



*For immediate release*

**The International Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce reveals the most gay friendly corporations in the world: BT Group, IBM and The Dow Chemical Company**

**Copenhagen, Denmark, July 28<sup>th</sup> 2009** – The International Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (IGLCC) is pleased to unveil the results of the first edition of the International Business Equality Index. The Index is a measurement of the performance of multi-national corporations in relation to Diversity and Inclusion issues specifically focusing on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities in the countries where they operate. The leading corporations are BT Group, followed by *IBM* and *The Dow Chemical Company*. The announcement was made at a press conference during the closing of the IGLCC Second Annual Congress in Copenhagen.

The corporations participating in this year's Index are: AMR (the parent company of American Airlines, Inc. and American Eagle), BT Group, Cisco Systems, The Dow Chemical Company, IBM, ING, Intel, KPMG, Kraft Food, Merck, Novartis, Philips, SAP, TNT and UBS. They represent 1.7 million employees in 227 countries and sales of USD 800 Billion a year.

"On behalf of BT, I am absolutely delighted with this recognition" said Ian Livingston, BT's CEO." As one of the largest communication companies in the world, we provide service to customers in more than 170 countries and employ well in excess of 100,000 people across the globe. Diversity must be, and is, at the heart of our business and having the policies and the practices in place to support the LGBT community is essential to our success."

Anne Heal, BT's Senior Champion for Sexual Orientation added, "BT has been providing same-sex partner benefits to employees since the early 1980s and will continue to look at ways in which we can ensure that our people can be 'who they are' at work without fear of discrimination or prejudice. The IGLCC award recognises the efforts of our HR community and our LGBT network, Kaleidoscope, in their determination to ensure that equality of opportunity is reality in our business. I am also delighted."

"The findings of the survey on which the Index is based are somewhat mixed, but definitively encouraging," said IGLCC Secretary General, Pascal Lépine. "The vast majority of respondent corporations have Diversity and Inclusion programs and most explicitly include LGBT issues. We see from this survey that most of these companies take sexual orientation and gender identity matters very seriously. However, full equality is still years or decades away."

While corporations scoring high on the index are powerful examples of how diversity and inclusion programs can be very successful, the 2009 Index findings also point to a darker side: nearly 50% of global corporations participating in the study do not have any LGBT Diversity & Inclusion managers; openly gay men or lesbians are hard to find among the ranks of management (fewer than one out of ten include gay men or lesbians in more than one of every sixteen countries they have a presence in); and, without regard to the level of internal focus on LGBT inclusion, these multi-national companies are not proudly trumpeting their diversity programmes to the general public or the local LGBT communities through advertising

or PR. In fact, only a handful of companies support local LGBT communities either through financial or in-kind support.

Despite these negatives, Mr. Lépine is optimistic. "To have such confidence shown towards our community makes me believe that there are still many good chapters to be written in the history of the international LGBT business community. It is especially important in these difficult economic and political times to salute all the participating corporations for their courage and example", he said in today's presentation. "But," he continued, "we must be realistic and say that, even if today we see promise, there is much more work to be done. Far too often we see and hear of gay and lesbian professionals throughout the world that do not have access to basic employee rights and benefits just because of their sexual orientation", added Mr. Lépine.

The Index is the product of an international committee that includes gays, lesbians and transgender professionals living and working in eight different countries from Europe and North America. The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) and its European Region (ILGA-Europe) have played an instrumental role in the development of the program. "It is obvious that with the impact of globalization the LGBT community has its eyes on what corporations are doing at the international level, not just in one single country", said David Pollard, Chairman of the Index Committee.

"BT Group's outstanding commitment, policies and investment in LGBT diversity merits them the title of the most LGBT friendly corporation in the world. We challenge all multinationals to follow the example and leadership shown by those who saw a chance to be ahead of the curve. The IGLCC is proud of this historic moment and extends the invitation to all international corporations to participate in next year's Index", concluded Mr. Lépine.

The corporations participating in this year's Index are: AMR, BT Group, Cisco Systems, The Dow Chemical Company, IBM, ING, Intel, KPMG, Kraft Food, Merck, Novartis, Philips, SAP, TNT and UBS. To download a copy of the Index report, go to: [www.iglcc.org/index2009](http://www.iglcc.org/index2009)

### **About the IGLCC**

The International Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (IGLCC) was founded in 2006 in Hamburg, Germany and is based in Montréal, Canada. IGLCC is the world's leading international LGBT business network, operating in 15 countries through 17 chambers of commerce and business organizations. IGLCC represents the interests of over 55 million Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) employees, business owners and customers worldwide.

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