



## President Kim Hosts First-Ever Meeting with LGBT Leaders at World Bank/IMF Shareholder Event

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WASHINGTON, April 11, 2014 - In the first conversation of its kind at a World Bank/IMF shareholder meeting, World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim today met with 15 Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) leaders from developing countries around the world to listen to their experiences and concerns about discrimination in the development process against persons solely because of their sexual orientation. The activists shared their stories with President Kim, World Bank Group management, delegations, and staff. They discussed their proposals for change, and how the needs of LGBT communities in their countries relate to the World Bank Groups twin goals of ending extreme poverty by 2030 and boosting shared prosperity for the poorest 40 percent in developing nations. President Kim expressed his commitment to review World Bank Group policies in light of the issues raised. "I want to thank the gay and lesbian activists from around the world for their courage in speaking up on behalf of others in vulnerable situations in their countries, and for pressing home the point that discrimination against any group is unacceptable -- whether it is religion, race, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Their stories will inform us as we move ahead with revisions to the World Bank Groups long-standing safeguards, which were designed to protect the interests of individual people in our projects, he said. The meeting was held in private to protect the identities of several of the activists who feared reprisals in their home countries. At the event, the activists, who came from 12 countries on four continents, thanked President Kim for meeting with them, and urged him to take further action to ensure that World Bank Group activities do not exclude sexual minorities in the future. "We are very encouraged to see that the World Bank Group stands ready to listen to the voices of marginalized communities, in particular sexual minorities. We urge President Kim to go further and ensure it translates into concrete changes in the way the World Bank Group conducts business in its client countries. As a start, we suggest that the World Bank Group devote substantial resources to research the links between poverty, sexual orientation and gender identity; and develop a Gender and Sexual Minorities safeguard to ensure World Bank Group projects do not harm women and sexual minorities further, the activists said in a group statement. In a recent op-ed on discrimination, President Kim said that discrimination based on gender, age, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity or other factors can hurt a countrys competitiveness by impeding investment and full economic participation in the work force. The World Bank  
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