

The Declaration of Paramaribo for the promotion of an LGBT-friendly work environment

Preamble

Considering that:

According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law;

According to the American Convention on Human Rights, everyone who is subject to the jurisdiction of member states, should be ensured the free and full enjoyment of the convention rights without discrimination based on race, skin color, gender, religion, political or other convictions, national or social origin, economic status, birth or any other social condition;

The Inter-American Commission for Human Rights has concluded that lesbian, gay, bisexual persons and transgenders are nevertheless victims of persecution, discrimination, harassment and other kinds of human rights violations, hindering the members of the LGBT-community in the free and full enjoyment of their rights;

According to article 8 paragraph 1 of the Surinamese Constitution, everyone within in the territory of the Republic of Suriname has equal claim to the protection of person and property;

According to article 8 paragraph 2 of the Surinamese Constitution, no one may be discriminated against based on birth, gender, race, language, religion, origin, education, political conviction, economic position or social condition or any other status¹;

The Surinamese legislator has adjusted the Criminal Code in such a way that discrimination based on sexual orientation is criminalized²;

Despite the fact that prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation is embedded in the criminal justice system, the LGBT-community is still confronted with discrimination in the workplace;

This discrimination in the workplace manifests itself, among other things, through unequal treatment due to discriminatory provisions in collective labor agreements (CLA's) as well as through social exclusion and harassment;

¹ "Any other status" refers to, among others, the LGBT-community.

² Articles 175 and 175 of the Criminal Code.

That as a result, Members of the LGBT-community cannot be themselves at their workplace, making it difficult for these employees to function at their optimum level, which leads to a lower productivity per employee; and

The barriers that have been created for the LGBT-community can be significantly reduced by striving to have a work environment that is as LGBT-friendly as possible.

In order to create such an LGBT-friendly work environment, Parea has drafted the “Declaration of Paramaribo”; an action plan that intends to bring all parties closer together; LGBT and non-LGBT employees, employers, trade unions, other civil society organizations and the government.

Parea is of the opinion that only through concrete adjustments in the organizational atmosphere as well as concrete changes in the atmosphere of the (company) culture, it will be possible to actually make progress to ensure the rights of members of the LGBT-community.

The Declaration of Paramaribo strives to achieve:

- An inclusive company culture in which LGBT-employees feel appreciated, they can be themselves and their full potential is acknowledged;
- A work environment for members of the LGBT-community that goes beyond merely the minimal legal requirements of equality;
- Active leadership of heterosexual (straight) allies and LGBT role models who visibly promote an LGBT inclusive work environment; and
- A close and sustainable partnership between employers and LGBT-employees to come to a common benefit.

With the purpose of achieving these goals, Parea has drafted an action plan in collaboration with the Workplace Pride Foundation that can support companies in creating a work environment that is actually inclusive.

Organizations that commit to the Declaration of Paramaribo demonstrate the intention to collaborate with Parea to work towards a work environment that is as LGBT-friendly as possible.

The Declaration of Paramaribo

1. The employer will make the maximum effort to have a safe and comfortable work environment with equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of their sexual orientation, and respect the authenticity of employees.
2. The employer will work closely together with organizations that promote LGBT interests and strive to implement the gathered knowledge and information as much as possible in the human resources policy.
3. The employer will strive to appoint heterosexual allies and members of the LGBT - community who will take the lead in the process of creating support for an LGBT - friendly environment.

4. The employer will actively strive to create a work environment that allows LGBT - employees to visibly want to be themselves and where they can be themselves in the workplace and where together with the employer, LGBT – employees want to make efforts to implement activities related to promoting diversity and inclusiveness.
5. The employer will provide his support to a survey that intends to collect information regarding LGBT inclusiveness in the workplace.
6. The employer will establish an internal support structure in close collaboration with LGBT - employees.
7. The employer will embed this Declaration in the organizational structure, the human resources policy and insofar applicable, the CLA and demonstrate this inclusion in his/her external communication, such as for example in the annual report.
8. The employer will encourage his/her employees to participate in the survey and by doing so contribute to the development of 'best practices' for the realization and implementation of the goals of this Declaration.
9. The employer will support activities to enhance the acceptance of the LGBT - community.
10. The employer will make the maximum efforts to strive to achieve the goals of this Declaration, regardless of where in the world he/she is active.