



## **Love Makes a Family.**

### **Asia-Pacific Rainbow Families come together in Hong Kong for the first annual celebration for families.**

May 11-12, 2017 - Planet Ally and the International Family Equality Day (IFED) will jointly convene the first annual Asia-Pacific Rainbow Families Forum in Hong Kong at Bloomberg Ltd Office.

The Forum will feature several events over 2 days to coincide with the upcoming International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT).

In conjunction with IFED this year's IDAHOT theme is 'families'. IDAHOT is celebrated on May 17 and aims to celebrate all forms of sexual and gender diversities.

'Families are one of the most crucial building blocks of our societies, and this is why families matter.'" said Joel Bedos, International Coordinator of IDAHOT.

The 2-day Asia-Pacific Rainbow Families Forum will both raise awareness of the existence of rainbow families in the Asia-Pacific region and highlight the importance of family support.

"Families are at the heart of all of our lives. Whether it's the family we grew up with or the families we have built throughout our lives," said Maria von Känel, IFED Founder & Coordinator and Co-founder of the Asia-Pacific Rainbow Families Forum.

100 participants from over 10 different countries in the Asia-Pacific region will share research findings advocating for the urgent need for recognition, protection and equal treatment of rainbow families and LGBTI people.

The Forum will feature films, a panel discussion, country presentations, and delegate workshops. Representatives come from all over the region and the world, representing everything from civil society, faith groups, academia, the United Nations and the private sector.

"Together a mighty group of rainbow family advocates are creating history. The Asia-Pacific region has never convened a rainbow families dialogue on this scale before," said Bess Hepworth, mother of two, founder of Planet Ally and co-founder of the Forum.

"Being proud, visible, and sharing stories can change hearts and minds. We humbly hope this forum can help to dispel notions that LGBTI rainbow families don't exist or are not a relevant cultural issue for LGBTI people in Asia and the Pacific Islands."

#### **Contact Information:**

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#### **About Planet Ally**

Planet Ally is a new global multimedia platform committed to LGBTI and ally travel information and advocacy. Planet Ally empowers LGBTI people and allies to make informed travel decisions. We want to live on a planet of allies!

#### **About IFED**

The first International Family Equality Day (IFED) was launched in 2012 as a sign of solidarity and pride to promote equality for all families. The 5th International Family Equality Day in 2016 was commemorated in 74 towns and 36 countries worldwide, whether on a smaller scale with picnics, gathering together, celebrating in safe spaces or with big public events. The Council of Europe recognises the IFED as an important tool to combat homophobia and transphobia and to promote a tolerant and cohesive society.

#### **About IDAHOT**

The International Day International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT) was created in 2004 to draw the attention of policymakers, opinion leaders, social movements, the public and the media to the violence and discrimination experienced by LGBTI people internationally.

In under a decade, May 17 has established itself the single most important date for LGBTI communities to mobilise on a worldwide scale. The Day represents an annual landmark to draw the attention of decision makers, the media, the public, opinion leaders and local authorities to the alarming situation faced by lesbian, gay, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people and all those who do not conform to majority sexual and gender norms.

May 17 is now celebrated in more than 130 countries, including 37 where same-sex acts are illegal, with 1600 events reported from 1280 organizations in 2014.

## About UNDP Being LGBTI in Asia

Being LGBTI in Asia is a regional United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) aimed at addressing inequality, violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status, and promotes universal access to health and social services. It is a collaboration between governments, civil society, regional institutions and other stakeholders to advance the social inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people. The programme recognizes that LGBTI people are highly marginalized and face varied forms of stigma and discrimination based on their distinct sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions. The programme is supported by UNDP, the Embassy of Sweden in Bangkok and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

