

1 August 2018

Mr Lee Hsien Loong  
Prime Minister's Office  
Istana, Orchard Road  
Singapore 238823

Dear Prime Minister,

## **We Are Ready for a Better Singapore**

Following another successful run of Pink Dot – the 10<sup>th</sup> – at Hong Lim Park on 21 July 2018, we would like to take the opportunity to reach out and share with you the **10 Declarations for Equality** that were made at the event. We endorse these declarations wholeheartedly and unreservedly, and would also like to share with you the commitments we have collectively made, and recommendations on how we can take this forward together.

2 Over the years, the Singapore Government has taken the position that Singapore is ultimately a “conservative” country, and therefore “not ready” for the repeal of S377A or achieving legal equality for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community.

3 As a Singaporean community of parents, volunteers, professionals, artists and citizens, we are acutely aware that there are people who are uncomfortable with or disapprove of sexual orientations or gender identities different from their own. However, their discomfort should not be a reason for or lead to discrimination of our minority community.

4 As an alliance of various LGBTQ and LGBTQ-affirming organisations, and on behalf of all our stakeholders – our family members, clients, service-users, volunteers, staff, supporters, donors, community and corporate partners – we urge you to speak up and act for us.

5 We also invite you to also commit yourself to the **10 Declarations for Equality**, and work with our Government and fellow Singaporeans to achieve them.

6 We have included some recommendations on how this can be achieved:

### **The 10 Declarations for Equality are as follows:**

*Declaration 1. We are ready to stand by our friends and family members who are LGBTQ, so that none of them will ever feel the need to hide who they are.*

Recommendation: We will continue working with LGBTQ individuals, couples, families, communities and organisations to continue building resources and resilience.

*Declaration 2. We are ready to start difficult conversations with people who don't agree with the values that we stand for. We need to keep sharing our stories and build better understanding.*

Recommendation: We, along with other like-minded LGBTQ organisations, will seek to initiate dialogue with various religious groups, hopefully with the support of government ministries like **Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY)** and **Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF)** to facilitate these conversations.

*Declaration 3. We are ready for LGBTQ organisations to be able to register themselves under the Societies Act so that we can have proper legal entities to support members of the LGBTQ community.*

Recommendation: We, along with other like-minded LGBTQ organisations, are prepared to work closely with **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** to work out a road-map to ensure that non-profit groups will comply with existing legislation and be legally registered.

*Declaration 4. We are ready to see more positive portrayals of LGBTQ people in our mainstream media without censorship.*

Recommendation: We will work closely with **Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI)** to ensure that appropriate and updated media guidelines are in place, that are more in line with contemporary understanding of how individuals, couples and families, regardless of their sexual orientation and/ or gender identity, should be represented in a respectful manner in mainstream media.

*Declaration 5. We are ready for schools to support all our children equally with accurate sex education, and to equip teachers to handle homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools.*

Recommendation: We will work with **Ministry of Education (MOE)** to ensure that no child is excluded or left behind because of their sexual orientation and/ or gender identity. This includes working towards setting up a taskforce to look into the provision of adequate, evidence-based sexuality education and developing guidelines for handling homophobic and transphobic bullying in educational institutions.

*Declaration 6. We are ready for greater access to healthcare and social services. We need doctors, nurses, social workers and counsellors to be better informed about the needs of LGBTQ individuals.*

Recommendation: We will work with **Ministry of Health (MOH)** and the **Health Promotion Board (HPB)**, **Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF)** and the **National Council of Social Service (NCSS)** to educate them on the specific health care and social service needs of the LGBTQ community, remove existing barriers to healthcare and social services, and ensure fair and equitable access to services for the LGBTQ community.

*Declaration 7. We are ready for businesses that embrace diversity so that our LGBTQ friends have an equal footing when they are looking for jobs and that they are protected from discrimination at their workplaces.*

Recommendation: We will work with **Ministry of Manpower (MOM)** and the **Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP)** to ensure this.

*Declaration 8. We are ready for LGBT Singaporeans to be seen as equal citizens in the eyes of the law. We need to repeal 377A, an outdated law that criminalises gay men for something so innate to them.*

Recommendation: We believe that in the long run, decriminalisation of same-sex relations between men needs to happen, as it already has in the vast majority of developed nations and many developing nations around the world. We will actively engage **Parliament**, the **Judiciary** and **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** to ensure that there will be equal access to justice.

*Declaration 9. We are ready to be the change we want to see. We can all do our part to change the hearts and minds of the people around us.*

*Declaration 10. We are ready to be heard.*

Recommendation: We will continue to engage with all sectors of society on issues that affect the LGBTQ community.

7 We do all this because we believe in Progress, Justice and Equality, which are represented on 3 of the 5 stars of our beloved National Flag.

8 The Government has often told us that we are “not ready”. Today, we are writing to let you know that we are. We invite you to help us create avenues for dialogue.

Majulah Singapura!

Yours sincerely,

**Free Community Church**

Inclusive Christian Church in Singapore committed to welcoming everyone.

[www.freecomchurch.org](http://www.freecomchurch.org)                      [info@freecomchurch.org](mailto:info@freecomchurch.org)

**Humanist Society (Singapore)**

Seeks to represent the non-religious in Singapore who pursue fulfilling and ethical lives. Guided by Reason, informed by Evidence and driven by Compassion, the Society raises awareness for science, humanism and ethical living.

[humanist.org.sg](http://humanist.org.sg)                      [info@humanist.org.sg](mailto:info@humanist.org.sg)

**IndigNation SG**

An annual month-long festival of events by and for the LGBTIQ+ community in Singapore.

[www.indignationsg.com](http://www.indignationsg.com)                      [indignation2018@gmail.com](mailto:indignation2018@gmail.com)

**MARUAH**

Singapore human rights NGO.

[maruah.org](http://maruah.org)                      [maruahsg@gmail.com](mailto:maruahsg@gmail.com)

**Oogachaga**

Community-based, professional organisation working with LGBTQ individuals, couples and families since 1999.

[www.oogachaga.LGBT](http://www.oogachaga.LGBT)

[contact@oogachaga.com](mailto:contact@oogachaga.com)

**Pelangi Pride Centre**

Singapore's only LGBT library, community space and resource centre since 2003.

[www.pelangipridecentre.org](http://www.pelangipridecentre.org)

[pelangipridecentre@yahoo.com](mailto:pelangipridecentre@yahoo.com)

**Project X**

Sex workers' rights group in Singapore advocating for a fair and safe sex industry and human rights for all.

[theprojectx.org](http://theprojectx.org)

[projectx.sg@gmail.com](mailto:projectx.sg@gmail.com)

**Prout**

Meetup and support platform for LGBTQs to find their local community, receive relevant events and group recommendations, and get support from resources, experts and helplines.

[www.facebook.com/proutapp](http://www.facebook.com/proutapp)

[contact@proutapp.com](mailto:contact@proutapp.com)

**SAFE Singapore**

Parents, families and friends of LGBTQ persons, who believe in a society that accepts, affirms and empowers everyone to participate fully in it, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

[safesingapore.blogspot.com](http://safesingapore.blogspot.com)

[safesingapore@gmail.com](mailto:safesingapore@gmail.com)

**SG Narratives**

Aims to explore the intersections of the Social and Personal through conversations in the hopes to cultivate, demonstrate and practice empathy.

[www.sgnarratives.com](http://www.sgnarratives.com)

[team@sgnarratives.com](mailto:team@sgnarratives.com)

**Singapore LGBT Law**

Non-profit project to bring easily understandable, sustained, free legal advice on some issues faced by LGBT Couples & Families in Singapore.

[www.singaporelgbtlaw.com](http://www.singaporelgbtlaw.com)

[hello@singaporelgbtlaw.com](mailto:hello@singaporelgbtlaw.com)

**The Bi+ Collective Singapore**

Community that provide resources, support and love for Bi+ individuals living in Singapore.

[thebipluscollective.wixsite.com/tbcsg](http://thebipluscollective.wixsite.com/tbcsg)

[thebipluscollective@gmail.com](mailto:thebipluscollective@gmail.com)