



ILGA ASIA APPLAUDS BHUTAN'S PARLIAMENT MOVE TO REPEAL LAW CRIMINALISING LGBTI PEOPLE

ILGA Asia welcomes Bhutan's parliament move to decriminalise same-sex relations. A historic joint sitting in Bhutan's parliament last week on 10th December which coincided with Human Rights Day approved a landmark bill abolishing Sections 213 and 214 of the Penal Code. The discriminatory provisions in the Penal Code which had been often interpreted to criminalize consenting same-sex relations have led to the marginalization and vulnerability of LGBTI people in Bhutan.

“The LGBTI community in Bhutan has worked hard for so many years to achieve equality. We are extremely pleased with this exciting development. It marks a monumental progress for LGBTI rights in Bhutan and contributes to higher Gross National Happiness for LGBTI Bhutanese.” Tashi Tsheten, ILGA Asia Executive Board member said. “While the repeal of the law is pending the King of Bhutan's approval, it allows LGBTI community in Bhutan to enjoy their lives in dignity without fear of prosecution.”

As Bhutanese celebrates their National Day on Dec 17, ILGA Asia would like to extend our heartiest congratulations to the LGBTI community and allies in Bhutan for their victory. This positive development is another step forward in advancing human rights of LGBTI people in the region. It is certainly a welcoming news amid a challenging time globally. It is a result of incredible resilience of LGBTI community in Bhutan, and will ripple throughout the region and beyond.

While Bhutan becoming the latest country that decriminalizes consensual same-sex sexual relations, the Asia region remains at forefront in the fight against oppressive laws on LGBTI people around the world. Consensual same-sex relations is still criminalized in as many as 21 countries and territories in Asia. Criminalization of consensual same-sex relations is a human rights violation. It denies LGBTI persons from equal dignity and legitimizes stigma, discrimination and violence against them.

ILGA Asia urges governments and policymakers in the region to ensure equity and human rights of all people, by repealing laws that discriminate LGBTI individuals, and adopting measures to protect LGBTI people from violence and discrimination and addressing the rampant homophobia and transphobia across the world and in the Asia region.

Undersigned:

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