



PRESS RELEASE

Forum on the Rights of LGBTIQNA+ People and Political Parties' Policies 2023

30th March 2023 between 13:00 - 16:00

At the Student Christian Center in Bangkok, Thailand

On March 30th, 2023, from 13:00 (1:00 pm) to 16:00 (4:00 pm) at the Student Christian Center in Bangkok, Thailand, the working committee for the LGBTIQNA+ Civil Rights Network for Political Party Policy 2023, which is supported by more than 33 sexual and gender diversity rights organizations, organized the event "Panel Discussion on the Rights of LGBTIQNA+ People and Political Parties' Policies 2023". The event provided a platform for sexual and gender minorities and civil society organizations to present issues related to LGBTIQNA+ inequality, and propose policies to the political parties, with the goal of improving the rights of the LGBTIQNA+ community in six areas including law, health, education, employment, government welfare, and positive media.

A total of twelve political parties running in the upcoming election in May 2023 were invited to attend. This event provided the opportunity for representatives of the political parties to listen to the voices of sexual and gender minority citizens, as well as present policies which would demonstrate the political parties' assurance in achieving equal rights for, and protection of, sexual and gender minorities. As the political parties made pledges to ensure that the policies would be implemented in practice, representatives from civil society organizations, public participants, and the media were present to act as witnesses.

Tunyawat Kamolwongwat, representing the Move Forward Party, stated that the Move Forward Party reaffirms the human rights of sexual and gender minorities, and aimed to push for legislation in the House of Representatives, including the draft Civil Partnership Bill and other laws to support diverse gender identities (e.g. ability to change legal title), as well as the legalization of sex work by repealing the Prevention and Suppression of Prostitution Act B.E. 2539, in order to provide protection and social benefits for sex workers under the labor laws and prevent coercion. Furthermore, Kamolwongwat mentioned that the

Move Forward party aims to reform the healthcare system to achieve equality in all dimensions.

Voranai Vanijaka, an advisor to the leader of the Chart Pattana Gla Party, pledged to push for the draft Marriage Equality Act to become enacted, as well as push for legislation that enables all individuals to choose their legal title. Vanijaka also emphasized the elimination of discrimination (of LGBTIQNA+) in the workplace as one of the party's core policies. The party also has a clear stance on reforming the laws which are founded upon 'good morals' (ศีลธรรมอันดีงาม) and instead be based on human rights principles. Additionally, the party aims to provide police officers with training on gender diversity to increase awareness and reduce discrimination towards sexual and gender minorities.

Udomsak Sirisutthiwat, representing the Chart Thai Pattana Party, emphasized the importance of human dignity, equality, and the ability to develop the country together, supported by the push for more modern laws which ensure gender equality, and support the empowerment of sexual and gender minorities for the development of Thailand. The party also aims to push for equal marriage and laws that recognize gender identity and eliminate gender-based discrimination.

Phakin Charoennonsit, representing the Thai Sang Thai Party, stated that the party has been collecting evidence and is therefore well aware of the extent of inequality that sexual and gender minorities face. The party aims to expand opportunities for sexual and gender minorities by supporting solutions that target structural issues, including pushing for the Marriage Equality Act, which would address inequality due to tax and employment discrimination. Further, the party also emphasized the need to have legislation that can protect sex workers and aimed to include gender-affirming healthcare as part of comprehensive health insurance.

Tankhun Jittissara, representing the Pheu Thai Party, reaffirmed the party's stance to continuously push for the draft legislation of the Marriage Equality Act, and the Gender Identity Recognition Act, as well as make amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act to provide greater coverage. The party also plans to repeal the Prevention and Suppression of Prostitution Act B.E. 2539, improve the welfare and status of sex workers, and reduce social stigmatization. Additionally, the party has plans to propose laws to support other aspects of equality which have not been previously proposed, such as an SME Fund Act to especially support sexual and gender minorities to have better opportunities for livelihoods.

Pawisarat Tiyapairat, leader of the Phuea Chart Party, reaffirmed the commitment to create opportunities for everyone to participate in the country's transformation, support gender equality, and encourage further participation of sexual and gender minorities in legislative processes. The party is also willing to push for laws that reflect the needs of individuals with diverse gender identities, such as allowing the use of the preferred legal title, and they aim to amend the Ministry of Education's regulations to allow students to dress according to their gender identity, as well as including gender transitioning in healthcare benefits.

Chanan Yodhong, representing the Phuea Thai Party, stated that the Phuea Thai Party places importance on addressing the issue of poverty affecting all groups. Regarding sexual and gender diversity, Yodhong stated that the party will continue to push for the Equal Marriage Act, and recognize labor rights-related issues, including extending maternity and paternity leave for all parents, including same-sex couples. Further, the party supports making gender transitioning available as a benefit under national healthcare coverage.

Natt Mongkolnavin, representing the Bhumjaithai Party, emphasized that the first thing to be done at the House of Representatives is to push forward the draft Marriage Equality Act as an agenda item for two consecutive terms, followed by efforts to push for the enactment of gender recognition laws.

Pongpol Yodmuangcharoen, representing the Ruam Thai Sang Chart Party, emphasized the addition of surrogacy which is still missing from the proposed Civil Partnership Bill and motivated that this would create opportunities for sexual and gender minorities to have children. Further, Yodmuangcharoen reaffirmed the party's stance on promoting the rights of sexual and gender minorities to be as equal as those of [normative] men and women.

Nichakan Rakwongrit, representing the Commoners' Party, stated that the party has policies that address several aspects supporting the rights of sexual and gender minorities, and end discriminatory practices by amending laws that are gender unequal. The party strongly supports the amendment of the Marriage Act and pushes for a Gender Recognition Act that is SOGIESC inclusive. In addition, the party advocates for public health reform to create a healthcare system that is safe for sexual and gender minorities.

Thitiporn Chanwangsa, the Secretary-General of the Equal Party, stated that the party has plans to promote sexual and gender minority rights in three main aspects. The first aspect is to provide options for people to choose their legal gender according to their identity. Second is education, in which the health education curriculum will provide knowledge and understanding of sexual and

gender diversity to reduce harassment and discrimination based on gender. The final aspect is related to health policy, in which the party aims to provide comprehensive health benefits for transgender individuals and ensure equal opportunities for those who live in remote areas.

Pinyo Rutham, representing the Change Future Party, reaffirmed his stance on protecting the rights of sexual and gender minorities from harassment and discrimination, including creating reporting mechanisms within schools to eliminate bullying of sexual and gender minority students. The party also commits to collaborating with all political parties to achieve equal rights between all genders.

Finally, the event concluded with representatives from the working committee for the LGBTIQNA+ Civil Rights Network for Political Party Policy 2023 announcing the policy demands that have resulted from the collaborative work within the working groups, requesting that the political parties adopt the proposals and implement them in order to protect the rights of the sexual and gender minorities.

Watch the recorded live-stream of the Forum on the Rights of LGBTIQNA+ People and Political Parties' Policies 2023 at Prachathai's Facebook Page:
<https://fb.watch/jB5xZohTNR/>

