

Joint statement by ILGA, Gay Japan News and Rainbow Action
Delivered by Azusa Yamashita

Thank you Madam/Mr. President,

This statement is also on behalf of Gay Japan News and Rainbow Action. We welcome the responses of the Japanese government to the recommendations made by the governments of Argentina, Canada, Norway, Switzerland and the United States requesting to prohibit and eliminate discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and protect the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We appreciate that the Japanese government has taken positive steps in recent years towards protecting the rights of LGBT people by changing relevant policies. Such changes include issuing the legal document certifying one's single status when one attempts to marry abroad whether it is same-sex or opposite-sex couples. Inclusion of mental health of sexual minority population in the national policy on suicide prevention is also one of these changes.

However, sterilization requirement of transgender people in the Law on Special Provisions for Handling People with Gender Identity Disorder, lack of anti-discrimination legislation including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity as well as social stigmatization remain great challenges towards achieving equality and wellbeing of LGBT people.

We are also concerned by the government's decision to reintroduce the supplementary teaching materials for moral education in elementary and junior high schools that says being attracted to someone of the opposite sex is natural. This reinforces heteronormativity and excludes non-heteronormative pupils.

We call on the government of Japan to take concrete steps to implement the recommendations to protect all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. We will be happy to share our expertise in this regard.

Thank you Madam/Mr. President.