship event to provide an opportunity for gathering knowledge, building networks and setting norms in support of the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people around the world.

The 2018 ERC Global Conference on LGBTI Human Rights and Inclusive Development will take place in Canada from the 6-8th of August 2018.

[More about the ERC.](#)

NEWS SNIPPETS

- Funders for LGBTQ Issues and Global Philanthropy Project release the [2015-2016 Global Resources Report: Philanthropic and Government Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Communities.](#)
- [South Africa - PrEP provided free of charge to sex workers.](#)
- [Swaziland to hold first ever pride parade.](#)

PAI News

Statements:

- [Statement on International Women's Day](#)
- [Human Rights Day, South Africa](#)
- [Transgender Day of Visibility](#)

PAI 4th Regional LGBTI Conference

We have received a record-breaking 700+ number of applications to attend Pan Africa ILGA's 4th LGBTI Regional Conference to be held in Gaborone, Botswana, hosted by LEGABIBO. We are in the process of finalising participants and will be sending out emails regarding the status of applications during the week of 7-11 May.

We're looking forward to hosting applicants from 37 African nations and 11 international countries in what we hope to be our most successful conference yet.

Download the conference programme in [English](#) or [French](#), filled with eminent speakers and exciting discussions.



Become a Member



Pan Africa ILGA is the largest membership based and democratically organised LGBTI federation in Africa. PAI currently consists of 125 African organisations and 40 international organisations working on human rights and equality for LGBTI people.

How to become a member:

Please be aware that only organisations (not individuals) can apply for membership. At its next meeting the Executive Board of ILGA will review your membership and you will receive communication as to the status of your application.

To apply, click [here](#). The membership fee is €60 for two years.

KEEP IN TOUCH



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