United Nations Trans Advocacy Week 2022

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The sixth edition of the United Nations Trans Advocacy Week (TAW) will take place in June-July 2022, as a virtual initiative. This year, TAW is held under the general theme of 'Gender Justice, Peace, and Security'.

TAW core partners, GATE, APTN, TGEU, RFSL and ILGA World are delighted to host sixteen delegates, selected through an open application process. Since 2017, TAW has been making tremendous contributions by providing training solutions, enabling trans rights defenders to engage with UN human rights mechanisms and, in so doing, ensuring trans and gender-diverse representation in UN spaces.

TAW 2022 includes a line-up of bespoke training sessions for our delegates, closed-door meetings with special procedures mandate holders and a public side event.

"Navigating UN spaces can be very challenging, but our presence and meaningful engagement in human rights-related dialogues and policy development are of the utmost importance. Despite the challenges caused by a global pandemic, TAW 2022 is an opportunity to re-engage with UN human rights mechanisms", said Erika Castellanos, Interim Executive Director of GATE. "For TAW 2022, we have created a safe space that fosters a shared learning experience, networking, leadership development, and strengthening our communities' capacities to advocate for human rights within an international framework applicable to their regions and countries", Castellanos further added.

Reflecting on Trans Advocacy Week 2022, Zhan Chiam, Deputy Director of TGEU, noted "Trans Advocacy Week is the only annual trans-led engagement at the UN, and therefore vitally important to our communities, especially in countries in Central Asia and some part of Eastern European that do not have regional human rights mechanisms. For these, the UN is the only multilateral fora that can hold their governments accountable, especially in a context where trans rights alongside gender rights, reproductive justice, and civil and political rights as a whole are under attack". Chiam, who is also a co-founder of Trans Advocacy Week, further added: "We are thrilled to work with trans defenders from around the world to shape their advocacy and representation at the UN".

Speaking from Bangkok, Wannapong (Nhuun) Yodmuang, Senior International Advcocacy Officer at the Asia-Pacific Transgender Network, observed" "to tackle the trivialization of trans rights at the United Nations and its Peace and Security agenda, the Trans Avocacy Week can serve as a empowering space for trans people across the world to learn, self-organise, and be ready to cliam the space that we deserve at the UN'. Yodmuang, an international law professional, will also be moderating one of the training sessions meant for TAW delegates.

"International advocacy provides trans human rights defenders with a unique opportunity of taking national-level work to international fora, and consequently to strengthen the work done locally to enhance trans human rights. In this sense, trans advocacy week provides an invaluable and unprecedented opportunity for rights defenders to engage with the United Nations", said Dr Chamindra Weerawardhana, Senior Consultant at ILGA World, who leads ILGA's trans human rights programme. "This year's theme of 'gender justice, peace and security' is one that forces us to reflect on the challenges inherent in the UN's WPS agenda, and presents an opportunity to explore more inclusive and holistic approaches to WPS", Weerawardhana further added.

Andrea Ayala, a human rights defender from El Salvador, a former international footballer, and currently International Advocacy Officer at RFSL, added, “TAW is a great opportunity for rights defenders from global south countries. As a trans human rights defender from a global south country myself, I can personally vouch for the fact that TAW represents an absolute game changer. This is a great opportunity for those of us doing advocacy work in global south contexts”.

“By empowering our trans, gender non-conforming, and non-binary communities with a wealth of insights into UN human rights mechanisms, we will be able to pave the path to meaningful representation in UN spaces”, Ayala further added.

The United Nations has long been a space where trans and gender-diverse people have been seldom represented. TAW seeks to create an interactive platform for trans human rights defenders from different parts of the world to engage proactively with UN human rights mechanisms, procedures, policies, and efforts within the UN system to enhance gender justice and representation.

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