



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

3 December 2015

Dear Sir Elton,

I wish to thank you for your letter dated 16 October 2015 and for your warm and generous words on my efforts as Secretary-General to promote and protect the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. Ending homophobic and transphobic discrimination and violence is indeed a cause close to my heart and to the founding mission of the United Nations.

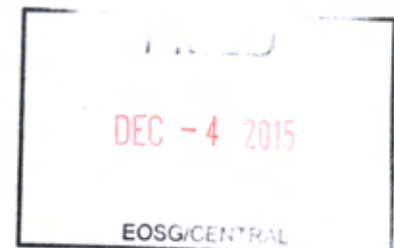
Allow me to express my gratitude for your own leadership to promote LGBT equality and an AIDS-free world, both in your private capacity and through the work of the Elton John AIDS Foundation. Your voice reaches millions around the world and has played an important role in sensitizing people and their Governments to the challenges facing members of the LGBT community.

I would also like to thank you for highlighting the potential role of businesses in combatting anti-LGBT discrimination. In September this year, I spoke at a United Nations ministerial-level event on the links between LGBT inclusion and progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – a theme that will be reprised at a follow-up event on the economic cost of homophobia on Human Rights Day on 10 December 2015 at United Nations Headquarters. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which has been leading much of the United Nations work in this area, including the ongoing United Nations “Free & Equal” campaign, plans to develop United Nations guidance for businesses to help companies play their part in ending the social and economic marginalization of LGBT people – an initiative for which we would greatly welcome your support.

Sir Elton John  
Founder  
Elton John AIDS Foundation  
London

EXA/08/001 HRT/03/002

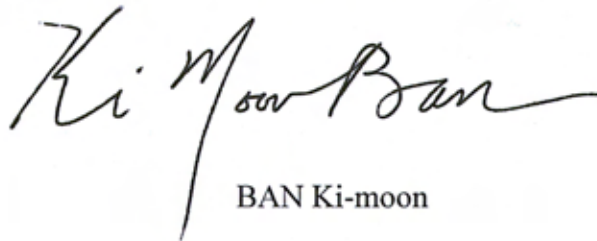
15-10391 / 15-09826



Thank you, again, for your inspiring commitment and your offer of partnership. I would encourage you to have your office reach out to Mr. Charles Radcliffe, LGBT rights adviser and the United Nations campaign "Free & Equal" Director, OHCHR, to explore the scope for potential collaboration. Mr. Radcliffe can be reached at tel. +1 212 963 4953 or by email at [radcliffe@un.org](mailto:radcliffe@un.org).

I look forward to working in partnership to help make the world a more free, fair and equal place for LGBT people everywhere.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ki Moon Ban". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ki" and last name "Ban" being more prominent than the middle name "Moon".

BAN Ki-moon



*Executive Office of the Secretary-General  
Cabinet du Secrétaire général*

To: CDC (through ODSG),

As requested by the SG, please find attached for your approval and his signature a letter addressed to Sir Elton John, in reply to his letter of 16 October, in praise of the SG's efforts to promote and protect the rights of LGBT people.

AK

Political Unit  
2 December 2015

Received in ODSG

3 Dec 2015

Seen by:

Rf F2

15-10391

email

**ACTION COPY** AG /w. end.  
DSG/cdc

**RECEIVED**

**NOV 30 2015**

15-10391

**EOSG/CENTRAL**

**NOTE TO CHEF DE CABINET**

**Re. Letter from Sir Elton John to the Secretary-General on efforts of the Secretary-General to promote and protect the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people**

(15-09826)

1. A letter dated 16 October, was received from Sir Elton John in praise of the Secretary-General for his efforts to promote and protect the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.
2. Please see attached a draft response for EOSG's consideration.

Ivan Simonović  
30 November 2015

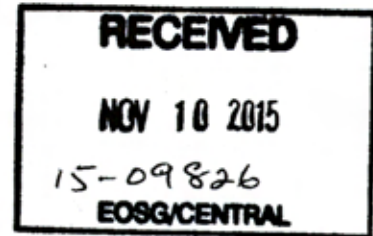
ERR/02/001  
HRT/03/002



Via OHCHE NYO (collog 15-09824)

TWENTIETH  
ANNIVERSARY  
1993 - 2013

20



October 16, 2015

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon  
United Nations Secretary-General  
United Nations Headquarters  
New York, NY 10017

**ACTION  
COPY**

OHCHE NYO (mail)  
DSG / CDC  
PA / ASM / AG

Dear Mr. Secretary General:

I am writing to express my deep gratitude for your extraordinary leadership on LGBT rights worldwide. It is indeed both heart-warming and truly historic to have a United Nations Secretary General so passionately and personally committed to this fight.

I am continuously reminded of the huge and pressing issues that you are dealing on a daily basis in so many parts of the world and the strong opposition by many UN Member States to your views on LGBT rights. And yet, as you rolled out the new Sustainable Development Goals, you made sure to affirm that they are all based on one guiding principle: leave no one behind. I was very moved to hear you say at that time: "We will only realize this vision if we reach all people regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity" and that "ending marginalization and exclusion of LGBT people is a human rights priority and a development imperative." I couldn't agree more.

I also very much want to commend and congratulate you on your efforts to ensure that the UN, as the premiere global institution and one of the world's largest employers, is leading by example when it comes to fundamental fairness, inclusion and equality. The unprecedented joint UN statement on ending violence and discrimination against LGBT people, endorsed by 12 UN agencies (including UNAIDS, a key ally of ours in the global fight against AIDS), is an extremely strong showing that support for LGBT rights is not just personal but institutional.

As we together seek to open hearts and minds and get governments, corporations and individuals to embrace LGBT rights as essential to both social justice and economic development, having the UN not just talk the talk but walk the walk is extremely persuasive. It is my understanding that the educational efforts through your Free and Equal Campaign have also reached millions (some say billions) of people, partners and policy makers worldwide. And for that too, I am most grateful.

As your bold efforts continue, please know that my Foundation and I stand ready to help in any way we can. As a small foundation, and as a private citizen, I am trying in my small way to contribute to a tide of change that we all pray will have a significant impact not only on LGBT rights but on creating an AIDS-free world. To that end, there a few recent activities I wanted to share with you.

**ELTON JOHN  
AIDS FOUNDATION**

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**ELTON JOHN AIDS FOUNDATION  
AND JIMMY CHOO  
CREATING AN AIDS FREE FUTURE  
PROJECT PEP, 2009**

EXR/08/001; HRT/03/002



First, I am delighted to join forces with the United States Government's PEPFAR Programme in launching in early November a \$10m Rapid Response Fund designed to accelerate LGBT community access to life-saving HIV information, testing and treatment in Africa. For the first time in the history of the epidemic, the end of AIDS is within our collective reach but not if we shame and shun those in need. We cannot end AIDS without ensuring LGBT rights and engaging LGBT people - its just that simple. We hope that this Fund can work closely with other donors, foundations, corporations and mechanisms to protect and promote LGBT rights.

Second, I held a gathering of 20 CEOs with Sir Richard Branson at my home this September to create a corporate compact on LGBT non-discrimination. Leaders from some of the largest global companies, including Coca Cola, Unilever, and Google, met to review some immediate, tangible steps the corporate world can take to protect LGBT rights. During this meeting UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibe made an extremely compelling case for action based on the impact of homophobia on health. We will continue to build on this foundation at Davos and other gatherings of corporate leadership and would welcome support from the UN's business partners.

I recently extended this work by speaking to 350 business leaders at the Yalta European Strategy annual meeting on how human rights for all are an essential pillar of Ukraine's future, and the critical role that business can play in ensuring that human rights include LGBT rights so that Ukraine can join the family of nations for whom such rights are self evident. I have enclosed a copy of my speech for your reference. This speech and my subsequent interview with the BBC prompted several responses from Russia. I have now spoken with President Putin, who has invited me to meet with him within the next month to discuss LGBT rights in Russia. I welcome your guidance on this meeting.

(speech not  
enclosed)

Your leadership and that of the UN Secretariat and UNAIDS are making a huge difference that will save countless lives and change, not just the course of the AIDS epidemic, but the course of history. I know that we will not be blessed to have you as Secretary General forever and would welcome the opportunity to find ways to work together in the remaining few years to maximize our collective impact.

With boundless respect and gratitude,

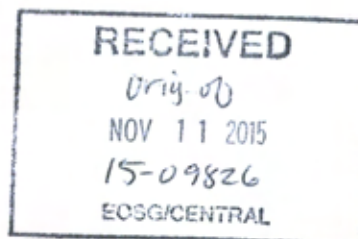
Sir Elton John  
Founder

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CREATING AN AIDS FREE FUTURE  
PROJECT PEP, 2009





His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon  
United Nations Secretary-General  
United Nations Headquarters  
New York, NY 10017

**ACTION COPY** Human Rights  
DSG, ColC  
PA, ASM, AL

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**ELTON JOHN AIDS FOUNDATION  
AND JIMMY CHOO**  
CREATING AN AIDS FREE FUTURE  
PROJECT REP 2009



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With boundless respect and gratitude,

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Founder

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