

## **Discussion on SDG 4 – Quality education - Tuesday, 9 July 2019, 3:00-6:00 PM**

My name is Lia Burbano and I am speaking on behalf of the LGBTI Stakeholder Group, NGO Major Group and Volunteers.

As the moderator emphasized, we need a learning revolution!

Lifelong learning ensures that all persons across the life-course, including minorities, those of older age and people affected by emergencies and crises, have the skills to participate fully in economically productive activities and in political and cultural affairs. However, not all people have access to quality education, formal and informal, that is meaningful and prepares them throughout their lifespan for the future. This inequality is often rooted in gaps in basic needs, human rights, and environmental well-being.

Schools play a critical role in protecting children and adults from violence. Yet, they are also a setting for violence to those belonging to minority groups and facing intersecting forms of discrimination. This includes bullying, difficulties accessing bathrooms and not having their preferred names or identities recognized by teachers. This results in lower attendance and higher rates of drop-out compared to their peers.

Initiatives by volunteers and NGOs counteract barriers by raising awareness of the value of education, challenging the norms that prevent our communities from attending school, and improving educational infrastructure and learning environments. Their role must be acknowledged.

We call on states, as Ms Giannini said to “shake the world” and to:

1. Remove the structural barriers to quality education for all through targeted strategies, multi-sectoral approaches and proper resourcing — barriers interlinked with all of the SDGs existing both inside and beyond the classroom;
2. Guarantee access to quality education for all on all levels — from early childhood, through secondary, vocational and higher education, and across the lifelong quest for learning;
3. Ensure and enforce non-discriminatory, inclusive, and safe school environments with attention to all women and girls, persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous peoples, those in remote rural areas or urban settlements, racial, ethnic, religious or caste minorities, the poor, migrants, refugees, displaced persons, and the LGBTI community;
4. Include all stakeholders in actions that strive towards achieving access to education for all and improving the quality of that education;
5. Use the strengths and commitment of local, indigenous, and remote communities to teach and to lead their own development;
6. Ensure that all learners may learn and demonstrate their learning in their primary language, including sign or indigenous languages;

And finally, the question is not only what are the practical ways to improve access to quality education, but also, what will we all commit to doing **together** to remove barriers and change the educational systems to be more inclusive and responsive to our changing world?

Thank you