

Your excellencies, good evening. As everyone may have noticed, Colombia Diversa (where I work) is the only participant organization from Colombia during this Assembly. This is not a coincidence, we are the most desperate! LGBT persons are not safe in my country, and violence committed against them during the armed conflict remains unaddressed and sometimes justified. Poor articulation and complementarity with the ICC will hinder our efforts to create a feminist and queer-inclusive transitional justice.

Before I ask something, let me explain: Colombian civil society has been profoundly let down after the convoluted closure of the Preliminary Examination. We are happy to pave the way and be the trailblazers for new methods of complementarity and participation, but civil society must be an active part of it. We were blindsided a year ago with the announcement of the 6-page-MoU, and we remain in the dark. There are no substantial arguments about the Colombian situation that justify closing the Preliminary Examination with such an inarticulate exit strategy. We need more from you: how is the OP going to evaluate significant progress on criminal investigations, on victims' participation, on the search of disappeared persons, on the design and implementation of reparations? What are the standards for the investigation, judicialization and reparation of gender-based violence committed against women and LGBT persons?

We are working in Colombia Diversa to successfully litigate the first -ever- gender persecution case against LGBT persons before a transitional tribunal. We believe this will offer a comprehensive and complex view of what happened during the war, that it will enrich the definition of *gender*, that it will strengthen the queer and feminist alliances, that it will make visible hundreds of stories that remain untold, that it will reshape the definition of "punishment", "harm" and "participation". We also hope that this litigation strategy will be a platform for other feminist and LGBT transitional justice initiatives around the world. Now that the gender persecution policy paper is being launched, we believe there are several collaboration opportunities arising.

So, here's my ask. It's a big ask, but it's worth it. Create a substantial follow-up system for the MoU. This does not have to be an effort from scratch, we had already been working with the OP from 2019 to 2021 on benchmarks that would indicate significant progress in the judicialization of sexual violence, forced disappearance, victims' participation, and transformative reparations.

Colombian civil society is wounded, but we are still looking for ways to cooperate and insist on the relevance of the universal jurisdiction and jurisprudence produced by the ICC. Without a follow-up system we will have disconnected yearly visits and ethereal signals that won't help victims get justice, and we will lose the alliance built between the ICC and Colombian civil society that has existed since 2004. I am asking you to make things differently. In Colombia we are used to set the example, and we will gladly make sure that it is worth it! Let's create an exit strategy that is useful for victims, for the ICC and for the story we want to write about justice and about human kindness.