

Godrej Industries partners with the United Nations Human Rights Office to launch global standards for businesses to tackle discrimination against LGBTI people



Mumbai, India, October 12, 2017: The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Godrej Industries today launched an unprecedented set of global corporate standards to support the business community in tackling discrimination against lesbian, gay, bi, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people, at the Godrej headquarters in Vikhroli, Mumbai.

Godrej champions diversity and inclusion as part of its core values and is among the few companies in India to introduce LGBTI favourable policies at the workplace. The Standards of Conduct builds on the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2011. They are the product of a year-long process of consultations facilitated by the United Nations Human Rights Office and the Institute for Human Rights and Business, including regional meetings with leading business representatives in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. Godrej was one of the companies consulted to research these guidelines in India, and has supported the framework since its inception.

Addressing an audience of 100 business and HR leaders from companies like Hindustan Unilever, Procter & Gamble, Tata Sons, Accenture, SAP, Ikea, Intuit, Mahindra & Mahindra, Aditya Birla Group, Nomura, Adidas, Deutsche Bank and



Marico, **Nisaba Godrej, Executive Chairperson, Godrej Consumer Products Limited**, said, *“Diversity and inclusion are very important to us at Godrej, and it is a matter of great pride and honour for us to partner with the United Nations in launching these corporate standards. We are optimistic that many other leading companies in India will also use this platform to encourage dialogue and discourse and bring in more inclusivity in their people processes and culture going forward.”*

Ahead of the Mumbai launch, the **United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein** expressed hope that the Indian private sector would be a “catalyst for change” on these issues. *“The Indian private sector can take a leadership role in ensuring that their LGBTI employees can experience dignity and opportunity in the workplace and beyond. When companies take action to end discrimination at work and support LGBTI communities, the ripple effects of such action can have a huge, positive impact in society,”* he said.

The Corporate Standards of Conduct on Tackling Discrimination Against LGBTI people was launched by **Fabrice Houdart, Human Rights Officer, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.**

Houdart said the UN had chosen to launch the standards in Mumbai because of the city’s status as a growing global business hub. *“Having a launch here in Mumbai sends a signal that Indian companies – local, national and global – have a role to play within India and globally in promoting equal rights and fair treatment for all LGBTI people,”* he said. He thanked Godrej for its support for the new standards – including hosting the first round of consultations with business and activists in 2016.

The launch was followed by a panel discussion on the inclusion of LGBTI people in corporate India. The discussion was moderated by **Salil Tripathi, Senior Advisor, Global Issues, Institute for Human Rights and Business** and hosted thought leaders from different sectors, including **Radhika Piramal (Vice Chairperson, VIP Industries Limited), Nandita Das (Actor and Filmmaker), Gauri Sawant, (Transgender Activist), Meenakshi Ganguly (Director, South Asia, Human Rights Watch) and Keshav Suri (Executive Director, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group).**

The event was concluded with a message from **Farhan Akhtar (Actor, Filmmaker and Founder - MARD Initiative)**, who shared his support for the United Nations



standards and urged companies to commit to creating unbiased and equal workplaces. He also added, *“I am so glad to see how many companies in India are coming forward to embrace LGBT inclusive policies. I hope that this UN standards release will further propel this movement forward.”*

Godrej also hosted a pre-event discussion with 20 attending Diversity & Inclusion leaders to share best practices and what they can do to build more inclusive cultures.

The five standards highlighted in the Corporate Standards of Conduct on Tackling Discrimination Against LGBTI people are:

- RESPECT the human rights of their LGBTI workers, customers and members of the public
- ELIMINATE workplace discrimination against LGBTI employees
- SUPPORT LGBTI employees at work
- PREVENT discrimination and related abuses against LGBTI customers, suppliers and distributors – and insist that suppliers do the same
- STAND UP for the human rights of LGBTI people in the communities where companies do business

About the Godrej Group

Established in 1897, the Godrej Group has its roots in India's Independence and Swadeshi movement. Our founder, Ardeshir Godrej, lawyer-turned-serial entrepreneur failed with a few ventures, before he struck gold with a locks business. Today, we enjoy the patronage of 1.1 billion consumers globally across consumer goods, real estate, appliances, agriculture and many other businesses. In fact, our geographical footprint extends beyond Earth, with our engines now powering many of India's space missions. With revenue of over USD 4.1 billion we are growing fast, and have exciting, ambitious aspirations. Our Vision for 2020 is to be 10 times the size we were in 2010. But for us, it is most important that besides our strong financial performance and innovative, much-loved products, we remain a good company. Approximately 23 per cent of the promoter holding in the Godrej Group is held in trusts that invest in the environment,

health and education. We are also bringing together our passion and purpose to make a difference through our Good & Green strategy of 'shared value' to create a more inclusive and greener India. At the heart of all of this, are our people. We take much pride in fostering an inspiring workplace, with an agile and high performance culture. We are also deeply committed to recognising and valuing diversity across our teams.

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About The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is mandated to promote and protect the enjoyment and full realisation, by all people, of all rights established in the Charter of the United Nations and in international human rights laws and treaties. OHCHR is guided in its work by the mandate provided by the General

Assembly in Resolution 48/141. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The New York Office leads its LGBTI initiative which includes the worldwide awareness campaign "Free & Equal".

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