

World Congress On Human Rights
May 2009; Paris

Remarks by Atul Keshap, IO/RHS Director

- Mme le Secretaire d'Etat, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs. Veuillez me permettre a parler en Anglais.
- Thank you for inviting me to participate in this important discussion on sexual orientation and gender identity hosted by the Government of France.
- The United States is committed to the principal of human dignity enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human Rights documents.
- The Obama Administration supports the U.N. General Assembly Statement on “Human Rights, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity,” a French led initiative, and we have joined 66 other UN member states which condemn human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity wherever they occur.
- The U.S. is an outspoken defender of human rights and critic of discrimination around the world. In joining like-minded nations at this conference, we demonstrate our commitment to end violence, detention, and execution internationally against gay, lesbian, trans-sexual, and bisexual individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Unfortunately, there are numerous countries that continue to criminalize consensual homosexual conduct.
- The United States works diligently with our embassies across the globe to oppose such laws and open a dialogue on why we view them as a serious human rights concern.
- We monitor and report on the issue and on the human rights situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals as part of our country human rights reports, which are made available to governments and are important aspects of our engagement with them.

- Through our work at the United Nations and other international fora, we will remind countries of the importance to respecting the human rights of all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Together, we must uphold and protect the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals, as part of our commitment to upholding the universality of human rights.
- Thank you all very much.