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ARC Co-Directors John Fisher & Kim Vance

ARC UPDATE

“Towards a Strategic International LGBT Human Rights Agenda”

- October 2004



ARC International joins with our brothers and sisters around the world in mourning the loss of Fannyann Eddy, who was brutally murdered on Wednesday, September 29, 2004 as she was working late at the offices of the Sierra Leone Lesbian and Gay Association. Fannyann, aged 30, is survived by her 9-year-old son, Valentine.

About ARC

ARC (“Allied Rainbow Communities”) International believes that all human beings have the right to celebrate who they are, with freedom, dignity and respect.

Unfortunately, the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (“LGBT”) persons are routinely abused, with little commitment by many States or UN bodies to develop or implement standards to address these recurring human rights abuses.

ARC International seeks to advance recognition of LGBT human rights at the international level, by:

- ✓ building global coalitions and a strategic international vision;
- ✓ developing practical and accessible learning tools;
- ✓ supporting regional and domestic priorities;
- ✓ advancing the international standards to hold States accountable; and
- ✓ empowering groups and individuals to become engaged in international processes in ways that are relevant and meaningful for them.

ARC: The Year in Review

This year has been an incredibly busy one for ARC!

Following the successful consultation we co-hosted in Brazil last December, ARC created a global listserv in early 2004, which swiftly grew to over 160 participants from more than 50 different countries. The list grows daily and is proving to be an invaluable forum for information exchange, strategizing and mutual support.

ARC then developed a detailed Government Briefing Kit, in preparation for the 6-week UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, which took place in March-April, 2004. Copies of the Briefing Kit are available on-line at: www.arc-international.net/brief.pdf.

At the Commission on Human Rights itself, ARC Co-Directors Kim Vance and John Fisher lobbied governments, made oral statements to the UN Commission, met with the Acting High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights defenders, co-organized a day of visibility, supported progressive resolutions, chaired a panel on Alternative Families, and

worked to strengthen global networks. Brazil was subject to intense pressure by those opposing the resolution, and to everyone's disappointment announced that it did not intend to proceed with the resolution this year. After much cross-regional lobbying, however, a consensus was forged to keep the Brazilian resolution on the Commission's agenda, and it is expected to again generate intense controversy at the 2005 session of the Commission. ARC's continued work with other organizations to build support for this initiative is needed more than ever.

Kim has recently returned from Latin America, where she further developed ARC's connections with groups in Mexico and Costa Rica, as well as attending *Encuentro*, a gathering of lesbian feminist activists from across the region. In recent months, we have been working intensively to organize an International Dialogue on Gender, Sexuality and Human Rights, which will bring more than 60 activists from over 40 countries together in Geneva to meet with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and key governments, and to develop strategies for next year's Commission.

It therefore continues to be an active and challenging time, and we appreciate your continued support, as we work together towards the recognition of our basic human rights.



Meeting with the UN Special Representative on human rights defenders in Geneva, 2004