



MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

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TO: Finance and Economic Development Committee

DESTINATAIRE : Comité des finances et du développement économique

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**SUBJECT: Report on the LGBTI Leaders of Americas Conference, Bogota,
Colombia**

**OBJET : Rapport sur le congrès « LGBTI Political Leaders of Americas », tenu à
Bogota, en Colombie**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to report to Committee following my attendance at the LGBTI Leaders of Americas Conference in Bogota, Columbia May 15-20, 2019

BACKGROUND

I was invited to attend the LGBTI Leaders of Americas Conference in Bogota, Colombia as a panelist and participant to the conference. More than 300 activists and elected officials from North America and Latin America attended the LGBTQ Victory Institute-organized conference in Bogota to discuss issues related to elected LGBTQ officials at every level of government – national, provincial, state and local. The goal of the conference was to provide the opportunity to exchange experiences about LGBTQ people's role in building a more inclusive society through civic engagement.

DISCUSSION

The conference focused largely on the different stages of LGBTQ rights in North America and Latin America. It took place at a time of struggle for LGBTQ human rights in many countries who recently implemented the Inter-American Court of Human Rights' landmark 2018 ruling that recognizes same-sex marriage and transgender rights.

Many of the panel discussions focused on the persistent discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the region.

The panel that I participated in was held during the 'Friendly Cities' event held at the Luis Angel Arango Public Library in Bogota. We shared our experiences as Canadian elected officials with respect to gains made in LGBTQ rights and protections. Later in the day, the Mayor's Office provided a guided tour of the Bogota historic centre.

It was notable that while the human rights struggle lags behind in many parts of Latin America for LGBTQ persons, the representation at each level of government is more diverse than in the United States and in Canada. This is especially true of elected representation of transgender officials.

The conference was an excellent opportunity to exchange best practices for Openly LGBTQ leaders, public servants and allies in civic engagement and elected office. Each session allowed for an open dialogue to highlight the role of LGBTQ leaders in building more inclusive societies, generated ideas to promote dialogue with governments and to identify best practices in political participation of LGBTQ people.

The conference offered elected LGBTQ officials from around the continent to exchange experiences and best practices towards equality.

It is through the commitment of Members of Council, to attend conferences like this one, that the City of Ottawa's interests are advanced.

Councillor Catherine McKenney

CC: City Council