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Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Group Statement on **Political Declaration and**

Follow-up and Review Mechanisms of SDG Zero Draft Outcome Document:

Dear Co-facilitators, distinguished colleagues,

My name is Micah Grzywnowicz and I have the honor of presenting this statement on behalf of a Post-2015 SOGI constituency.

As a coalition of concerned human rights organizations working to counter the exclusion of persons due to real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and bodily diversity, we attribute particular significance to the retention of a human rights imperative in the Political Declaration.

This is particularly important when countering discrimination. All major UN human rights conventions prohibit discrimination on any ground, including “other status.” These conventions are living instruments that retain relevance in all contexts, and this sentiment must not be lost in these negotiations. A closed list of prohibited grounds for discrimination, as listed in paragraphs 17 and 22 , would be counter-productive and would undermine the integrity of the OWG’s proposal. Prohibition of *all forms of discrimination* is *critical*.

Furthermore, we caution that unconditional respect for national policies and priorities, as currently contained in paragraph 19, is incompatible with the universal and global nature of a transformative and sustainable development agenda. While it is reasonable to note that development policies obviously are implemented in a local context (national or subnational), it has always been a principle of international agreements that the obligations remain universal and global. This should be retained in the context of the SDGs.

Indicators must measure structural barriers to development, such as the existence of discriminatory laws and policies. At the same time, participation in review and monitoring mechanisms should not be predicated on cultural or social realities, nor should national policies bar participation in an *international* development agenda.

Co-Chairs, we're speaking about a universal agenda but how can this agenda be truly inclusive and leave no one behind if not all people are protected from discrimination?

I thank you.