



Concept Note of High-level event during UNGA81 High Level Week

Championing Diversity in Times of Adversity: Standing Up for LGBTI Persons

**Monday 21st September 2026; 3 to 4.30 pm
United Nations Headquarters Conference Room 12**

Also to be Webcast on UN Web TV. Link forthcoming.

The UN LGBTI Core Group¹ will hold a high-level event during the 81st session of the General Assembly under the theme “Championing Diversity in Times of Adversity: Standing Up for LGBTI Persons”, bringing together States, the United Nations, civil society and voices from business, sports and the arts to showcase how they have continued to stand up for LGBTI persons in complex national, regional and global dynamics.

Background:

The past years have tested the resolve of all those who defend human rights. LGBTI persons continue to face criminalization, discrimination and violence, and in many places hard-won progress is under strain: civic space is narrowing, protections are being questioned, and disinformation is fuelling stigma. For LGBTI persons and those who stand with them, these are, unmistakably, times of adversity.

Yet adversity has not silenced solidarity. Governments have continued to advance inclusive laws and policies; the United Nations has kept the human rights of LGBTI persons on the international agenda; civil society organizations have provided protection, services and advocacy, often at

¹ The United Nations LGBTI Core Group is an informal cross regional group of United Nations Member States established in 2008. The group is co-chaired by Mexico and Norway, and includes Albania, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Nepal, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Peru, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Timor Leste, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, the European Union, as well as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the non-governmental organizations Human Rights Watch and Outright International. Austria, Estonia, Liechtenstein, Slovenia and Switzerland are observers to the group.

great risk; and leaders in business, sports and the arts have used their platforms to champion diversity and to open hearts and minds. Individually and together, these actors demonstrate that standing up for the equal dignity and rights of all people is not only possible in difficult times – it matters most then.

This event will bring these voices together. It is an opportunity to showcase concrete ways in which different actors have continued to stand up for LGBTI persons, to share lessons on sustaining progress amid complex national, regional and global dynamics, and to reaffirm the promise of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: human rights and fundamental freedoms for *all*, without distinction, everywhere.

Proposed Run of Show

Speakers

UN Secretary General (TBC)

High Level State Representatives

High Level United Nations Representatives

Civil Society

Representatives from Business and Sports/the Arts (TBC)

Master of Ceremonies: Maria Sjödin, Executive Director, Outright International

Format: In-person guided interaction on championing diversity in times of adversity

Participation:

The room seats 130 persons

Member and Observer States of the Core Group are asked to send up to 2 persons per delegation

Non-member/observer participants will be capped at 65 persons

Preliminary Run of Show

Order may be adjusted according to availability of speakers

3:00–3:15 (15 min)	Arrival of participants
3:15	Family photo – Heads of State or Government, Ministers, Deputy Ministers & Permanent Representatives attending

3:20–3:21 (1 min)	Seating
3:21–3:24 (3 min)	Opening Remarks by Master of Ceremonies
3:24–3:30 (6 min)	Opening remarks – by co-chairs Representative of Mexico Representative of Norway
Part 1:	Panel on Championing Diversity in Times of Adversity The speakers will be invited to reflect on these questions: 1. Can you share about a time of adversity that you, your business, your organisation, your family or your country has faced? 2. In that moment, what were the specific challenges that were faced in trying to be a champion for diversity? 3. What are some good practices or lessons-learned on that journey that you would like to share with others?
3:30–3:35 (5 min)	Key-note remarks UN Secretary General (TBC)
3:35–3:40 (5 min)	Key-note remarks Head of Government/State (TBC)
3:40–3:45 (5 min)	Remarks by celebrity connected with LGBTIQ issues (TBC)
3:45–3:50 (5 min)	Remarks by Civil Society representative 1 (name TBC)
3:50–3:55 (5 min)	Remarks by Civil Society representative 2 (name TBC)
3:55–4:00 (5 min)	Remarks by representative from the Business world (TBC)
4:00–4:05 (5 min)	Remarks by Head of UN Women (TBC)

Part 2:	Messages of Support from Member States and how they are Championing Diversity in Times of Adversity
4:05–4:25 (20 min)	2 minute messages by 10 UN Member States High Level Participants, with priority given to balanced regional representation and seniority Speakers list: 1) 2) 3) 4) 5) 6) 7) 8) 9) 10)
4:25-4:30 (5 min)	Master of Ceremonies - Closing Remarks and br

All participants are invited to a post-event reception at Outright International, 17th Floor, 216 E 45th St that will be held from 5:00 to 6.30 pm.