

7 December 2016

**The
International
Primatological
Society**



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Dear IPS Members,

I write on behalf of the IPS officers, to alert you to some concerns we have heard from some IPS members about our upcoming (2018) meeting in Nairobi in light of Kenya's anti-gay policies and to reconfirm our commitment to the upcoming meetings. We take the concerns about Kenya's policies very seriously, and have discussed them extensively, seeking advice and input from the entire IPS Council and from colleagues who are active in the LGBTQI community and who work in Kenya or in other countries with similar or even harsher anti-gay policies. We also consulted with our hosts from GRASP, and we are attaching the statement they compiled in response to our queries as well as the link to the UN policy they provided.

In our deliberations we have tried to balance our concern for the safety and comfort of our LGBTQI colleagues and our concern for the inclusion of African primatologists, especially those from Kenya and other east African countries, as well as the practical matter of an agreement made in good faith 4 years ago to hold the meeting in Nairobi. We also want to show support for the nascent African primatological society, and holding the meetings in an African country after a decade (the 2006 meetings were in Uganda) is a powerful way to do this.

We appreciate the statement that our GRASP hosts compiled in response to our stated concerns (see PDF) and were reassured by the UN's policy, considering that our venue will be at the UN property (see link below). For all of these reasons, we anticipate pursuing the plan that was initiated 4 years ago and holding the 2018 IPS meetings at the UN in Nairobi as a way of demonstrating IPS support for African primatology.

We hope you will join us in showing our support for African primatology by helping to make the next IPS meetings a success. Additionally, we hope you will contribute to the efforts of the new IPS Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity, which is being tasked with developing a set of policies and criteria for inclusiveness that we can apply as we consider future IPS meeting sites.

In the meantime, we will continue to work on this issue, including how to address the safety concerns of our members. Specifically, we want to reassure our members that all conference programming will be in the UN compound, which has as part of its mission the protection and support of LGBTQI people [see UN statement via link], and for activities outside the UN compound/ conference venue lack this protection, we suggest keeping in mind local context [see GRASP statement attached]. The IPS and conference organizers will work to maintain the conference itself as a safe space for all members.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Best wishes,

Karen B. Strier
IPS President

*PDF of GRASP statement

*Link to UN statement may not open so please copy-and-paste it into your browser:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B905EWfGAuQVU1lYalRJMfVQZ1hYdXZBUGM4UFRja2ZGRUhv/view?usp=sharing>

www.internationalprimatologicalsociety.org

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