

Headline: Godrej partners UN for the global release of LGBTI anti-discrimination standards

Description: The report contains guidelines for creating a non-discriminatory workplace

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BENGALURU: India may have voted against a recent United Nations resolution to ban the death penalty for consensual same-sex relations, adultery and blasphemy, but Godrej Industries is among a handful of companies partnering a UN initiative to tackle discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) employees at workplace. Companies have a strong business and economic case for tackling discrimination against LGBTI employees, and must adhere to international human rights standards even if doing so may have cost complications, says a United Nations Human Rights Office report.

The 'Standards of Conduct for Business' report, prepared after two years of research and, with inputs from 15 companies including Godrej, Accenture and Coca-Cola, contains guidelines for creating a non-discriminatory workplace. "Since legal frameworks differ from country to country, the guidelines have outlines on best practices without enforcing them," said Mahnaz Shaikh, Head of Diversity and Inclusion at Godrej Industries Limited and Associated Companies (GILAC).

Godrej is partnering the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for the release of the report in Mumbai on Thursday. The report states that companies should take steps to ensure that LGBTQI staff are not forced to either reveal or conceal their identity or status within the workforce.

Reporting processes should be offered to prevent and address harassment and discrimination at workplace while also protecting those who report such abuses from retaliation, it said. Nisaba Godrej, executive chairperson at Godrej Consumer Products, said, “We are optimistic that many other leading companies in India will use this platform to encourage dialogue and discourse, and bring in more inclusivity in their people processes and culture going forward.