

## **Sydney Worldride Asia Caucus Report-back**

**On Monday 27 February 2023, APCOM, ANTRA and AGCM hosted the Asia Caucus. 70 participants attended the session.**

**Here's a summary of the two panels.**

**Welcome by Board Advisor of ANTRA,**

**Dr Judy Tang (she/her)**



Welcome everyone!

I would like to acknowledge that we meet on the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and I pay my respects to their elders past and present, and also pay my respects to any First Nations people joining us today in this event. I acknowledge that we meet on Aboriginal land that has never been ceded, Always was and always will be.

My name is Dr Judy Tang (pronouns she/her), and I'm delighted to welcome you all to the Asia Caucus presented by APCOM, ANTRA (Australia NZ tongzhi rainbow alliance) and AGMC (Aus LGBTIQ Multicultural Council), for the Sydney WorldPride Human Rights Conference.

These three not-for-profit organisations combined have worked tirelessly for decades for our communities and we're so fortunate that they will continue to do so until equality for LGBTIQ+ people is achieved, and we can thrive in the Asia region.

Thank you all for being here today – your heartfelt presence shows the passion and spirit of all the amazing people gathered in this room – advocating and fighting for justice, equality and true belonging in our world and the many countries in the Asia Pacific where we come from.

Since we have such an amazing array of people today – let’s make the next 2 hours one full of impact, hope, critical thinking, connections....and perhaps a little scheming for LGBTIQ+ safety, equality, and belonging in the Asia Pacific.

There is no better opportunity, time, and place for it – together, we have activists, multilaterals, government, donors, academia, lawyers, local and global leaders. I’m honoured to make a special mention to welcome the UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Victor Madrigal-Borloz; Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of LGBTQ+ Persons, U.S. Department of State, Jessica Stern, UK’s Special Envoy on LGBT rights, Lord Nick Herbert, and to Ambassador Chantale Wong from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Welcome and thank you for joining us today.

And to everyone here, let’s use this chance to highlight the issues and challenges faced by our LGBTIQ+ brothers and sisters in the Asia region, and then let’s find opportunities and pathways forward for us all.

Cedric, the founder of ANTRA, shared this with me:

In 1000 BC, in the Book of Rites, Confucius once said: If the society is to work in the best way, it will be a way to achieve that under the leadership of virtuous people, where everyone pursues peace & harmony, and they seek hospitality rather than hostility, similarity rather than individuality, and they try their best to make contributions to the world. And thus a world of “Great Unity”

Asia is the birthplace of many of the world’s oldest civilisations. Asia can provide leadership and insight to the idea of Great Unity in the Queer World globally, in building a world that achieves unity, peace and love.

And it starts and/or continues here. With that, I leave the Asia region in all of your capable hands and open hearts.

**Remarks by APCOM Regional Advisory Group Chair,**

**Bryan Choong Bryan Choong (he/him)**



Thank you very much Dr Judy Tang for the warm welcome.

Good morning, Zhao An, Kalai Vanakkam and Selamat Pagi – My name is Bryan Choong, from Singapore, I just greeted you in the four official languages in my country. My pronouns are he/him.

It is a great pleasure to be the Chair of APCOM, taking over from Dédé Oetomo from Indonesia. Dede has been outstanding in steering APCOM with Midnight for 8 years.

We are so delighted to convene the Asia Caucus in partnership with so many LGBTQI organizations in Asia, and to be able to do this face to face again. It is really great to meet old friends and make new ones in person after 3 years.

APCOM only just celebrated our 15th anniversary last year – and in Nov 2022, we were able to celebrate the repeal of Section 377a in Singapore. For those who might not be familiar, Section 377a was a law introduced by the British when Singapore was a British colony, and it criminalised sex between consenting adult males.

Before the 2022 repeal in Singapore, many in my community felt they had lost hope after we failed in so many previous attempts since 2006. Many have left the country so that they can feel safer and freer, some have settled in Australia. I was one of many activists who worked on the repeal because we want change not for ourselves, but also the future generations of Singaporeans. I know Singapore is capable of becoming a more equal society.

The 2018 victory in India motivated Singaporean activists, and I hope the recent success in Singapore, and Bhutan in 2021, and upcoming one in Sri Lanka will inspire many LGBTQI movements in Asia that change is possible.

As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year – I hope we will hear of more wins in the region.

Many of you are grassroots leaders who often risk your life in doing what you believe in.

Many of you are champions in the public sector, private sector, UN agencies, grant makers, or in your own professional field..

SO THANK YOU, THANK YOU for your continuous work – even on days when our goals seemed so far away, Your leadership is a shining beacon to those who are going through darkness and storms. You are change makers who will make those positive changes for equality happen.

Some of you may know APCOM's founder, the late Shivananda Khan passed away in 2013.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of his passing, we will commemorate his leadership and legacies, as well as those who have passed on.

Leadership is never easy, but rarely do our rights are given to us on a silver platter. APCOM is honoured to be part of your journey. APCOM also will need to do more on changing laws and policies in the Asia Pacific region. Looking at the outstanding leaders we have in this caucus, I think we have a great start – let's start conversations, let's build collaborations, let's all create collective impact.

On behalf of APCOM – thank you for being together today.

Happy Mardi Gras! Happy WorldPride everyone!





Asia Caucus-04



Asia Caucus-03



Asia Caucus-05





Asia Caucus-06



Asia Caucus-07



Asia Caucus-08





Asia Caucus-09



Asia Caucus-10



Asia Caucus-cover



Asia Caucus-01

## Panel 1

**Summary: Setting the Scene from our Community**



**The Asia Region is vast, we shall hear from prominent activist on issues, challenges and opportunities to advance LGBTQI rights in their sub-region**

**Panelists were asked three questions;**

*Q1: Can you please provide an overview of challenges that LGBTQIA+ are facing in your country/sub-region?*

*Q2: Despite the challenges mentioned, what are some of the opportunities to advance the rights of LGBTQIA+ in your setting?*

*Q3: What kinds of support to LGBTQIA+ need to enable them to meet the challenges and opportunities you mentioned?*



**Amir Mukambetov (he/they)**

*Chair, Kyrgyz Indigo*

Central Asia includes five countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. They are all Post-Soviet countries independent for about thirty years and LGBT movement has been for a similar length of time. There has been a lot of work done during this period, so queer people have become more visible. The majority of mass media outlets use correct terminology.

There is, however, a major problem of authoritarianism in the region, which uses LGBT people to distract citizens from real economic and social problems. Other challenges exist, since homosexuality is still criminalized in two out of five countries.

It's in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. There are some working groups that work on decriminalization, which include local activists, experts, and the international community. Tajikistan government adopted an anti discrimination law, but it did not include protections for sexual orientation and gender identity. The same thing going to happen in Kyrgyzstan. In Kazakhstan consent age is between 16-18, but for transgender people it was increased until 21. In Kyrgyzstan some regressive changes were added to the law on gender markers change and now trans people have to go to court to do that.



**Charlene Liu (she/her)**

*Co-Founder, ShanghaiPRIDE China*

**Challenges:**

China's LGBT+ face two main challenges: 1) Communities that have a following and are seemed as a rights movement or as any initiatives that are not in alignment with the country's ideology are scrutinized, discriminated, targeted, and ostracized; 2) LGBT+ people are seen to not being able to have children to increase the population and therefore, frowned upon.

**Opportunities:**

1) With globalization and the digital age, youths have more access to knowledge and awareness on LGBT+, so they are more accepting and willing to continue the movement of inclusion for LGBT+ people. 2) International and some local corporations are giving focus to Diversity & Inclusion, including LGBT+ inclusion in the workplace.

What everyone can do:

Whether it is "top down" or "bottom up" approach, everyone plays a part. Governing bodies (consulates, embassies, chamber of commerce) can pressure corporations and governments to be inclusive for the LGBT+ communities. Companies play a big role to implement D&I internally (create awareness, create policies, extend benefits for the LGBT+ employees) and externally (support local organizations, charities). Companies have a strong role and louder voice next to the government's ear in advocating for more inclusion. We need to "keep the pressure on" while being mindful about the safety of those who are involved.



**Naomi Fontanos (she/her)**

*Executive Director, Gender and Development Advocates (GANDA) Filipinas, the Philippines*

Southeast Asia is a very diverse region but everywhere in Southeast Asia LGBTQIA+ people are facing patriarchy. This patriarchy is also connected to capitalism, colonialism/neo-colonialism, and nationalism.

So women and LGBTQIA+ people face enormous cultural, economic, political, social, and health challenges including pervasive inequality, violence, political instability, and high burden of disease especially with HIV and AIDS. The gender binary, the idea that there are only two genders, is quite prevalent in Southeast Asia, which is a legacy of colonialism and adherence to this binary is found in our laws. It is important for LGBTQIA+ movements to find linkages with feminist movements as many feminist movements come before LGBTQIA+ movements.

Some feminists may not be supportive of LGBTQIA+ rights but more and more feminists are embracing the LGBTQIA+ movements and the work overlaps. It is important to connect with

feminist movements and advocate for feminism itself that fights against oppression on the basis of class, race, gender, and histories of colonialism. In Southeast Asia, the goal of activists is to change the culture to truly participate in it.

LGBTQIA+ people also need to continue speaking out about human rights based on SOGIESC and find ways to advocate for this at the regional level. LGBTQIA+ activists also need to confront political homophobia in all fronts and challenge calls against the community that we are destroying the family or stand against traditional values or are impinging on religious freedom. LGBTQIA+ activists need to decolonize their activism to ensure that activism is connected to culture and speaks the language of the people.



**Jannat Ali (she/her)**

*Executive Director, T-Track, Pakistan*

The current situation about the trans movement in Pakistan regarding the challenge of protection of trans rights act at Syria Court and main target was on self perceived gender identity which has put our community lives in danger.

I also talked about trans phobia which is increasing in South Asia and also Globally. When we talk about representation and distribution of resources we don't have equal numbers. And less participation as well.

Mentioned the impact of anti trans legislation increasing Gender and sexual based violence Asian Immigrants from the South also need special support to get visa and asylums. Current need of time is solidarity as the whole movement is like a body, if there is pain in one part the whole body would feel pain. We need to see who is supporting our region in homophobic and transphobic campaigns.



**Ryan V. Silverio (they)**

*Executive Director, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus*

LGBTQIA+ persons in Asia engage in a complex dynamics of political and cultural forces that re-echo colonial legacies of subordination and conservatism. Criminalization of LGBTQIA+



persons continues to exist in highly authoritarian regimes that politicize homophobia and transphobia; the perceived majoritarian views that reflect anti-LGBTQIA+ sentiments are used as justification for continued violence.

Repressive political strategies against LGBTQIA+ persons entail restrictions on freedom of expression and movement, on increased surveillance, on prohibiting groups from obtaining legal registration, among others. Amidst this political context, patriarchal cultures perpetuate: heteronormativity, enforcement of the binary, and control over bodies, especially among LBQ women.”

## Panel 2

### Summary Opportunities for advancing LGBTQI rights in Asia

**Our community already has some entry points to sustain our movement for equality. This panel features prominent LGBTQI envoys and their role in supporting LGBTQI equality in Asia.**

**Panelists were asked three questions;**

*Q1 – Can you please provide an overview of your role, and issues you’ve heard from the LGBTQIA+ in the Asia region?*

*Q2 – As we heard from panel 1, there are some recommendations for support from the community. Could you provide us some examples of what is the current support you are providing to the region, and how the LGBTQIA+ community in Asia can engage with you more?*



**Lord Nick Herbert (he/him)**

*UK's Special Envoy on LGBT rights*

The UK is committed to the promotion and protection of LGBT+ rights. We welcome the cooperation with colleagues on this panel to work together to address the key issues facing LGBT+ equality: violence and discrimination; ongoing criminalisation and to map out our national funding priorities to ensure a greater global spread of funding.

Since 2018 the UK has allocated over £13.5m to enable governments, civil society, business and parliamentarians in their fight for human rights and equality for LGBT+ people. The majority of UK funding focuses on the Commonwealth and has been delivered in partnership with members of The Commonwealth Equality Network – without whom much

of our work would not be possible. UK funding has helped to provide capacity building, technical legal assistance to governments and civil society seeking to repeal or reform outdated laws or policies, and research to better understand the challenges faced by LGBT+ people around the world. The UK is committed to working with governments and civil society to work together to progress LGBT+ rights.

We are finalising our own plans for a new multi-year programme to support grassroots LGBT+ organisations and civil society activists globally.

Through the Global Equality Project (managed by Kaleidoscope and Westminster Foundation for Democracy), the Changing Laws, Changing Lives programme (managed by the Human Dignity Trust) and the support to the Commonwealth Equality Network (managed by Kaleidoscope trust), we are supporting work on promoting and protecting the rights of LGBT+ people across the Pacific including Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Vanuatu.

Since September 2021, the UK has been working to discreetly support the work of ILGA Asia and Stonewall in developing new tools to help LGBT+ people in Afghanistan. Pleased to see that ILGA Asia launched Safar, the Afghan humanitarian platform earlier this year.



**Ambassador Chantelle Wong (she/her)**

*U.S. Director, Asian Development Bank (ADB)*

Thank you for inviting me to speak with you today.

It is an honor to speak with you about important topic of how the ADB is engaging the LGBTQI community.

I currently serve as the U.S. Executive Director to Asian Development Bank, or ADB,. ADB seeks to build a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific by providing loan and other support to its developing member countries. While traditionally focused on infrastructure projects, the ADB has expanded its efforts to support gender equality in recent years across a range of projects and programs. ADB has also begun to build a framework to support gender equality and social inclusion, or GESI, including for LGBTQI+ persons.

Like other multilateral development banks, the ADB has safeguards that seek to ensure that no one is harmed from ADB projects and to help support inclusive growth for all members of society. The ADB is now in the process of updating its safeguard policy statement. The safeguards review at is an important opportunity to address the discrimination and marginalization of LGBTQI people in Asia and the Pacific and advance equitable growth. That is part of the reason why the United States supports including protections for SOGIESC in

the updated safeguards.

The ADB should ensure that in its projects, particularly in the health, education, and social protection sectors, no vulnerable group, including the LGBTQI community, is made worse off or not able to benefit from a project because of who they are. As you know, many ADB members continue to maintain laws that discriminate against LGBTQI people and, in some cases, criminalize same-sex acts.

To be clear, an ADB safeguard cannot address these laws, and would not require ADB borrowers to change any of their laws. It is important to keep in mind that the ADB charter prohibits the bank from interfering in the political affairs of any member and that only economic considerations should be relevant to its decisions.

I want to end on a personal note, based on an experience I had on a recent trip to India. Last year, myself and two other board members traveled to India to meet Indian government officials, development partners, and CSO, including from the LGBTQI community, about India's future work with the ADB.

During our visit to Mumbai, we were stuck in heavy traffic and a beggar approached our car. I noticed that the beggar was transgender and it reminded me that in many countries, members of our community have few opportunities besides begging or sex work.

This encounter moved me and underscored why the work of greater LGBTQI inclusion in ADB projects and safeguards are so important to ensuring that individuals, like that beggar in Mumbai, can have an opportunity to live fulfilling and meaningful lives.

## **Conclusion**

We crammed so much information within such a short time – thank you to all the speakers for sharing your expertise. You have seen that there's so much local expertise in this region to affect positive change for LGBTQI human rights – and we need investment into preserving and growing the local knowledge.

Your support needs to ensure that local knowledge and expertise is well recognised and also compensated for. But more than that, and most importantly – how to ensure such organisations remain agile and respond to the needs of the community as it changes – and in the longer term, how to create a system that sustains the local organisations that is not project driven.

We are in a region that have seen some backwards trends;

- the situation in Afghanistan
- the continued military rule in Myanmar
- transgender rights are being encroached in Pakistan
- Indonesia – the new criminal code and the pornography law provide tools for the right wing, religious conservatives to target our community



- Thailand is implementing the NGO law which would violate fundamental freedoms guaranteed under international human rights law if passed

We know from Covid-19 situation that our groups are reaching the most vulnerable, we are raising the voices of our communities that often are not heard and heeded by our governments, and we tell you the realities.

We hope that donors would look at the needs of the LGBTQI communities in our region, and support us to respond quickly to the needs of our communities, rather than the emphasis on the internal reporting.

Happy Mardi Gras and Happy WorldPride!

## Asia Caucus Agenda

Sydney WorldPride Human Rights Conference Asia Caucus – hosted by APCOM, ANTRA and AGCM

*in partnership with*

**APTN, ILGA Asia, Intersex Asia, ASEAN LBQ Network, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus**

*in collaboration with*

**GANDA Filipinas, Kyrgyz Indogo, ShanghaiPRIDE, T-Track**

*special Thank You to*

**Sydney WorldPride, Equality Australia**

### 27 February 2023

**10:00am – 12:00pm**

Karstens Sydney

Level 1 – 111 Harrington Street Sydney NSW 2000

APCOM is proud to be one of the official Community Partners of the Sydney WorldPride Human Rights Conference 2023. We are, in fact, the only non-Australia based Community Partner.

APCOM is also proud to be hosting the Asia Caucus prior to the Human Rights Conference. In the lead up to the Conference, we have had a regional consultation to inform [What LGBTQI in Asia would like to see at the Human Rights Conference](#) that fed into the main [programme](#) of the Conference.

The Asia Caucus is a safe space for our community to gather and connect, build relationships, and engage in important conversations with people from around the world that share a common identity and/or experience.

Our speakers will share information and discuss issues and challenges, create opportunities for collective collaboration, as ways forward to advance LGBTQI rights in Asia.

#### Panel 1:

##### Setting the Scene from our Community

The Asia Region is vast, we shall hear from prominent activist on issues, challenges and opportunities to advance LGBTQI rights in their sub-region:

*Moderated by*

**Ryan V. Silverio (they)**, Executive Director, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus  
Central Asia

**Amir Mukambetov (he/they)**, Chair, Kyrgyz Indigo  
East Asia

**Charlene Liu (she/her)**, Co-Founder, ShanghaiPRIDE China

Southeast Asia

**Naomi Fontanos (she/her)**, Executive Director, Gender and Development Advocates (GANDA) Filipinas, the Philippines

South Asia

**Jannat Ali (she/her)**, Executive Director, T-Track, Pakistan

Reflection by

**Jean Chong (she/they)**, Executive Director, ASEAN LBQ Network

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## Panel 2:

Opportunities for advancing LGBTQI rights in Asia

Our community already has some entry points to sustain our movement for equality. This panel features prominent LGBTQI envoys and their role in supporting LGBTQI equality in Asia.

Moderated by

**Bryan Choong (he/him)**, Regional Advisory Group Chair, APCOM

**Victor Madrigal-Borloz (he/him)**

UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, United Nations

**Jessica Stern (she/her/they/them/he/him)**

Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons, U.S. Department of State

**Lord Nick Herbert (he/him)**

UK's Special Envoy on LGBT rights

**Ambassador Chantale Wong (she/her)**

U.S. Director, Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Reflection by

**Joe Wong (he/him)**, Executive Director, APTN

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Time	Topic
10:00 – 10:05 (5 mins)	Welcome and Introduction <b>Dr Judy Tang (she/her)</b> , Board Advisor of ANTRA
	Keynote #1 (5 mins) <b>Bryan Choong (he/him)</b> , Regional Advisory Group Chair, APCOM
10:05 – 10:15 (10 mins)	Keynote #2 (5 mins) <b>Hiker Chiu (he/her)</b> , Executive Director, Intersex Asia

<p>10:15 – 10:55 (40 mins)</p>	<p><b>Panel 1</b></p> <p>Moderated by <b>Ryan V. Silverio (they)</b>, <i>Executive Director, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus</i></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <p><i>Central Asia</i></p> <p><b>Amir Mukambetov (he/they)</b>, <i>Chair, Kyrgyz Indigo</i></p> <p><i>East Asia</i></p> <p><b>Charlene Liu (she/her)</b>, <i>Co-Founder, ShanghaiPRIDE China</i></p> <p><i>Southeast Asia</i></p> <p><b>Naomi Fontanos (she/her)</b>, <i>Executive Director, Gender and Development Advocates (GANDA) Filipinas, the Philippines</i></p> <p><i>South Asia</i></p> <p><b>Jannat Ali (she/her)</b>, <i>Executive Director, T-Track, Pakistan</i></p>
<p>10:55 – 11:00 (5 mins)</p>	<p>Reflection from Panel 1</p> <p><b>Jean Chong (she/they)</b>, <i>Executive Director, ASEAN LBQ Network</i></p>
<p>11:00 – 11:40 (40 mins)</p>	<p><b>Panel 2</b></p> <p>Moderated by <b>Bryan Choong (he/him)</b>, <i>Regional Advisory Group Chair, APCOM</i></p>



	<p>Speakers:</p> <p><b>Victor Madrigal-Borloz (he/him)</b> <i>UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, United Nations</i></p> <p><b>Jessica Stern (she/her/they/them/he/him)</b> <i>Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons, U.S. Department of State</i></p> <p><b>Lord Nick Herbert (he/him)</b> <i>UK's Special Envoy on LGBT rights</i></p> <p><b>Ambassador Chantale Wong (she/her)</b> <i>U.S. Director, Asian Development Bank (ADB)</i></p>
11:40 – 11:45 (5 mins)	<p>Reflection from Panel 2</p> <p><b>Joe Wong (he/him), Executive Director, APTN</b></p>
11:45 – 11:50 (5 mins)	<p>Summary of the session and ways forward</p> <p><b>Henry Koh (they/them), Executive Director, ILGA Asia</b></p>
11:50 – 11:55 (5 mins)	<p>Closing</p> <p><b>Alexander Teh (he/him), President – Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council Inc.</b></p>
11:55 – 12:00 (5 mins)	<p>Group photos</p> <p><b>Midnight (he/him), Executive Director, APCOM</b></p>

APCOM would like to say a big rainbow thank you to



**SYDNEY  
WORLDPRIDE  
2023**





## Asia Caucus Speakers / Bios



**Alexander Teh (he/him)**

*President – Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council Inc.*

Alexander is AGMC President and a multi-disciplined professional with over 20 years of experience and a proven track record of sustained delivery on critical communities' projects across programs of work; whilst delivering communities orientated results.

He has experiences in business, change management and communications, advising best solution practices, effectively managing sensitive stakeholders, satisfying legal and compliance regulatory requirements.



**Ambassador Chantelle Wong (she/her)**

*U.S. Director, Asian Development Bank (ADB)*

Ambassador Chantale Yok-Min Wong is the United States Executive Director. Before her appointment, she was the Senior Vice President at AmidaTechnology Solutions. She was appointed by President Obama to serve as Vice President for Administration and Finance, and Chief Financial Officer at the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). Prior to MCC, she was the budget director of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

She has also held leadership positions at the Office of Management and Budget, Departments of Treasury and Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency. She joined ADB in 1999 as an Environment Specialist and was subsequently appointed by President Bill Clinton as U.S. Alternate Director. She holds a Master in Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. She has another Master in Environmental Engineering from the University of California, Berkeley, with a focus on water and waste water management. She earned her undergraduate degree in civil and structural engineering from the University of Hawaii.



**Amir Mukambetov (he/they)**

*Chair, Kyrgyz Indigo*

Amir is a Human Rights Defender, Feminist, Queer Muslim and LGBT+ activist from Kyrgyzstan. Before becoming the Chair of the Board at Kyrgyz Indigo he served the LGBT+ organization as Head of the Community Empowerment Department for about a decade.

Amir is one of the foremost queer activists in Kyrgyzstan and an expert on gender, sexuality, human rights, religion and HIV prevention in the Central Asian region. During his activism, he has contributed significantly to increasing the visibility of the queer community, building the LGBT+ movement and enhancing the capacity of the LGBT+ community in the country.

Amir proud graduate of SOAS University of London with MA Degree in Gender Studies. Before that, he obtained an undergraduate degree from Kyrgyz Kuwait University, with BA Degree in Journalism.



**Bryan Choong (he/him)**

*Regional Advisory Group Chair, APCOM*

Bryan Choong spent more than 15 years working on human rights and community health issues for the LGBTQ+ communities in Singapore. Bryan is the Chairperson of Oogachaga, Singapore's most established LGBTQ+ organisation that specialises in LGBTQ+ psychosocial health. He is also one of six Singapore gay men who filed legal challenges to decriminalise homosexuality in Singapore. Singapore finally repealed its anti-homosexual laws in November 2022.

Regionally, Bryan serves as the Chair of Regional Advisory Group at APCOM, a Bangkok-based network that works to improve the health and rights of LGBTQ+ across Asia and the Pacific.

In recognition of his LGBTQ+ community work, Bryan received a Chevening scholarship from the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2017. He has a Master in Public Health from the University of Edinburgh and a Master in Counselling from the University of South Australia.



**Charlene Liu (she/her)**

*Co-Founder, ShanghaiPRIDE China*

Charlene Liu was born in Malaysia and has lived in the US, Singapore, and China. She is an engineer, community leader, social change advocate, and diversity and inclusion expert. She graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with a BSc in Electrical Engineering and has 20+ years of working experience in different areas of the Semiconductor & Electronics industry, ranging from design, engineering, manufacturing, project management to sales and marketing.

She has experience with events, corporate innovation, and management consulting at PwC and was the Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging APAC at Arcadis.

Charlene has 17 years of community leadership, commercial event management, and Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) advocacy experience. In 2009, she co-founded ShanghaiPRIDE, an annual festival run entirely by volunteers that promotes LGBT+ inclusion, in 2014 Q-Events, an event management company, in 2016 Ladies Who Tech, a social impact community for women in STEM, and in 2019, D&I Consulting DNIC, a consultancy which helps corporations build a more inclusive culture. Recently, she was elected as an Executive Board Member, Women Representative of ILGA Asia. Charlene is now embarking on a full-time journey managing these platforms.

In 2014, she and team ShanghaiPRIDE were awarded Shanghai Hero by Time Out Shanghai, and in 2018, Best Event Organizer in East China by Huodongxing.





**Dr Judy Tang (she/her)**

*Board Advisor of ANTRA*

Judy has a doctorate in neuropsychology and is a practicing Clinical Neuropsychologist. Judy is a strong advocate for multiculturalism and LGBTIQ+ communities with expertise in psychology, ageing, research, and mental health. With extensive relationships across government and community groups, Judy has volunteered for more than 10 years to promote and advocate for multiculturalism and equality for migrants.

She is a former President of the Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council, a national body that advocates for the rights of multicultural and multifaith LGBTIQ+ people and communities. Judy is a current Board Director for the Victorian Pride Centre, and is one of Victoria's 12 Multicultural Commissioners at the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

Judy is also currently a Board Advisor of ANTRA – Australia & New Zealand Tongzhi Rainbow Alliance, a grassroots not for profit advocating for the Queer Chinese in Australia.



**Henry Koh (they/them)**

*Executive Director, ILGA Asia*

Henry Koh (they/them) is the current Executive Director of ILGA Asia. Prior to joining ILGA Asia, Henry served as a human rights specialist with regional human rights organizations and the United Nations. They had extensive experience engaging in UN advocacy to advance SOGIESC rights, access to healthcare for vulnerable groups, freedoms of expression, assembly and association.

Henry is also the co-founder of Beyond Borders Malaysia, focusing on refugees' rights, Assistant Secretary-general of PROHAM (Society for the Promotion of Human Rights), and the Malaysian MSM Representative for the UN Global Fund's Country Coordinating Mechanism (2019–2022). They initially joined ILGA Asia as the Research Officer from March to July 2021, and was part of ILGA Asia's UN Human Rights Mechanisms trainers from 2017 to 2019.

Henry holds a Masters of Law (LL.M.) in International Human Rights Law, Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) (University of London), and a Postgraduate Diploma in International Arbitration.



**Hiker Chiu (he/her)**

*Executive Director, Intersex Asia*

Hiker Chiu is a pioneer of the intersex human rights movement in the Asian region from Taiwan who founded [OII-Chinese](#), the first human rights advocacy organization and information platform for Chinese-speaking intersex people since 2008. Hiker Chiu was the first intersex person to come out in Taiwan publicly, initiating the [“Global Free Hugs with Intersex Movement”](#) in 2010. Since 2013, Hiker has devoted themselves to building intersex connections in Asia and founded the Intersex Asia community on Facebook, which was the foundation of Intersex Asia.

Hiker was also the first intersex person elected as co-chair of [ILGA Asia](#) in 2015. In 2018, the intersex community selected Hiker to be the first Co-chair of [Intersex Asia](#) – the first and only regional network of intersex organizations in Asia. Currently, Hiker serves as the Chair and Executive Director for Intersex Asia.



**Jannat Ali (she/her)**

*Executive Director, T-Track, Pakistan*

Jannat Ali is an MBA Gold Medalist Transgender Activist (Artist + Activist) and the Executive Director of Community Based Organization Track-T. She is a TEDx motivational speaker, World Economic Forum Member, Global Trainer, and Change Mentor who have. Her work includes community’s capacity development, sensitization of civil society and institutions, advocacy, and trans healthcare. She is the founder of the Trans Pride March in Pakistan and has contributed immensely to the Legislations for the Protection of Trans Rights. Currently, she is hosting a show “Journey with Jannat”. Recently serving as first Transgender Lecturer in Punjab at UMT (University of Management and Technology). She has made representation in more than 37 countries through her performance, motivational speaker, Panelist, trainer, Ambassador and as Co-Chair of Human Rights and Diversity – InterPride. She is also Global Advisory Board Member at Dignity Network Canada.



**Jean Chong (she/they)**

*Executive Director, ASEAN LBQ Network*

Jean Chong has been an LGBTQ activist for more than 20 years. She is the Executive Director and founder of the ASEAN Feminist LBQ Network (11 countries in South East Asia) based in Bangkok, Thailand. Jean also leads and co-founded Sayoni, a queer feminist organization in Singapore that organizes community events, conducts research, and advocates for equality, well-being, and dignity to improve the lives of LBTQ people.

Her activism began as a volunteer with Safehaven, a gay Christian support network, eventually becoming their first female vice chairperson. Jean went on to become a founding member of an inclusive church, Free (First Realize Everyone is Equal) Community Church, and served as their first chairperson. Expanding her activism into local advocacy, she became a part of the core team of People Like Us in Singapore.

Jean is the Asia advisor for the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice and the current Chairperson and founding member of the ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, a regional network of Southeast Asian LGBTIQ groups lobbying for the inclusion of LGBTIQ rights in the ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism. In her past roles, she has worked for OutRight Action International as their China Program Coordinator. Jean holds a Masters of Human Rights and Democratization from the University of Sydney (EU scholarship). She is the winner of the AWARE Champion for Gender Equality and Justice Award 2018 in Singapore and the APCOM Community Hero Award for the Asia Pacific region in 2018.



**Jessica Stern (she/her/they/them/he/him)**

*Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons, U.S. Department of State*

Appointed by President Biden, Jessica Stern serves as the Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI+) Persons. Special Envoy Stern leads U.S. efforts to protect LGBTQI+ persons globally from violence and discrimination.

Prior to joining the Department of State, Stern led Outright International, a global LGBTQI+ human rights organization, as its Executive Director for ten years. At Outright, Stern helped the organization secure observer status at the United Nations, release human rights reports annually, build the world's largest COVID LGBTQI+ grant-making program, and quintupled the budget. Before Outright, Stern was a researcher and advocate at Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the Center for Constitutional Rights.

Stern has a long history of multilateral engagement. Stern was a founding member of the UN LGBTI Core Group and of its secretariat. Stern successfully campaigned for the first UN General Assembly resolution to include gender identity and for successive Human Rights Council resolutions on sexual orientation and gender identity, leading to the establishment of the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. Stern provided the first LGBTQI+ rights expert testimony in a UN Security Council Arria. Stern has frequently served as an advisor to UN mechanisms, including as a founding member of the UNWomen LGBTI Reference Group.

Stern is a published author, is frequently cited in the media, and is the recipient of numerous honors, including from Crain's New York Business, Gay City News, and the Metropolitan Community Church. As an adjunct associate professor, Special Envoy Stern taught the first LGBTQI+ rights course at Columbia University's School of International & Public Affairs. Special Envoy Stern has lived in Mexico, the United Kingdom, and Uruguay.



**Joe Wong (he/him)**

*Executive Director, APTN*

Joe Wong is a Singaporean living in Bangkok. He oversees the institution and programme development of the Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN) and manages partnerships with stakeholders.

Joe's work includes supporting and strengthening trans-led movement through a community-led funding project to support grassroots, national trans groups run by and for trans people and regional programmes by coordinating trans advocacy efforts with its national partners and other international trans bodies.

His expertise is in community mobilisation, advocacy, programming and organisation development.



**Lord Nick Herbert (he/him)**

*UK's Special Envoy on LGBT rights*

Nick Herbert (Lord Herbert of South Downs) is the UK Prime Minister's Special Envoy on LGBT+ Rights. He is a longstanding advocate for LGBT+ rights, having been one of the leading voices for equal marriage when he was an elected MP in the House of Commons and the founding chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Global LGBT+ Rights. He is also the founder and chair of the Global Equality Caucus.



**Midnight (he/him)**

*Executive Director, APCOM*

Based in Bangkok, Midnight has been the Executive Director of APCOM since 2011, working in multi-sectoral partnerships with governments, donors, the United Nations, development partners and most importantly the community and civil society organisations working on advancing SOGIESC rights, and alleviating HIV in Asia Pacific region.

Midnight is a member of various advisory committees, including the global IDAHOT committee, Advisory Committee member of Global Philanthropy Project's Report on Government and Philanthropic Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Communities, international advisory group of Dignity Network, World Health Organisation Global PrEP Coalition and Guidelines Development Group for HIV Testing Services, and ASHM's Regional Advisory Group member leading on Key Populations of the Taskforce on BBVs, Sexual Health and COVID-19. He is also on the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board representing Asia and the Pacific as part of the NGO Delegation.

Midnight obtained his Masters in Globalisation and Development from SOAS University of London.



**Naomi Fontanos (she/her)**

*Executive Director, Gender and Development Advocates (GANDA) Filipinas, the Philippines*

Naomi Fontanos graduated from the University of the Philippines Diliman. She is a long-time advocate of the Filipino transgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex, and queer (TLGBIQ) community and an advocate of



feminism. In 2008, she became the first trans co-coordinator of Task Force Pride (TFP) Philippines, the official organizing network of the annual Metro Manila Pride March. She was part of the International Advisory Group of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) in reviewing the 7th Standards of Care (SOC), international clinical protocols for safe transitioning for trans people and part of the external peer review team of the World Health Organization (WHO) for its consolidated guidelines on HIV prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care for key populations in 2014. In 2015, she became the first trans Filipina to be a fellow of the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) of the United States State Department on Preventing and Responding to Bias-Motivated Violence Against the LGBT Community. She is a co-founder and current Executive Director of Gender and Development Advocates (GANDA) Filipinas, a TLGBIQ human rights organization primarily focused on the issues, needs, and concerns of the trans community in the Philippines and beyond. In 2018, she was named a fellow of the Internet Freedom Festival (IFF) held at Valencia, Spain in March 2018. In 2020, she was named as one of GoMagazine's "100 Women We Love" and in 2021 was awarded as one of Quezon City's Iconic Women. She was also named as one of the Faces of Exchange of the IVLP in 2021.



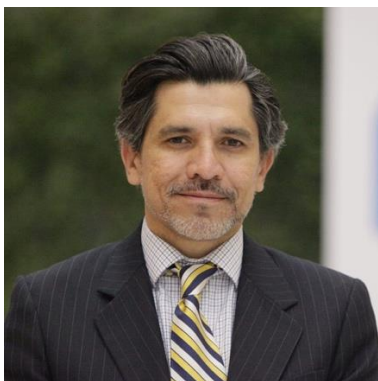
**Ryan V. Silverio (they)**

*Executive Director, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus*

Ryan V. Silverio is a genderqueer activist. With more than 20 years' experience in human rights activism, they have performed leadership roles such as being the current Executive Director of ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, as a member of the Board of Trustees of Philippine Human Rights Information Center (PhilRights), and as a regional advisory committee member of different international LGBTQI+ programs.

In 2021, Ryan co-organized the Southeast Asian Queer Cultural Festival (SEAQCF), an online festival for cultural activism and reclaiming queer cultural identities in the ASEAN region. Ryan has published research and learning modules on topics such as on youth participation in governance, child rights, and on queer activism.

Ryan is passionate about creating spaces for unheard voices within social movements. They graduated with a Master of Arts in Human Rights degree obtained from Mahidol University.



**Victor Madrigal-Borloz (he/him)**

*UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, United Nations*

Victor Madrigal-Borloz was appointed as UN Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity in late 2017. His initial three-year term started on 1 January 2018. He is the second Independent Expert to serve in this capacity. A Costa Rican jurist, Mr. Madrigal-Borloz is a senior visiting researcher at Harvard Law School's Human Rights Program, in residence at Harvard Law School from July 2019 to December 2023. You can also find a longer version on the mandate's [webpage](#).

