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SESSION REPORT

545

Global LGBT Forum: Creating Long-Term Global Networks to Sustain LGBT Human Rights Organizations



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Federal Foreign Office

SALZBURG GLOBAL LGBT FORUM

Session 545

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Global LGBT Forum: Creating Long-Term Global Networks to Sustain LGBT Human Rights Organizations

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Federal Foreign Office

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An Introduction to the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

“Humankind is defined by its diversity: the free expression of sexuality and gender is defining the societies in which we want to live in the 21st century. But progress is by no means certain.”

Klaus Mueller, Founder and Chair, Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

The Salzburg Global LGBT^{*} Forum was formed in June 2013 to establish a truly global, open and conducive space to reflect upon and advance the LGBT human rights discussion worldwide. This meeting brought together nearly 60 human rights practitioners from throughout the globe. A key goal of the Forum is to work with partners – governments, foundations and human rights organizations – to help shape and facilitate this conversation in an increasingly interconnected world.

Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, Berlin 2014

To ensure a sustainable follow-up to the Salzburg gathering, the German Federal Foreign Office, in conjunction with Salzburg Global Seminar, brought together, in Berlin, human rights leaders from China, India, Germany, Lebanon, Russia, South Africa, Syria, Uganda, and Venezuela for three days of consultations in May 2014 as part of the Salzburg Global session *Salzburg Global LGBT Forum: Creating Long-Term Global Networks to Sustain LGBT Human Rights Organizations*.

Placing the issues into context was Christoph Straesser, the German Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid, who noted that: “The question before us, as societies, organizations and persons wishing to protect and promote human

*LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. We are using this term as it is currently widely used in human rights conversations on sexual orientation and gender identity in many parts of the world, but we would not wish it to be read as exclusive of other cultural concepts, contemporary or historical, to express sexuality and gender, intersex and gender-nonconforming identities.



Klaus Mueller and Christoph Straesser

rights, is how to halt negative developments, and further advance positive developments. There is no simple answer to this question.” Noting that even in Germany, the process of recognition of the rights of LGBT persons has been a slow one, Straesser reminded participants that they can help the Federal Foreign Office identify factors that are conducive to positive developments, and guide the Office in its choice of means to foster them. “To help us identify answers, we work with the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum in order to establish a global space to reflect upon and advance the LGBT and human rights discussions around the world,” he declared.

Echoing those sentiments, Klaus Mueller, the Founder and Chair of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, said: “We believe that the global discussion has reached a critical point where we need to advance equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people and communities, their protection under the law, and their right to express themselves freely. In many ways the spotlight of international attention makes LGBT communities more visible than ever before. The amplified attention for equal rights for LGBT citizens is encouraging. Our goal is to help developing those systems now which are required to support LGBT human rights in the long term.”

Mueller reminded participants that “homophobia, not homosexuality, is a Western export” and that the diversity of sexual and gender identities is shared across the human family.

Process and preparation

Initial planning meetings were held between Mueller and Silvia Heer, Desk Officer in the Human Rights Division at the German Federal Foreign Office. The planning involved an extensive process of collaboration, discussion and strategizing. The participants, program, logistics and all factors involved with bringing together such a diverse group of individuals from a range of countries, meant that much coordination and organization was involved.

The Federal Foreign Office arranged for Mueller to meet with a range of key personnel whose inputs ensured that the meeting was as wide and relevant in scope as possible. To ensure that the program reflected the needs of the participants as well, there was consultation via email in the months leading up to the meeting. The invited participants had the opportunity to make inputs on how the dialogue emanating from Salzburg could be taken forward in a meaningful and cohesive manner. By early May 2014, two weeks before the commencement of the session, a wide and extensive range of ideas and viewpoints had been solicited, thus ensuring that the final program would be as representative of the current realities of the global LGBT community and the Federal Foreign Office as possible. This consultation provided an invaluable framework for there to be a mutually-beneficial sharing of long-term, sustainable ideas and strategies.



Silvia Heer



Geeta Misra and Wanja Kilber at the Memorial to Homosexuals Persecuted Under National Socialism

Participants at the Forum

Participating in the Berlin meeting of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum were:

Klaus Mueller, *Founder and Chair Global LGBT Forum; Historian, Filmmaker, kmlink Consultancy, Berlin, Germany*

Benjamin Glahn, *European Development Director, Salzburg Global Seminar, Salzburg, Austria*

Tamara Adrian, *Human Rights Activist; Professor, Central University of Venezuela, Caracas, Venezuela*

Georges Azzi, *Executive Director, Arab Foundation for Freedom and Equality, Beirut, Lebanon*

Pooja Badarinath, *Program Coordinator, Advocacy and Research, CREA, New Delhi, India*

Geetanjali Misra, *Co-Founder and Executive Director, CREA, New Delhi, India*

Wanja Kilber, *Chairman of the Board, Quarteera, Berlin, Germany/Kazakhstan*

Olga Lenkova, *Spokesperson, Coming Out, St Petersburg, Russia*

Kasha Jacqueline Nabagesera, *Founder & former Executive Director, Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG), Kampala, Uganda*

Sudeshan Reddy, *National Information Officer, United Nations Information Centre, Pretoria, South Africa*

Fadi Saleh, *Gender and Sexuality Studies Lecturer, Syria (based in Germany)*

Dennis Wamala, *Program Manager, Icebreakers, Kampala, Uganda*

Dan Zhou, *Executive Director, Yu Dan; Lawyer and LGBT human rights activist, Shanghai, China*

The meeting was joined by colleagues from:

German Federal Foreign Office

Christoph Straesser, *Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid*

Silvia Heer, *Human Rights Division, Department for United Nations and Global Issues*

Katharina Lack, *Human Rights Division, International Human Rights Protection*

Martin Huth, *Head of Human Rights Division*

Anke Konrad, *Deputy Head of Division, Human Rights Office*

Ruediger Koenig, *Deputy Director General for the United Nations and Human Rights*

Stephan Lanzinger, *Human Rights Division*

Hans-Ulrich Suedbeck, *Head of Division, Western Balkan Office*

Sylvia Groneick, *Deputy Head of Division, Department of Disarmament and Arms Control*

Dietrich Becker, *Head of Division, Western and Central Africa*

Aili Rehbein, *Desk Officer, Uganda*

German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Ralf Kleindiek, *State Secretary*

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Katharina Spiess, *Human Rights Officer*

Nicole Hoffman, *Desk Officer, Uganda*

Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Saskia Helsdingen, *LGBT Human Rights Officer, The Hague, The Netherlands*

Michael Pistecky, *Deputy Head of the Political Section, Dutch Embassy, Berlin, Germany*

European External Action Service

Riccardo Serri, *Deputy Head of Division, Human Rights Strategy and Policy*

Implementation, Brussels, Belgium

Front Line Defenders

Andrea Rocca, *Head of Protection, Dublin, Ireland*

Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen

Peter Mares, *Director zivik (civil Conflict Resolution), Berlin, Germany*

Dreilinden

Ise Bosch, *Founder and CEO, Hamburg, Germany*

Objectives

The primary objective of this session was to look at the specific ways that LGBT issues are addressed by the German Federal Foreign Office and their embassies across the world, but especially in the Global South and East. The session was also designed to assess how German governmental support for human rights issues can help to ensure that LGBT and other human rights organizations, embassies, and other actors build closer networks and more effective relationships.

Both the Federal Foreign Office and the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum have shared perspectives on how to strengthen cooperation that, while established, is relatively new for both sides. An additional objective was knowledge-sharing as LGBT groups would benefit from a better understanding of the procedures of the Foreign Office, which in turn can address its struggles to build continuous engagement with LGBT groups that in many countries operate under extreme pressure, are fragile, or even illegal.



Olga Lenkova, Dan Zhou and Dennis Wamala



Georges Azzi

Issues to consider

Both the Foreign Office and LGBT groups struggle with a growing global polarization on questions around sexual orientation and gender identity hence among the key questions posed during the meetings were:

- How can we – the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum – create long-term global networks to sustain LGBT human rights?
- When supporting LGBT human rights: What works, where and when, and what does not?
- How do we collectively address the seemingly growing polarization on questions around sexual orientation and gender identity?
- Crisis Response: How and when should we and the Foreign Office react? And how can we react effectively?
- How can we react to the fact that not only has the struggle for LGBT rights become global, but that hate campaigns have gone global too, and that trans- and homophobia are more and more connected globally?



Dan Zhou (right) and Benjamin Glahn

The meeting place

Berlin, with its past characterized by division, prejudice and violence and its present as a united, diverse, progressive space, provided a fitting backdrop for these meetings. Efforts were made for the participants to see different parts of the city and learn more about its difficult, complex past. Discussions and ideas flowed into the evenings with lively dinner sessions as participants shared their personal and professional experiences in advancing LGBT rights in their home countries.

Having met a little less than a year earlier at the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum along with 50 others, bonds and friendships had already been formed. Berlin however, provided an opportunity for a more focused, indeed a deeper, engagement for this group of 13 Salzburg Global Fellows.

It was fitting that all the participants arrived in Berlin on May 17, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO-T). The city hosted a large parade on that day to commemorate IDAHO-T, which was addressed by Kasha Nabagesera and Dennis Wamala, activists from Uganda who are also part of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum. The significance of arriving in Berlin on this particular day was not lost on the participants as they set to work on the tasks ahead.

Day 1

Creating Long-Term Networks to Sustain LGBT Human Rights Organizations

A venue with a commanding view of the Brandenburg Gate provided an inspiring space as participants began the day updating each other on developments since the June 2013 Salzburg program. The atmosphere in the light and airy room was relaxed (even if the content was at times less bright) as participants spoke openly and frankly about both the positive developments and the set-backs that they had experienced in their respective countries.

Some of the focus of the discussion was on the global polarization on LGBT issues exacerbated by the reality that LGBT politics is hugely influenced by national politics while, conversely, LGBT rights is now seen as a global issue.

Questions considered were:

1. How do we separate global LGBT politics from global “other” politics? And should this be done in the first place?
2. Is there a so-called “pure” LGBT issue? And if so, how do we push for it with other global issues competing (economics, trade, etc.)?



Wanja Kilber and Olga Lenkova



Pooja Badarinath and Kasha Jacqueline Nabagesera

Country and region updates

In Uganda and Russia especially, the security of human rights defenders has deteriorated considerably while, on the other hand, reports from Latin America, China, South Africa and Europe gave some reason for hope. In fact it seems that with both positive and negative developments, LGBT human rights are finally recognized as an important issue for all societies to deal with.

In a series of discussions, the group grappled with the question: “What can we do to advance LGBT human rights?” The consensus was that LGBT struggles are finally getting global attention for what they actually are – fundamental human rights.

The chair of the session, Klaus Mueller asked if this current period indeed marks a new step within the global recognition of LGBT issues as fundamental human rights questions and, if so, how can we (LGBT activists and allies in securing LGBT human rights) advance long-term change before the global spotlight moves away.

Olga Lenkova from Russia emphasized the need for donor countries in particular not to be paternalistic and prescriptive. “If we want to change things globally, we all need to understand that there is no perfect place,” she declared. LGBT issues were not seen as human rights issues a few years ago, but this has changed. However, such change has taken place amidst vocal opposition which she describes as being “much more extreme than it has ever been.” In Russia, homophobia

is organized and visible, and includes groups that openly organize the bullying of LGBT teenagers in schools with the police doing nothing to stop it. Current laws prevent activist groups from supporting these young people even if victims of such bullying ask for help. New Russian legislation also nurtures blackmailing of LGBT persons. Another challenge is that due to funding and human resource constraints, there is largely a focus on the cities of Russia and Eastern Europe with the rural areas often neglected. In addition, many NGOs have been classified as “foreign agents” under other punitive new laws, resulting in the withdrawal of international NGOs and the closure of other local organizations. “We are in constant motion and do not take time to step back and reflect,” Lenkova summarized.

Founded three years ago, the German-Russian NGO Quarteera connects LGBT Russian-speaking asylum speakers in Germany, including those who have been tortured in Russia as well as victims of so-called “corrective rape”. Its chairman Wanja Kilber informed the session that the issue of visas and entry into Europe continues to be challenging for those escaping harmful situations because, as he put it, “Europe does not act with unity.”

South Africa continues to be a paradox as, domestically, the government continues to publicly champion LGBT rights while, in global forums, it is seen as being “too soft” on regimes such as Uganda, said Sudeshan Reddy, the National Information Officer at the United Nations Information Centre in South Africa. In spite of its progressive constitution, incidents of so-called “corrective rape” of black lesbian women and brutal violence against transgender and gay people in impoverished parts of the country continue to occur. Reddy also updated the group on a national advocacy campaign his office has coordinated which links apartheid, anti-Semitism and homophobia.

Tamara Adrian, a professor of law and human rights in Venezuela and leading transgender activist highlighted the need to have a “global strategy that can work with local tactics.” She argued it is critical to look at the big picture but also to work in the local context and understand local partners and their situations and challenges. For a global strategy, she posited, we need to have a clear vision of sexual rights as well as to have sexual identity and expression mentioned at every possible level at the United Nations. Countries are in general not willing to change their position unless they face global pressure,

either overt or covert. There have been positive developments regarding transgender rights in Uruguay, Chile, Mexico and Argentina, while progress is less even in Peru and Venezuela. The closeness of evangelical groups to the current Brazilian president is also a cause for concern.

Geeta Misra, co-Founder and executive director of CREA, a New Delhi-based feminist human rights organization that works to advance sexual freedoms, reinforced the need to move beyond the narrow confines of LGBT rights only as it is important that one takes a stand across related human rights issues. “We need to stand for something bigger than the identity-based work as this loses people who do not identify as LGBT,” she stressed.

Concurring, Pooja Badarinath, a program co-ordinator at CREA, stressed that all prejudice has similar roots, including patriarchy and paternalism, and there is a need to be strategic in deciding when to talk from a narrow perspective and when to talk from a broad perspective. India’s recent elections are not a cause of great hope as the new prime minister is seen as socially conservative, but on a positive note, civil society mobilization is growing in India, as was seen after the high-profile gang rape and murder of a woman on a New Delhi bus in December 2012. Activists in India can be more active in supporting other activists in the South, the group heard.

“Let us be clear that international attention does make a difference,” began Dennis Wamala, a program manager at Icebreakers Uganda, a care and support organization for LGBTI people in Uganda. Since 2013, the human rights situation in the country has taken a step back with the parliament being used as a tool to promote state-sanctioned homophobia. Under the new laws, even speaking about homosexuality is illegal and if one does not identify homosexuals, they can be deemed an accomplice, which has resulted in the eviction of tenants landlords suspect to be gay. In extreme cases, men have been arrested for simply watching romantic movies together. In response, Wamala told the group, an umbrella civil society group, comprising 60 organizations with a human rights mandate, has been established In Uganda. Now if anyone is speaking about rights, they are speaking for all human rights, which are after all linked, he explained.

These sentiments were echoed by Wamala’s fellow Ugandan activist Kasha Nabagesera who emphasized the need to hold governments



Dennis Wamala and Klaus Mueller

accountable to international treaties. “We have to be mindful about personal security but we also have to motivate our community and remind them not to lose hope,” she reminded the participants. Strategic activism has been evident by the decision of Ugandan LGBT activists to sue radical-right American evangelicals in the United States. It was also suggested that aid previously earmarked for governments should rather be channeled to credible (and LGBT-supportive) NGOs. Citing discussions brought up in Salzburg, there was consensus that the LGBT issue should not be the stick which donors use to beat governments. Sometimes, it was argued, there is a place for a quieter form of diplomacy. Adding to the Uganda experience, Nabagesera called for more action by the UN, declaring: “We do not need just resolutions and mandates – we need solutions.” While acknowledging that UN entities such as the Commission on the Status of Women are trying to hold governments accountable through international treaties, there remains a disturbing increase in violation and abuse. “Communities need to be sensitized,” Nabagesera declared, “and we need to work more strongly with our allies, especially in the judiciary, as well as among religious groups and in the media.”

For Dan Zhou, a lawyer and human rights activist in China, communication is a skill that is much-needed. There have been positive developments including the hosting in Beijing of the first China Community Dialogue on being LGBT in Asia, which was not

closed down by the government. Zhou reported that even though there is no specific law criminalizing sexuality in China, there are still no protective laws for LGBT people in the workplace, there remains censorship against the gay media, and there remain limits on freedom of expression. He remarked that it is encouraging that more Western European embassies have become increasingly active in engaging LGBT activists in China and expressed hope that German embassy in China would more strongly participate in this effort. The challenge involves how to understand Chinese LGBT issues in specific country contexts.

Discussing the situation in the Middle East, George Azzi of the Arab Foundation for Freedom and Equality (AFFE) highlighted a few positive developments in Lebanon including a recent legal judgment which declared that homosexuality is “not unnatural.” LGBT activists are more visible in the country and there are now more sympathetic judges in the judiciary. As in other situations as well, it is strategic to engage with allies and potential allies and that is what is presently being done by AFFE and others.

Discussing the situation in Germany, Klaus Mueller spoke of the recent Supreme Court judgments which have been supportive of LGBT issues. Nevertheless, despite a solid majority of supporters in the parliament, gay marriage is not yet legal in Germany. Softer issues such as mobilization against the Sochi Winter Olympics and the recent win of Austrian drag artist Conchita Wurst in the Eurovision Song Contest are “signs that Europe does not want to be seen as discriminatory.” Within the EU, the European Parliament now has an Intergroup on LGBT



Tamara Adrian



Human Rights that cuts across all party lines and provides a direct link to parliamentarians.

Across the Atlantic, it is interesting to watch how the relatively rapid, progressive steps and actions of the Obama administration have filtered down to changing public opinion.

After the discussion, the group visited the Monument to the Murdered Jews of Europe, the Book-burning Memorial and the Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted Under National Socialism. Collectively, these physical sites are testimonies to hatred and prejudice, but also to resilience and hope. Viewing these moving spaces reminded the participants that struggles against discrimination and oppression are universal and that there are always lessons to be learned.

The role of local and international donors

Arguments were put forward by the Salzburg Global Fellows that more regular, sustained engagement between the donor community and LGBT activist groups can take the process forward. Currently, there are a relatively small number of international organizations supporting LGBT rights and it is critical that supportive international networks are built up and expanded. It would also be useful to classify different funders – i.e. seed-funders, grass-root supporting funders, and big international donors – as each have their own set of mandates, programs, and target groups.

Finally, it is also important to educate and inform donors about local conditions and contexts. The reality is that donors have their own agendas and they need to be updated on issues constantly. Their support for the LGBT organizations should go beyond financial support.

The role of LGBT community and activists

Some participants expressed a view that many LGBT organizations can be highly prescriptive with regard to what should and should not be done. In addition, it was argued that donors and LGBT activists need to be careful to assume that they know global answers without seeking constant input from local groups. There was agreement that a situation in an individual country cannot change solely through outside intervention and pressure. Furthermore, while it is relatively easy to be angry and organized about extreme examples, it is more difficult to mobilize against injustices that have been dealt with for a long time. The so-called “multiplication of issues” should also be considered as LGBT issues influence many other areas and rights including work, housing, marriage, crime, hate speech, and health.

Suggested steps to promote an LGBT agenda when dealing with embassies

Participants had mixed experiences when dealing with embassies, which are sometimes seen as the “enemy” in the eyes of hostile governments. There was empathy with the position of embassies in that they are unable to get too directly involved lest they incur the wrath of the host government.

The experiences of the participants pointed to the reality that interaction is invariably personality-driven and sometimes all it takes is one dedicated Desk Officer to promote and support LGBT causes. Indeed it is sometimes a source of frustration that such critical aspects of human rights are at times seemed to be pushed by an individual rather than a policy.

Geeta Misra argued that in India and South East Asia, embassies do not spend enough time getting to know the activists as they are usually serving a political agenda from which they are reluctant to deviate. Indeed, only very few embassies, in her experience, take the time to talk to activists and find out about programs.

How can German embassies be more concrete in their work and support of LGBT human rights activists and organizations?

- Offer regular financial support;
- Organize specific LGBT-focused programs as part of their mandate;
- Embassies are parts of larger networks and could help build or extend networks that can include other human rights organization;
- Automatically include LGBT activists when organizing events to make sure their voice is heard;
- Provide strategic ideas and support on strategic interventions for the greatest impact;
- Look beyond capital cities when undertaking outreach work;
- Incorporate LGBT human rights training in the diplomatic training academies;
- Symbolic visible support: e.g. rainbow flag in embassies on IDAHO-T day;
- Incorporate LGBT human rights training in local staff training.

Pooja Badarinath reminded participants of the excuses often used by hostile governments who fall back on referencing colonialism to justify their anger at criticisms emanating from Western embassies. She urged that LGBT activists be aware of these arguments as they prepare to challenge them.

Kasha Nabagesera described the majority of Western embassies as a “big support” in Uganda as key officials at these embassies often take the time to talk to activists and support them where they can. Some diplomatic staff have even been asked to leave the country because of such support. The challenge in many situations is thus to try and guarantee the long-term engagement of embassies.

Dan Zhou suggested that embassies should improve their internal communication so that activists do not have to repeat their story all the time when the embassy focal point is replaced.

Klaus Mueller noted that in his communications with the German Foreign Office, colleagues were generally well-informed, but pointed out repeatedly that LGBT activists need to be pro-actively seeking and establishing contact with respective embassies as embassy staff often do not have the time and capacity to reach out to civil society at large, not just LGBT groups. He also pointed out that the Foreign Office has been working closely on LGBT human rights within the European Union and United Nations.

There was a wide-spread feeling among the participants that activists should also initiate contact with embassies rather than wait for official invitations. In Uganda, Dennis Wamala noted that activists now have such good partnerships with some embassies, that that these embassies do not organize events without inviting the LGBT organizations that they work with. In China, Zhou reported that the German embassy was noticeably less visible and active than other Western European embassies.

It is also a reality however that sometimes diplomats act more cautiously than their governments. In the German case, embassies sometimes “outsource” their civil society engagement and support to different foundations.

With the above issues highlighted, a general brainstorming session was held during which participants took a step back to consider areas that need more focus or are overlooked in the day-to-day work on LGBT human rights.



Sudeshan Reddy

Recommendations on Capacity Building

The session identified several areas of concern to be addressed if the LGBT human rights struggle to be taken forward at a global level. Recognizing that capacity building is key, training in the following areas was proposed by the Fellows:

For all activists

- How to build and maintain LGBT human rights movements;
- How to document violations of human rights properly;
- How best to use social media, which is both an essential tool to network but a danger that can be misused by state authorities and hostile media;
- How to write proposals to elicit funds;
- How to develop an effective marketing and campaign strategy.

For activists from the Global South in particular

- How to engage at global level;
- How to respond to accusations of “following a Western agenda”;
- How to present their projects to international organizations.

For supportive governments

- How to implement regulations that have been adopted regarding LGBT human rights.

In addition to capacity building, Fellows made the following proposals:

- Updated resources and surveys need to be made available, including on bullying and violence against the LGBT community;
- The burn-out of activists who are over-stretched due to many demands must be addressed and prevented;
- More South-South exchanges of activists should be facilitated;
- Homophobic organizations and individuals based in Western Europe and North America must be addressed;
- More joint meetings should be held: When a situation erupts, it is often the preference of donors and embassies to have individual meetings with activists. This is time consuming and difficult. It would be preferable to have the collective supportive diplomatic corps agree to have joint meetings with LGBT groups.

The day culminated in a dinner which provided a relaxed environment for further discussion and the opportunity to meet with other representatives of the German Foreign Office and donor organizations.

Day 2

Meetings with German and Dutch Ministries

Welcome meeting at the German Federal Foreign Office

The second day of the session began with a meeting hosted by Christoph Straesser, the Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid, who welcomed the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Having commenced his work in January 2014 in this position, Straesser gave a clear message: “Strengthening human rights across the world is a priority of Germany’s foreign policy. To achieve this goal, building sustainable networks of human rights defenders is of course of central importance. These can be formalized networks in the form of human rights organizations like those that many of you represent, but also more fluid networks, such as the one you are building with the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum.”

He explained that the German Federal Foreign Office decided to support this growing network as it “allows a multitude of stakeholders, including Foreign Services, to join and participate on an *ad hoc* basis, in accordance with their own financial or time-related resources.” For his work, this “facilitates the flow of information and, in turn, the choice



Christoph Straesser

of support measures which actors wishing to support the human rights of LGBTI persons in the world make.”

Straesser expressed his hope that the exchanges between the Ministry and the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum would be able to provide each other with a deepened insight into their respective work; the Forum could assist the Ministry in choosing the right measures of support, and the Ministry would be able to provide the Forum with information that will be helpful in the design of strategies to promote LGBT human rights.



Dennis Wamala meets with German ministries' Desk Officers for Uganda, Aili Rehbein (Foreign Office) and Nicole Hoffman (Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development)

Participants' experiences of working with German diplomatic missions

Dan Zhou noted that in China anyone who has reached out actively to the German embassy and consulates would have a few meaningful interactions as language is sometimes a major obstacle as many grassroots activists do not speak English (or German). He also highlighted that the German embassy is noticeably less active in supporting the LGBT agenda than the British, American, Canadian, Dutch and Scandinavian diplomatic corps.

In Uganda, Dennis Wamala has had steady interaction with the German Foreign Office, which updates him on how the embassy can help by having open and regular discussions. There was also empathy that diplomatic staff have to be careful in what they say or do not say to governments and other stakeholders. In Uganda, embassies tended to deal with LGBT issues in closed-door meetings, but since the introduction of the anti-homosexuality law, activists have asked diplomatic missions to speak out more openly.



Geeta Misra

A useful strategy for LGBT organizations is to create information tools for embassies; Ugandan activists have developed a manual on how to train local embassy staff in terms of supporting LGBT organizations in the country.

Georges Azzi reported that the German embassy has been supportive of NGOs working on LGBT issues in Lebanon. While this has been an encouraging first step, Azzi did however point out that many activists are not sure who they should contact in the embassies.

In Russia, Olga Lenkova and Wanja Kilber described a steadily worsening situation for the LGBT community with increasingly violent incidents as well as the bullying of teenagers in schools. Authorities frequently accuse so-called “foreign agents” of supporting local LGBT groups. One should not however deny the minor progress that is being made. A fairly peaceful demonstration commemorating IDAHO-T was held in St Petersburg, with approximately 200 participants and 200 police officers to protect the crowd, and this can be considered a victory in the current climate. Nevertheless, partnerships do exist with the diplomatic corps in Russia, with some even providing visa support for activists of Coming Out in case they need to leave country in an emergency.

In India, it is important to note that when talking about LGBT issues there is always a discussion of the multiple other human rights issues at the same time. Civil society in India, stated Geeta Misra, has not yet realized that engagement with embassies is a possibility for cooperation, although LGBT organizations in New Delhi do frequently use the Max Mueller spaces (which how the Goethe Institut is known in India).

Suggestions for the German Federal Foreign Office and activists

- The Federal Foreign Office could host a seminar for human rights defenders;
- German embassies could organize and host multi-embassy and multi-civil society meetings or forums for LGBT organizations;
- Educational programs could be devised, funded and hosted by German embassies. Such programs could focus on an understanding of what is sexual orientation and gender identity. Activists on the ground could answer these questions;
- Activists have to take more initiative and introduce themselves to embassies repeatedly until a relationship is secured. It is also necessary to be very clear about what specific support one asks from a German embassy.

In Venezuela, Tamara Adrian noted that she and other activists have good relations with the German embassy when it comes to human rights at a broader level but the embassy does not seem specifically interested in LGBT issues.

In his response to these impressions and suggestions, Christoph Straesser repeated that Federal Foreign Office policy is based on the basic truth that “LGBT rights are human rights.” The policy documents are there and need to be adhered to, including the European Union Guidelines for Human Rights Defenders. It is not only the official side that is important: “We also need to know the public and the ‘unofficial’ side of the issues and for our missions to understand human rights at broader level in each country. It is useful for our offices to be in contact with a network of LGBT organizations where key questions can be asked,” he said.

In her comments and presentation, Silvia Heer, a Desk Officer in the Human Rights Division in the Federal Foreign Office, noted that engagement in LGBT issues by the Foreign Office has increased over past few years but that some questions need to be continuously reflected upon and addressed, including:

- How do we generate funding and to whom do we give these funds?
- What is an adequate reaction? When is it strategic to be vocal and when is it more effective to use quiet diplomacy?
- How can we better identify and contact activists and key organizations?



Silvia Heer

Heer also gave an overview of how embassies operate while emphasizing that this is a “learning process from both sides” and while a response from the embassy may not be immediate, it will come. She noted that it is not absolutely necessary to identify the right person and who is responsible. The information submitted to embassies by activists or organizations ends up with the desk officer, who then informs the responsible colleagues in the ministry. Embassies are the German government’s “eyes and ears on ground” and give insight on the status quo to the German government, they provide background information and put information into perspective. The Ministry will in turn always try to keep embassies involved – they are on the ground, are informed and will react if necessary.

There is also the reality of high staff rotation. A focal point will leave a report with the most important information after he/she leaves a particular posting, however activists do need to contact embassies directly and regularly in order to ensure that they are visible to the embassy.

Heer informed the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum of possibilities of support beyond financial support to LGBT human rights activists, such as presence by embassy staff during court proceedings, the opening of discussion spaces between relevant stakeholders, the inclusion of the topic on the agenda of political dialogues, and other measures that Member States of the European Union can and should take in accordance with the Guidelines on the promotion and protection of the human rights of LGBT persons.



Sudeshan Reddy (right) meets with German ministries' Desk Officers for Southern Africa

Country desk round table meetings

Following Straesser's address, participants of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum then had productive one-on-one meetings with their country's respective desk officers from the German Federal Foreign Office, some of whom were joined by their colleagues from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. This provided an opportunity to assess what the current situation is in each country and to identify challenges as both activists and the ministries move forward. This session also provided the opportunity to identify who to contact and what to do to gauge a proper response and reaction.

During his meeting with his counterparts, Sudeshan Reddy of the United Nations Information Centre in Pretoria, South Africa emphasized the need for German diplomatic representatives to engage, in a sustainable manner, with LGBT civil society representatives from the outset and seek their advice on the type of support required. In South Africa too, the German Embassy has been noticeably less involved in supporting LGBT organizations compared to other Western European embassies as well as the American and Canadian diplomatic missions. While some German foundations, as well as the Goethe Institute, are active in this field, a more visible German diplomatic presence, even in as progressive a country as South Africa, would be welcome, he said.

In discussion with desk officers for Uganda, Dennis Wamala reported on the increasingly dangerous conditions for human rights defenders in the country as they looked at how to best coordinate necessary urgent responses to the current situation. Often, the good relationship



Olga Lenkova with Katharina Spiess, Human Rights Officer, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

with embassies provides the main protection for LGBT activists. In fact, in Uganda “we are more connected to embassies than civil society.” LGBT organizations often get to other civil society partners through the diplomatic missions, which have been quite active as their governments tried to positively influence the Ugandan Government. Regarding embassy support, Dennis declared that “we just have to say thank you.” The pressure by embassies is evident in the fact that the Anti-Homosexuality bill was written in 2008 but was only passed in 2013 due to the fact that governments and other stakeholders put pressure on the government. Other than foreign governments, the Ugandan Human Rights Commissioner has been relatively progressive and the hope is that his successor will be equally supportive.

Straesser responded that the German embassy and other supportive states are not going to drop the topic from the agenda. “It will continue to be a part of the larger human rights dialogue in Uganda.”

Citing his experiences in Uganda, Wamala highlighted the need to work with church groups and other civil society groups and to inculcate a broader shared human rights message upon civil society members. Wamala advocated “an inclusive approach whereby supporting LGBT is part of a broader commitment to entrench human rights”. While acknowledging the difficulty in dealing with the evangelical churches in Uganda, Wamala stated that it can start with getting the church to

stop expressing homophobia. “They do not need to promote it, but they can stop promoting hate,” he said.

It is also important, Straesser explained, to understand what the German public wants. Today, there are vocal sections of the German public who want development aid to Uganda to be cut because of the LGBT legislation. “We must make clear to concerned persons why cutting aid does not contribute to a sustainable solution to the problem. So while we are happy to help, it is important that you, the activists, help us explain why cutting aid would strongly affect human rights activists too. We need to show that we have better tools, that we have dialogue.”

As in other conversations, including on India, China and Russia, these encounters not only updated all parties on the situation on the ground but also allowed for invaluable brainstorming on how to meet short-term needs and formulate long-term strategies. Now that personal contact has been made, the ground is set for ongoing dialogue and coordination.

Colleagues from the respective ministries stated that this format of personal engagement helped them to better understand the quickly-changing situations in different countries. In turn, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum participants found the Ministry focal points to be informed, aware of and committed to working more closely with civil society organizations in their respective countries. Indeed, there was consensus among the participants that such interactions provide invaluable opportunities for further networking and partnerships.



Benjamin Glahn



State Secretary for Family Affairs Ralf Kleindiek with Wanja Kilber and Olga Lenkova

High-level meeting with German State Secretary for Family Affairs

Ralf Kleindiek, the State Secretary at the German Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, welcomed the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum for a lunch meeting at the ministry on Monday, May 19 in Berlin. Newly in his position since January 2014, he emphasized that the Ministry is currently reviewing its policies on all LGBT-related questions to ensure and advance equality.

He especially wanted to know how German policies and discussions on marriage equality, adoption, transgender rights and the safety of LGBT teenagers are perceived around the globe. He noted that the German public picked up very strongly on the opposition to the Russian government's LGBT policies in the run up to the Winter Olympics in Sochi.

He expressed an interest in finding out more about the global LGBT situation and what more can be done from his Ministry to support the work against homophobia. Acknowledging that more can be done, Kleindiek noted that the hesitancy on gay adoption rights implies homophobic tendencies and that such actions do not help in combatting what he termed "the new global homophobic coalition."

Citing an example of homophobia coming from Western countries, Klaus Mueller recounted how the notorious American evangelist, Scott Lively, fought against the integration of the history of gay persecution in Nazi Germany into the US Holocaust Memorial Museum where he railed against a “pink Swastika agenda”; this was long before Lively influenced Ugandan politics in adopting anti-gay laws.

Providing further evidence of the growth of such groupings, Tamara Adrian spoke of the correlation between the presence of evangelical churches and homophobia in Venezuela. Related to this, Georges Azzi informed the session about the financial support provided for homophobic organizations and religious extremists in Saudi Arabia and Qatar in particular. He also mentioned the discussion in some Arab states, such as the United Arab Emirates, of introducing border checks to see if a person is LGBT and to restrict access to LGBT people entering the country.

The group noted that while LGBT rights are much better in Germany than in many other countries, important struggles are still being waged. As a global Forum, participants cautioned against being caught in an overly simplified dichotomy of Western Europe as the “good guys” and Muslim countries as the “bad guys,” and instead emphasized the necessity to clearly address the issues.

Fadi Saleh, a gender and sexuality studies lecturer from Syria but currently based in Germany, posed the question of whether it is enough



Dennis Wamala and Klaus Mueller with Ralf Kleindiek

to just have a law against prejudice, as homophobia can be shown in many other ways.

After Klaus Mueller brought up the issue of “equal rights for rainbow families,” Kleindiek responded that “everyone will always be very diplomatic on the issue of equal rights saying that ‘we should all be equal’,” however, he stated, that the German Chancellor so far has not given her full support to establish equal LGBT rights in Germany. He further noted that one can hope for support from the Supreme Court as there is definitely the right for complete equality noting that “if homophobia is used to propagate national sovereignty and independence, it is being misused for a political agenda.”

Olga Lenkova explained how Russian media and politicians use homo- and transphobia that is expressed or even implied in Germany, or other Western countries, to highlight that even in Western Europe there is no full support for marriage equality and full adoption rights. She reminded the session: “Every time a politician in Europe shows that they do not stand fully behind LGBT rights, it legitimizes homophobia in Russia and the surrounding countries.” For example, lack of marriage equality for example in Germany is highlighted as a commonality between Russia and Germany. She stressed that the influence of the lack of full equality, in both marriage and adoption rights, cannot be underestimated in its usage for anti-LGBT propaganda both in media and legislation in her home country.



Fellows of the Global LGBT Forum together with Salzburg Global staff and interns with Ralf Kleindiek

Wanja Kilber, Chairman of the Board of Quarteera, an organization of Russian speaking LGBT people in Germany, added that the virulent homo- and transphobia of the current Russian government is also exported to other countries – not only neighboring states, but countries such as Germany. He cited the example of where Russian foundations recently financed a conference in Leipzig that brought together leading right-wing homophobic representatives from Russia, France, and Germany. It is yet another sign, he said, that the network of organized homophobia is being spread and strengthened and that “they are scared, fueled by fear and call themselves the last fighters for Europe’s values.” It can be termed a “homototalitarian wave,” he warned and “it is well-funded and well-organized.”

Kilber stated that the recent massive protest against school education for more tolerance and non-discrimination in the German state of Baden-Wuerttemberg was highly influenced by Russian propaganda on the so-called protection of family, showcasing how interconnected global influences have become. Increasingly, Kilber’s NGO has had to support Russian LGBT refugees whose numbers have multiplied ten-fold over the past year. Kilber also noted that one sentence that Russian speakers often quote from Chancellor Angela Merkel is: “multi-kulti has failed” when they emphasize that homophobia is spreading throughout Europe. He reminded the session that “Germany’s half-finished LGBTI policies will not convince other countries to support LGBTI and will not counteract homophobia. As long as equal rights for LGBTI in Germany are still up for discussion, we cannot convince others.”

Dennis Wamala talked about the growing numbers of Ugandan LGBT teenagers becoming homeless because they are expelled by their families in reaction to the state-sponsored homophobic legislation and public hate campaigns. Landlords now evict LGBT tenants and cite the newly passed law as the reason. He noted the irony of being in the German Ministry of Family Affairs while reminding the session about the homophobic propaganda that cites the “gay agenda to destroy families” and how proponents of homophobia often speak of “defending the family.”

On a more positive note, Dan Zhou reported that the second annual conference for LGBT activists in Beijing, funded by the United Nations Development Program and organized by the Beijing Gender

Health Education Institute, had the approval of Chinese government departments and the China Family Planning Association.

Other members of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum shared both positive and negative developments in several other countries including South Africa, India, and the MENA region, which deeply affect family structures and cohesion.

In summary, Kleindiek noted that counter-strategies are needed in response to these trends. He pledged to speak to his colleagues at the Foreign Office and to senior diplomats to see how they can assist, stating: “We would be ready to support you and you need to let us know how we can help.”

Noting that the German government is currently in the midst of re-shaping the country’s politics, Kleindiek expressed an interest in engaging his Ministry to bring forward this cause and in hearing about progress in this regard.

Kleindiek thanked the group for the many insights and concrete examples which showed how national discussions and legislation in Germany can influence LGBT human rights in other countries, and vice versa. Klaus Mueller emphasized the unique expertise offered by this group. Kleindiek invited the group to stay in touch with him and expressed his hope for a follow-up meeting.

Meeting with LGBT Human Rights Officer, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, joined by expert representatives from the European External Action Service and Frontline Defenders

Saskia Helsdingen, the LGBT Human Rights Officer at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, came from The Hague to brief the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum at the Dutch Embassy, with Michael Pistecky, Deputy Head of the Political Section at Dutch Embassy welcoming the group. Equal rights for LGBT people are a key priority for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Helsdingen presented on how the Dutch government implements this priority in both bilateral and multilateral negotiations.



Saskia Helsdingen

The Netherlands strives for coherence in its national and international policies to ensure full equality for all, with three major goals:

1. To abolish the criminalization of sexual and gender minorities;
2. To oppose discrimination of LGBT people and communities; and
3. To achieve wider social acceptance.

In her introduction, Helsdingen spoke of the rainbow flag being hoisted outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on IDAHO-T for the first time. Indeed, equal rights for LGBT is a key priority of the Dutch human rights policy. The Netherlands is often in the forefront – with strong support from within society – and there are no concerns that this will change in case of change of government.

How the Dutch Foreign Ministry supports LGBT issues

Bilateral efforts

Includes monitoring and dialogue; the support of local organizations and activists; supporting LGBT parades and IDAHO-T. In her presentation, Saskia Helsdingen cited useful resources include the EU Guidelines on how to promote equal rights on the ground. Other examples cited included free HIV-testing in Senegal, a gay pride parade on bikes in Cambodia, support of the Human Rights Fund, the

International Lesbian and Gay Association, the China Rainbow Media Awards and the Beijing Queer film festival. Plans are also underway to advance a program on acceptance of homosexuality in Muslim-majority countries.

Multilateral efforts

Working with the European Union, an EU Taskforce on LGBT has been established.

Focus areas for the Dutch Foreign Ministry currently include:

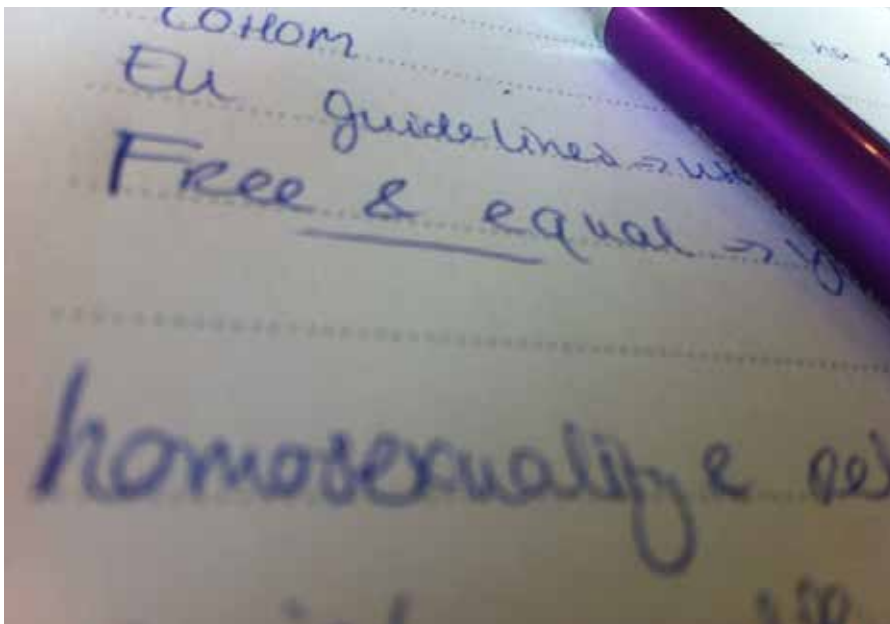
- Finding ways to limit the level of polarization;
- Ensuring more engagement with supportive developing countries, such as South Africa;
- Using appropriate – and strategic – terminology; (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not seen as a global point of reference by some governments. Should we advocate for equal rights without using LGBT terminology?)
- Establishing a better understanding of the discourse on LGBT rights in an African context;
- Finding ways to best reach out to moderate religious leaders, and in doing so, developing the most effective language and terminology to be used;
- Developing a stronger presence on these issues in the Middle East without endangering local activists; (In Egypt, the Dutch Embassy was requested by some activists not to be in touch with them as this will endanger their position)
- Promoting LGBT rights under the broad umbrella of “human rights” in some countries.

Klaus Mueller noted that HIVOS, the Dutch development organization, has supported the formation of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum and thanked Helsdingen for this early and most important support.

Georges Azzi responded that the LGBT movement in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is growing and the Netherlands could provide capacity building platforms for exchange between MENA countries. There are different ways of supporting LGBT communities that go beyond money, such as providing legal support; here also it is important for the LGBT movement to connect with mainstream organizations and thus become part of a bigger movement.

“There is a line that you do not want to cross between engaging religion and community,” noted one participant. For Fadi Saleh, the assumption is that there is a problem between homosexuality and Islam is in itself problematic and is too often presented in a black-and-white manner. Indeed, much Western discourse tends to be Islamophobic when discussing LGBT issues.

Klaus Mueller added that many LGBT individuals are part of their faith communities, as was discussed in 2013 at the Forum’s founding meeting in Salzburg. Pooja Badarinath said that engaging with religious leaders can happen on many different levels and over many different issues. If one movement is setting a precedent, then other movements are likely to follow the same procedure.



On the issue of global pressure, Kasha Nabagesera cited the incident in 2009 in Uganda when activists called for a campaign of international outcry as they needed the world to stand up and speak up against the law which was to be implemented. However, this international outcry also played a role in the law eventually being adopted after a Ugandan minister came under pressure following her public verbal heckling by a Canadian minister over the proposed bill. Here too, the double-edged sword that is international pressure came under scrutiny by the participants.

Olga Lenkova reminded the session that sometimes when the problems in certain so-called “bad countries” are pointed out, the situation in countries that are considered “good” is forgotten. After all, in many of these progressive societies, some LGBT people are being left behind including teenagers, the economically deprived and racial minorities. Indeed, their struggle seems to become less visible as they are confronted with the argument of that it could be even worse (i.e. “at least you are not living in an Islamic country”). Azzi argued that each country in the Global South has the potential to function as a partner and that there is no panacea or one rule when it comes to this issue – it should be on a case-by-case basis.

Dan Zhou informed the group that in China the Dutch embassy has been very active in supporting the LGBT community and has taken the lead among embassies in this regard. The Dutch embassy is not seen as

pushy or paternalistic and its influence on the government is seen as relatively strong.

Warning of the disturbing trend towards the “ghettoization and apartheid” of LGBT communities in some countries, Tamara Adrian emphasized that the multiplication of issues makes one see the bigger picture and reminds one that LGBT communities are discriminated against on many different levels.

In response to a question from Saleh regarding the short-term goals in MENA region of the Dutch government, Helsdingen explained that the focus is largely on women’s rights but the Ministry does have a mandate to focus on LGBT issues more in the MENA region. Helsdingen reminded participants of the need to meet and make themselves known to diplomats and speak to them.

Saleh questioned whether the West really is pushing strategically for LGBT rights as there is a perception that money is spent without thinking about what to support. He argued that the focus is on short-term results while it might actually sometimes be better to take a more protracted and long-term approach. There is a focus on “doing good deeds” while there is little local interaction and weak communication with key stakeholders. The LGBT agenda of some Western embassies sometimes echo the priorities of the West such as gay marriage and gay pride marches, which may not be the key issues for the local community.

A point repeated by the participants is that the voices of local activists should be heard as they know the context best. There was also consensus that capacity-building initiatives for local activists would assist greatly in empowering grass-roots LGBT human rights organizations.

Recounting his experience of being posted in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, Michael Pistecky, the deputy head of the Political Section at the Dutch Embassy in Berlin, spoke of the challenges of having a small staff as well as competing human rights issues. He too implored LGBT activists to make contact with supportive embassies.

Kasha Nabagesera, founder and former executive director of FARUG in Kampala, Uganda, emphasized the need for developing *ad hoc* risk funds and emergency policies, such as facilitating Schengen visas for leading human rights defenders. Due to the high risks LGBT human rights



Riccardo Serri

defenders are now facing in Uganda and other countries, a rapid escape out of the country at times might be the only way to secure their safety.

The discussion of what the Netherlands, Germany and the European Union can do to improve the security of human rights defenders who continue to work in their countries despite the risk of being arrested or physically attacked was also joined by two leading experts from Brussels and Ireland: Riccardo Serri and Andrea Rocca. Both travelled to Berlin to meet with the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum and participate in the meetings.

Serri, the deputy head of division on Human Rights Strategy and Policy Implementation at the European External Action Service (EEAS), outlined how the EEAS engages on LGBT human rights, with the EU guidelines for the promotion and protection of the human rights of LGBT people as a strong base document. The EU guidelines are for use by EU staff around the world and by EU member states' national embassies and were developed to help LGBT human rights through a variety of concrete measures and recommendations, such as démarches and public statements, court hearings and prison visits, political dialogues, support for international mechanisms, and efforts by civil society. They provide a checklist for assessing LGBT human rights issues and now explicitly cover the rights of transgender and intersex people.

Andrea Rocca, from Frontline Defenders, explained the mandate of his foundation which works to provide fast and effective support to human rights defenders globally at risk so that they can continue their work as key agents of social change.

The discussion on these central aspects of security made clear that appropriate and effective *ad hoc* risk reactions for human rights defenders are in urgent need of being developed further, and the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum hopes to use the now-established contacts to help facilitate this change.

The “Visa Issue”

There was much discussion around the support that can be given by some European countries in the form of emergency visas and general visa assistance to activists.

Saskia Helsdingen informed the participants that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs runs a shelter city project whereby cities in the Netherlands are willing and able to receive human rights activists, get them connected to representatives of the Dutch government, help them re-settle for a while, be safe and reach out to other organizations. This initiative is however designed especially for activists who would then again go back to their countries and work there again, so this is designed as short-term measure. Stressing this point, Andrea Rocca of Frontline Defenders noted that the visa issue is “absolutely fundamental” as the time needed process a visa “quickly” still means two weeks where activists are in danger. Some governments do try to speed

up visa procedures and currently there are *ad hoc* measures in place, but there is no unified policy of how to deal with these requests.

In several sessions, participants proposed that German embassies look at providing exit visas for activists who are in difficult and life-threatening situations. In case of emergencies, the cumbersome and often slow application process does not provide an exit strategy; in fact, LGBT activists are left alone in crucial situations as embassies have little to offer in case of immediate danger for activists – even if they have built a long-term working relationship with them.

Silvia Heer of the German Federal Foreign Office responded that providing visas speedily can be a problem for some EU states as existing visa laws can be very strict and until an exception has been granted by the government, embassies have to follow the guidelines.

Day 3

Meetings with Security Experts, Parliamentarians, Embassies and NGOs

Meeting with international security experts

The physical security of LGBT persons in difficult situations was the focus of a briefing session with experts on this issue. Stephan Lanzinger, Desk officer in the Human Rights Division of the Federal Foreign Office emphasized that support for human rights defenders is a long-established element of the European Union's and Germany's foreign policy. He noted that German embassies have an important role to play in putting into practice the German government's policies on human rights defenders.

There are many measures that German embassies can take, Lanzinger stated, including:

- Organizing regular meetings with human rights defenders to discuss topics such as the local human rights situation;
- Providing visible recognition for human rights defenders and their work. This can be done through appropriate use of the media, including the internet, through visits or public events;
- Where appropriate, visiting human rights defenders in custody or under house arrest and attending their trials as observers.

Speaking frankly, Lanzinger noted that there are internal obstacles that complicate an effective implementation of such protection tools, including the fact that:

- Many embassies are small and the person in charge for human rights probably has many other topics in their portfolio. Therefore, human rights issues might not always be the top priority for the person in charge;
- German diplomats usually only stay three to four years in their host country. Hence, when one tries to contact certain diplomats, they might have left the country while their successor has yet to arrive;
- At a physical level, embassies usually are well protected high-security buildings. This might give the wrong impression that the

diplomats working there are not interested in getting in contact with the civil society of their host country.

Concluding his presentation, Lanzinger gave three concrete recommendations to human rights defenders:

- **Be persistent:** Get in touch with German embassies. Don't wait for them to get in touch with you;
- **Be smart:** Carefully study the EU guidelines for human rights defenders and – if necessary – remind German embassies to act in accordance with the guidelines;
- **Be realistic:** What is desirable is not always feasible – at least not immediately.

Fadi Saleh, a gender and sexuality studies academic from Syria, and also Representing Tactical Tech, spoke of both the security threats and protections that relate to sexual minorities. Tactical Tech is an organization dedicated to the use of information in activism and focuses on the use of data, design and technology in campaigning and in helping activists understand and manage their digital security and privacy risks.

In response to such threats, Tactical Tech produced “Security In-a-Box” in collaboration with Frontline Defenders in 2009 and it is today the leading resource for digital security training for activists. It receives more than 100,000 online visitors per month and Tactical Tech directly trains on average 1000 journalists and activists per year in digital security tools and techniques.



Fadi Saleh

Given that different countries and regions have varying problems and contexts, there was the need to adapt the general “Security In-a-Box” guide and contextualize it to reflect and suit the needs of the specific communities; for example, there is now an online-security guide for LGBT activists in Arabic-speaking countries.

Andrea Rocca of Frontline Defenders cited examples of the work of his organization globally and shared copies of his organization’s security manual for human rights defenders at risk. Front Line Defenders is the International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and it works to provide fast and effective action to help protect human rights defenders at risk so they can continue their work as key agents of social change.

The discussions that followed illustrated, as with the conversation the day before at the Dutch embassy, that human rights defenders take a great number of risks, and the international community so far has not developed sufficient tools to react quickly, due to visa restrictions and lack of funding. Participants of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum also shared their realities, highlighting that despite closely following security recommendations, risks cannot be avoided as situations can change quickly.

Lunch meeting with members of the German parliament and leaders from political foundations and human rights organizations

Extending its network even further, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum met with members of the German parliament, political foundations and human rights organizations. Representatives included Ise Bosch from Dreilinden Foundation, Richard Koehler from Transgender Europe, and Andrea Kaempf and Sebastian Mueller from the German Institute for Human Rights. Martina Mittenhuber, Director of the Human Rights Office of the city of Nuremberg, which awarded Salzburg Global LGBT Forum member Kasha Nabagesera from Uganda with the Nuremberg International Human Rights Award in 2013, was also in attendance.

The lunch at the German Federal Foreign Office served as a networking opportunity to both make new contacts and to continue conversations with participants such as Riccardo Serri, Deputy Head of Division on

Human Rights Strategy and Policy Implementation at the European External Action Service (EEAS), Saskia Helsdingen, the LGBT Human Rights Officer at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Andrea Rocca of Frontline Defenders, who also attended the lunch. The gathering provided a relaxed opportunity to share ideas and best practice. The Forum participants were encouraged to meet with all the invited guests and to use this opportunity to network and gain contacts for future work and support.

Katharina Spiess and her colleagues from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development continued conversations on how LGBT human rights are embedded within the Ministry's programmatic initiatives.

Meeting with embassies

An afternoon meeting with diplomatic colleagues from the embassies of Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, Romania, the United States, Norway, Spain, and the European Union gave members of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum the opportunity to both inform about the situation of LGBT persons in their respective regions and to learn about perspectives from other embassies. Moderated by Martin Huth, Head of Human Rights Division at the German Federal Foreign Office, the discussion allowed for a frank assessment of contemporary challenges.

In addition to calling on individual embassies to do more in the countries in which they are based, diplomatic representatives were given an opportunity to interact directly with LGBT activists in a relatively intimate space and pose questions that they may not usually feel comfortable posing.

As one necessary step to move forward in building larger networks, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum presented the idea that embassies could use their network reaching out to other embassies to create regular larger focus meetings on LGBT human rights. Human rights defenders could give briefings on the situation on the ground. Being able to speak to an established and connected network of human rights officers from supportive embassies at the same time would considerably deepen the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum's network and enhance a concerted effort to advance LGBT human rights.



Klaus Mueller opens the Public Forum

Public Forum at the German Federal Foreign Office

A Public Forum provided a unique opportunity for the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum participants and representatives of the German Foreign Ministry to address key issues facing LGBT communities across the world. With approximately 100 representatives of the government and civil society present, the forum provided a platform for the sharing of diverse views.

Christoph Straesser, Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid, opened the evening outlining how the German government supports a large variety of measures to promote and protect the human rights of LGBT persons in the world: “While contexts and stakeholders vary, the questions Foreign Service members face in choosing these measures are often similar: Should support be public or discreet? How do we avoid endangering human rights defenders and the very rights they are trying to protect?”

He reminded participants and the audience that regular conversation with civil society and human rights defenders is vital: “To help us identify these questions and identify answers, we have invited a core

group of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum to join us in Berlin for meetings and conversations on how to sustain global LGBT networks.”

Klaus Mueller, the Chair of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, thanked the German Federal Foreign Office for their invitation and Christoph Straesser for his clear dedication to secure equal rights. Seldom do human rights activists from so many backgrounds have the opportunity to engage with as many representatives of government, foundations, human rights NGOs, other embassies, as well as the general public as was possible this May in Berlin, he stated.

“It is good to be with friends,” Mueller added, emphasizing the extraordinary cooperation on many levels the Foreign Office and colleagues from the human rights division had provided. He personally thanked Silvia Heer, who works in the Ministry’s human rights division, for her enormous support and inspiration during the preparation of this meeting.

Mueller explained that the partnership between the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum and the Foreign Office was to form a basis of co-operation that would not only enable LGBT groups to gain a better understanding of the procedures of the Foreign Office, but also enable the Ministry to build continuous engagement with groups that in many countries operate under extreme pressure, are fragile, or even illegal.

“We both believe this new relationship should not be taken for granted, but nurtured through regular meetings,” said Mueller. He added: “We



Tamara Adrian speaks on a panel alongside Salzburg Global LGBT Forum participants Straesser, Reddy, Groneick, Bosch, Badarinath and Zhou



Riccardo Serri (center) speaks at the Public Forum alongside Nabagesera, Becker, Konrad and Azzi

both struggle with a growing global polarization on questions around sexual orientation and gender identity,” and then posed the question: “How can we react to the fact that not only the struggle for LGBT rights has gone global, but hate too – and that trans- and homophobia are more and more connected globally?”

Supporting LGBT Human Rights: What works, where and when, and what does not?

Christoph Straesser moderated the first conversation titled: “Supporting LGBT Human Rights: What works, where and when, and what does not?”

Hans-Ulrich Suedbeck, Head of Division of the Western Balkan Office of the Federal Foreign Office described the close cooperation between LGBT activists and EU embassies in Serbia. Diplomatic pressure on the Serbian government helped to secure freedom of assembly and Pride March in Belgrade. Diplomatic intervention by EU members, Germany included, led to integrating LGBT rights into the general human rights framework in some Balkan countries. As diplomats have limited terms in a duty station, he emphasized it is critical that local activists have more than one contact point at an embassy and operate pro-actively. Inviting them to use common sense, he emphasized that the Foreign Office not only has clear guidelines to support LGBT human rights, but of course also



Hans-Ulrich Suedbeck

employs LGBT diplomats who might, along with their colleagues, open doors to such conversations.

Russia is a similarly difficult environment as described by Olga Lenkova, spokesperson for Coming Out, a St Petersburg, Russia-based LGBT support group, who made the case that behind-the-scenes diplomatic engagement with government officials at times can be very useful as these officials are often less hostile and defensive during private discussions. Wanja Kilber, Chairman of Quarteera, a Germany-based NGO that supports Russian LGBT activists, suggested the use of existing networks, such as city partnerships, to address LGBT human rights.

With regards to the role of the United Nations, Tamara Adriana of the Central University of Venezuela described the increasing visibility of LGBT issues. Capacity building by diplomatic missions, among others, has allowed activists to travel abroad and get better informed through the exchange of ideas and best practice.

Sudeshan Reddy from the United Nations Information Centre in South Africa noted how, in numerous multilateral forums, homo- and transphobia has moved away from the periphery of global human rights discourse. From the UN Secretary-General to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, LGBT rights are prominently discussed and promoted. Examples of this are the landmark 2011 resolution in the UN Human Rights Committee as well as launch of an anti-homophobia campaign

titled “UN Free and Equal.” The UN remains the largest forum of nation states in the world and the significance of its increasingly assertive anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia stance should not be underestimated; strong and continuous pro-active support from countries like Germany remains essential for future success.

The situation in India remains complex according to Pooja Badrinath of CREA with both progressive and regressive legal Supreme Court judgments within the last year. Civil society in India remains active and vibrant but capacity building is key and the support of diplomatic missions here is valuable.

Dan Zhou, a lawyer and activist from China highlighted the significance of networking, and urged a more coordinated approach from embassies on LGBT human rights that could facilitate regular exchanges and meetings as well as build bridges to other civil society organizations, as for example to gender activist groups.

Crisis Response: How to react? How to react well?

The second part of the public discussion examined the issue of “Crisis Response: How to react? How to react well?” and was moderated by



Tamara Adrian (right) with Ise Bosch



Kasha Jacqueline Nabagesera

Anke Konrad, Deputy Head of Division in the Human Rights Office of the Federal Foreign Office.

When there is a sudden deterioration of the human rights situation on the ground, it is critical that local organizations have contingency plans. As the situation in Uganda worsened, Kasha Nabagesera, founder and former Executive Director of FARUG in Kampala, Uganda, spoke of how prior training in security and safety helped local activists cope. The support of various diplomatic missions in Kampala was also encouraging both prior to and after the crack-down by the government against the LGBT community. What was not anticipated was the public outing campaign by some of the Ugandan print media which then meant it became less secure for LGBT activists to meet. Here too, the guidelines prepared by FARUG for diplomatic missions, among others, assisted with providing embassies with advice on how to support the LGBT community. These included information on the sanctions that should be applied as Uganda should serve as deterrence for other countries. Legal assistance, advice and general moral support from diplomatic missions based in hostile countries cannot be underestimated.

In a crisis situation, key contacts are a vital tool, argued Dietrich Becker, Head of Division for Western and Central Africa in the Federal Foreign Office. Hence, it is important for activists to establish personal

relationships and keep these contacts going before the situation deteriorates. In addition, activists need to be pro-active in contacting ambassadors and should not expect any pre-existing knowledge. However, even conservative diplomatic staff are aware that LGBT-issues are high on the German agenda.

Discussing the Ugandan case, Riccardo Serri of the European External Action Service informed the audience that the EU member states viewed the passing of the homophobic laws in Uganda as a very serious issue. Guidelines on LGBT issues have proved to be helpful to senior EU officials. Steps taken included the collection of information on the situation in Uganda as well as open-door and closed-door diplomacy tactics. With regard to Eastern Europe, he noted, there is considerable leverage if a country aspires to be a member of the EU. Financial pressures can be used if governments do not respect human rights.

When discussing how best to foster positive development in a hostile environment, Dennis Wamala of Icebreakers, an LGBT support group in Uganda, emphasized the need to understand the causes of a difficult situation. In the case of Uganda, religion (in the form of right-wing evangelists), culture (where one does not talk openly about sexuality), and lack of knowledge (where information is not readily available to society) created the conditions for the difficult situation. With regards to addressing this, one needs to reach out to progressive elements in society, educating civil society partners to begin a process of change. Media should be used as an ally, where possible. Local activists need to work with international organizations to remind hostile governments of their obligations under international law.

Positive news has emerged from Lebanon as recounted by Georges Azzi of the Arab Foundation for Freedom and Equality, who elaborated on a number of recent court judgments in the country. As a consequence, there is now a noticeable reluctance among the authorities to target the LGBT communities.

In responding to the question: What can we do at home to advance human rights? Klaus Mueller, the Chair of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, argued that bold and clear leadership in Germany on full equality is decisive at this point in time. "Clear legislation from homo- and transphobic laws, ensure the safety of teenagers, recognize and value families in all shapes, promote equal marriage

rights here in Germany,” he implored. Mueller noted that South Africa’s constitutional protection of LGBT human rights, Argentina’s transgender legislation and the promotion of marriage equality in many Latin American countries are models to follow – emphasizing the sense of urgency while the global spotlight is on LGBT rights. “So-called traditional values are quoted to justify the exclusion of LGBT citizens from legal protection, their families, and their neighborhoods,” explained Mueller. “Those laws and cultural practices defended, however, often are sad relics of Western colonial power – such as sodomy laws upheld in former British or French colonies. Homophobia, not homosexuality is a Western export. The diversity of sexual and gender identities is shared across the human family.”

In summarizing the evening forum, Anke Konrad highlighted the need to for LGBT activists to remain in constant contact with diplomatic missions, to not work in isolation and to be prepared for emergencies.



Next Steps

Feedback from the Federal Foreign Office repeatedly emphasized that support for human rights defenders and human rights organizations is critical to German foreign policy and this includes both structural networks as well as the kind of fluid networks that are being built through the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum.

Regular and consistent engagement between human rights groups and embassies is also a critical component of a long term strategy to support LGBT groups and LGBT rights as fundamental human rights. To tackle the many official and non-official forms of violence and repression against LGBT communities, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum and German Foreign Office came up with recommendations for consistent engagement to address these issues.

This program in Berlin could, for example, support new recommendations for long-term, more regular and consistent engagement between LGBT human rights groups and embassies. Cooperation could also focus on regional forums and seminars for human rights defenders and government ministries, building on meetings that have taken place in South East Asia and other regions. Collaboration with the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum is a good opportunity to institutionalize an approach to these meetings and to include LGBT issues into mainstream human rights discussions. Based on the multitude of new ideas and the urgency to advance LGBT rights, the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum will continue to work with the German Federal Foreign Office to harvest those ideas put forward and to intensify cooperation at all levels to ensure that this relatively new relationship develops into a partnership of shared goals.

There are no easy answers and no “short-cuts” to supporting, enhancing and sustaining LGBT rights. What do make a difference are ongoing networking, engagement and dialogue between German diplomatic missions and LGBT human rights organizations. There



Salzburg Global Fellows of the second Global LGBT Forum together the Salzburg Global staff

needs to be follow-up, monitoring and evaluation, consistent communication and openness between all parties.

Concrete Recommendations

Some of the concrete recommendations resulting from the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum to date, many of which are being implemented, include:

1. Roundtables and dialogues between donors and activists to discuss LGBT strategies should be increased, not only in countries where LGBT rights are under threat, but before they are under threat. For example, the EU-supported NGO Forum in Lebanon works well in this regard, and could be replicated elsewhere.
2. Donors and supporters of LGBT groups should focus on a multiplicity of issues, not only hate speech or physical violence. In many contexts the major challenges faced by LGBT communities relate to labor, health, housing, family, and educational policies.
3. International groups need to focus on mainstreaming LGBT rights in accepted rights like freedom of expression, assembly and association.
4. In countries where LGBT activists are facing persecution, imprisonment, and even the death penalty, the international community should consider creating systems for travel visas and protection programs in support of human rights activists.

5. Training and capacity building for LGBT activists and groups plays a critical role in many places, and support for these kinds of activities needs to be increased. Capacity building is critical to advancing the ability of civil society and activists and to building a common thread in countries affected by this issue. However, this support needs to move beyond capital cities to expand work in rural areas and secondary cities.
6. In countries where LGBT communities are being persecuted, international sanctions should best be levelled against individual politicians – not aid budgets in general. A global reduction in development aid or development support creates a tool for governments to suggest that LGBT communities are to blame for reductions in international support.
7. International donors should not only support human rights activists, but also the communities and individuals affected by LGBT repression (evictions, job losses, etc.). It is critical to build support for programs that address special circumstances where communities are affected, but where support is going to activists themselves.
8. Diplomatic missions should carefully manage public and non-public tools and engage with local civil society partners in order to ensure that the correct tool is chosen.
9. Overseas diplomatic missions should, wherever possible, attend Gay Pride parades and other LGBT events, as they can provide a critical safety mechanism for activists and communities.
10. More international pressure needs to be brought to bear on the people and organizations that are funding the politics of hate and anti-democratic movements.



Audrey Ryback and Klaus Mueller note the Forum Fellows' priorities

11. The international debate needs to be shifted away from talking about the “developed” and “developing” world, and toward a discussion focusing on countries that protect the human rights of LGBT communities and those that do not. For example, countries like Argentina, Brazil, and the Philippines can play a significant role in changing the dynamics of the North vs. South debate.

The Berlin meeting provided an invaluable opportunity to build on the foundations laid in Salzburg in 2013. For three days, participants had the opportunity to share experiences, ideas and concerns with key stakeholders in the German government, whose openness and generosity was appreciated and encouraged. For the objectives of this stimulating gathering to be fulfilled, there needs to be a collective effort for both LGBT organizations and German foreign missions to reach out to each other, to learn from one another and to work together to advance LGBT human rights.

The opportunity to engage in dialogue and debate in an open, conducive environment cannot be over-estimated. This three day-process of learning, sharing and listening was a chance to share experiences and learn from each other. The consensus is that this “fluid network” that Christoph Straesser spoke of can make a meaningful contribution towards creating long term global networks and sustaining LGBT human rights organizations. The combined expertise of the German Federal Foreign Office and the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum as well as the diverse range of participants collectively contributed to an enriching, mutually-beneficial exercise, from lively dinners to walking tours of a city whose past continues to shape its present – a city whose very existence embodies the triumph of tolerance over oppression, unity over division, and hope over despair.

For a network to truly live and thrive, there is no substitute for face-to-face interaction. The momentum of Salzburg was sustained in Berlin through the processes of discovery, empathy and learning. It must now continue.

“We believe that the global discussion has reached a critical point where we need to advance equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people and communities, their protection under the law, and their right to express themselves freely.”

Klaus Mueller, *Founder and Chair, Salzburg Global LGBT Forum*



Appendix I

Session Participants

All positions correct at time of session (May 2014)

Klaus Mueller

Founder and Chair Global LGBT Forum; Historian, Filmmaker, kmlink Consultancy, Berlin, Germany

Benjamin Glahn

European Development Director, Salzburg Global Seminar, Salzburg, Austria

Tamara Adrian

Human Rights Activist; Professor, Central University of Venezuela, Caracas, Venezuela

Georges Azzi

Executive Director, Arab Foundation for Freedom and Equality, Beirut, Lebanon

Pooja Badarinath

Program Coordinator, Advocacy and Research, CREA, New Delhi, India

Geetanjali Misra

Co-Founder and Executive Director, CREA, New Delhi, India

Wanja Kilber

Chairman of the Board, Quarteera, Berlin, Germany/ Kazakhstan

Olga Lenkova

Coming Out, St Petersburg, Russia

Kasha Jacqueline

Nabagesera

Founder & former Executive Director, Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG) Kampala, Uganda

Sudeshan Reddy

National Information Officer, United Nations Information Centre, Pretoria, South Africa

Fadi Saleh

Gender and Sexuality Studies Lecturer, Syria (based in Germany)

Dennis Wamala

Program Manager, Icebreakers, Kampala, Uganda

Dan Zhou

Executive Director, Yu Dan, Lawyer and LGBT human rights activist, Shanghai, China

Christoph Straesser

Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid

Silvia Heer

Desk Officer – Human Rights Division, Department for United Nations and Global Issues, Federal Foreign Office

Katharina Lack

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Martin Huth

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Anke Konrad

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Dietrich Becker, Head of Division, Western and Central Africa, Federal Foreign Office

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Dietrich Becker

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Katharina Spiess

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Head of Protection at Front Line Defenders, Dublin, Ireland

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Session Sponsors

The Federal Foreign Office represents Germany's interests to the world. It promotes international exchange and offers protection and assistance to Germans abroad.

With headquarters in Berlin and a network of 229 missions abroad, the Federal Foreign Office maintains Germany's relations with other countries as well as with international and supra-national organizations.

This work concerns much more than just political contacts among governments and parliaments. Because Germany and German society are enmeshed in ever-growing international networks, the Federal Foreign Office promotes intensive interaction and exchange with the world in the fields of business, culture, science and technology, the environment, development issues and many more areas, including LGBT and human rights.

Appendix III

Salzburg Global Seminar Staff

Senior Management

Stephen L. SALYER, *President & Chief Executive Officer*
Patricia BENTON, *Vice President & Chief Operating Officer*
Clare SHINE, *Vice President & Chief Program Officer*
George ZARUBIN, *Vice President & Chief Development Officer*

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Rachelle Giard, *Individual Giving Manager*
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Margit Fesl, *Housekeeping Supervisor*
Gerhard Haumtratz, *Service Supervisor*
Ernst Kiesling, *Executive Chef*
Karin Maurer, *Reservations and Revenue Supervisor*
Matthias Rinnerthaler, *Maintenance Supervisor*
Karin Schiller, *Sales and Marketing Manager*
Daniel Szelényi, *General Manager*
Natascha Weissenböck, *Events Coordinator*
Veronika Zuber, *Events Coordinator*

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(at time of program)

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Alex Jackson, *Communications*
Kevin Mersol-Barg, *Global Citizenship Program*
Daniel O'Donnell, *Program*
Gereon Plättner, *Berlin Intern*
Audrey Ryback, *Berlin Intern*

Report Author: Sudeshan Reddy is the national information officer at the United Nations Information Centre in Pretoria. He has held this position since October 2001 and is responsible for advocacy on a range of issues, including human rights. Prior to this, he served as the public information officer at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Regional Directorate for Southern Africa where he served in South Africa, Zambia and Angola. Before joining the United Nations, Mr. Reddy was research officer at the Democracy Development Program, a Durban-based non-governmental organization which focused on human rights and the consolidation of democracy in South Africa. He holds an honors degree in African politics from the University of the Witwatersrand and is currently undertaking an M.A. in mass communication through the University of Leicester. While at University, Sudeshan headed, during the course of 1997, the students LGBTI organization, Activate.

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Salzburg Global Seminar would like to also thank the Salzburg Global Fellows and experts for generously donating their time, expertise, intellectual capital and superior ideas.

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Salzburg Global Seminar

Salzburg Global Seminar is an independent non-profit institution founded in 1947 with a distinguished track record of convening emerging and established leaders to address global challenges and drive progress based on Imagination, Sustainability and Justice. It convenes imaginative thinkers from different cultures and institutions, implements problem-solving programming, supports leadership development, and engages opinion-makers through active communication networks, all in partnership with leading international institutions.

Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

In 2013, Salzburg Global Seminar, an independent, international, non-profit organization, began a multi-year program focused on LGBT and Human Rights. The purpose of the program was to develop a Global LGBT Forum with regular international meetings in Salzburg and the developing world that can support a global conversation on the position of LGBT people and communities within contemporary society, including the protection of their rights through the rule of law. The founder and chair of the Global LGBT Forum is Dr. Klaus Mueller (kmlink.net), an international consultant for a number of leading institutions, including Salzburg Global Seminar and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, DC. Dr. Mueller is an expert on the persecution of homosexuals under Nazi rule and was the initiator, research director, and associate producer of the award-winning film *Paragraph 175* (2000), which profiled gay survivors of Nazi persecution. The LGBT and Human Rights program has been initiated, developed, and implemented as a cooperation between Dr. Mueller and Salzburg Global Seminar.

The Global LGBT Forum was launched in June 2013 at Schloss Leopoldskron, home of Salzburg Global Seminar, convening more than 60 legal experts, activists, scholars, artists, politicians, journalists, researchers or human rights defenders – many holding more than one of these roles – for an international symposium entitled *LGBT and Human Rights: New Challenges, Next Steps*. The participants represented 35 countries and regions from around the world and brought together decisive global voices from diverse spheres to look at LGBT and human rights through lenses such as cultural diversity, creative expression, and civic responsibility.