

# Tackling Discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, & Intersex People

## STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR BUSINESS

### AT A GLANCE



UNITED NATIONS  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



“If we are to achieve faster global progress towards equality for LGBTI people, businesses will not only have to meet their human rights responsibilities, they must become active agents of change.”

**ZEID RA'AD AL HUSSEIN**  
UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

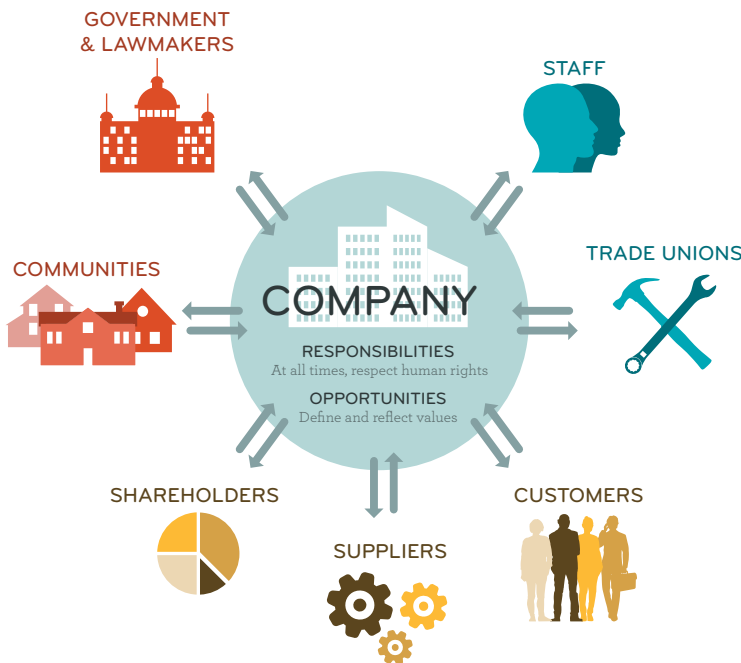
## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Human Rights Office has developed five Standards of Conduct to support the business community in tackling discrimination against lesbian, gay, bi, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people.

The Standards, produced in collaboration with the Institute for Human Rights and Business, build on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and reflect the input of hundreds of companies across diverse sectors.

### COMMUNITY

### WORKPLACE



### MARKETPLACE

The Standards of Conduct take the case for corporate engagement a step further – by pointing to the many opportunities companies have to contribute to positive social change in the communities where they do business

## THE CHALLENGE

The past decade has seen important progress in many parts of the world in the lives of LGBTI people who have benefited from legal reforms and, in some cases, shifts in social attitudes. But such progress has been uneven. In most countries, protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is inadequate at best. Even in countries that have made significant strides, LGBTI people can face high hurdles, with studies suggesting that they are more likely than the general population to be bullied at school, treated unfairly at work, and denied access to basic services.

## WHY STANDARDS OF CONDUCT?

**In 2000, the United Nations launched the UN Global Compact, the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative.** In 2011, the UN Human Rights Council endorsed a set of Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights that affirm that every business has a responsibility to respect human rights, and address any adverse human rights impacts of their operations.

**Companies have important opportunities to foster diversity and promote a culture of respect and equality.** Many firms have also found that doing so brings economic benefits — helping attract and retain talent, improving decisions and building loyalty with customers and investors alike.

**Awareness of the role that business can play is growing, and many companies have already taken steps to translate a commitment to LGBTI inclusion into action.** Even so, most are just beginning to grapple with these issues, and accumulated knowledge and best practices remain thin.

**The Standards of Conduct are intended to help accelerate the pace of change.** They set out the steps companies can and should take to ensure equal treatment at work and tackle discrimination in the broader community.

every business — regardless of size, structure, sector, or location — has a responsibility

## WHAT USE FOR THE STANDARDS?

The United Nations Human Rights Office encourages:

- **Companies** to endorse, use, and refer to these Standards and promote their use by others;
- **Civil society and other stakeholders** to use the Standards as a tool in assessing and reporting on companies' commitments, policies, and practices.

## WHAT DO THE STANDARDS SAY?

### At All Times

**1 RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS.** Businesses should develop policies, exercise due diligence, and remediate adverse impacts to ensure they respect human rights of LGBTI people. Businesses should also establish mechanisms to monitor and communicate about their compliance with human rights standards.



### In the Workplace

**2 ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION.** Businesses should ensure that there is no discrimination in their recruitment, employment, working conditions, benefits, respect for privacy, or treatment of harassment.

**3 PROVIDE SUPPORT.** Businesses should provide a positive, affirmative environment so that LGBTI employees can work with dignity and without stigma.

### In the Marketplace

**4 PREVENT OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.** Businesses should not discriminate against LGBTI suppliers, distributors or customers, and should use their leverage to prevent discrimination and related abuses by their business partners.

### In the Community

**5 ACT IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE.** Businesses are encouraged to contribute to stopping human rights abuses in the countries in which they operate. In doing so, they should consult with local communities to identify steps they might take — including public advocacy, collective action, social dialogue, support for LGBTI organizations, and challenging abusive government actions.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT:

Download the Standards of Conduct booklet, which discusses the case for business to play a larger role in promoting LGBTI equality and outlines each of the Standards in more detail. Learn how to use the Standards to empower LGBTI people in the workplace, marketplace and community: [www.unfe.org/Standards](http://www.unfe.org/Standards)

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