

# Justice for Gay Africans Society

## Strategic Planning Meeting

Date: Wednesday 25 August 2010 || Time: 18:00 – 20:00hours  
 MBARC Boardroom, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor 63 St Mary Axe  
 London. EC3A 8AA

### AGENDA

	Item	Reference	Required Action	Lead
1	<b>Welcome and Introduction</b>	Reflection & projection		Godwyns
2	<b>Aims and Strategic focus</b>	See attached	General discussion	Godwyns
3	<b>Mission statement</b>		Suggestion based on aims	Eddie Bruce-Jones
4	a) <b>Remit/Scope/Network</b> b) <b>Update on UN/global/EU activities (TBC)</b>	The Commonwealth UN Other civil organisations	Discussion	Eddie Bruce-Jones
5	<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory board,</li> <li>• Board of Trustees,</li> <li>• Events planning</li> <li>• Media/Publicity</li> <li>• Outreach</li> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• International liaison (main focus to challenge countries of origin)</li> <li>• Etc. (suggestions welcomed)</li> </ul>	Discussion and suggestions	General
6	<b>Events</b>	Events through the year Milestone dates Uses	Events	Christopher Banda
7	<b>Any Other business</b>	Name; logo, recruitment	General suggestions	Godwyns
8	<b>Date of next meeting</b>		Suggestions (quarterly with regard to governance)	

Thanks for participation

# Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> August 2010, 6 to 8pm

**In Attendance:** Anne Cormack, Christopher Banda, Eddie Bruce-Jones, Michael Bell, Patrick Strudwick, Rowland Jide Macaulay, Seon Van-Sertima, Godwyns Onwuchekwa.

**Apologies:** Cheikh Traore, Peter Tatchell, Skye Chirape, Davis Mac-Iyalla, Edward Phillips, John Bosco

## **Introduction:**

All present introduced each other and Godwyns in a brief Welcome note (*see script on last page*) emphasized that this organisation and this meeting is to bring changes and build capacity of LGBT people of African descent.

He also re-emphasized that the group is not just for Africans but for all gay Black people. The aims in its current state may be ambitious hence may require reviewing.

Godwyns concluded by asking the Strategic group to accept his invitation as “owners of the project because together, we are stronger”.

## **Questions raised:**

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### **Composition of the Strategic Group & subsequent sub-groups/membership**

A clear and defined explanation on the role and involvement of people of non-African origin in JFGA.

Persons of all races can make JFGA relevant, by virtue of the UN Declaration on Human rights, this is about representation, leadership and collaboration, and everyone can make a contribution, using assets available including intelligence, experiences and the media.

It was also agreed that although the group is focused on emancipation of LGBTI black people, everyone, regardless of sexuality is welcomed as members if they believed in and want to contribute to the struggle.

### **Aims and Strategic focus**

Basic Human Rights of LGBTI black people.

Understanding and tackling issues faced in the UK, such as discrimination and homophobia within the African communities and also racism within the gay community.

A clear distinction between issues above and issues in countries of origin.

Countries of origin may take more attention although JfGA will not neglect local (UK) issues.

**The name of the group** “Justice for Gay Africans Society” is restrictive to other gay black people.

JFGA must be clear on specific issues affecting Black people. If this is an African group, there are people of other race who are of African origin; a new thinking must apply on how JFGA will address these issues.

Connecting the relevance of justice for equal rights at home and abroad. JFGA must also consider how to deal with the challenges from the diaspora African society at home and abroad. This could be tackled through events and other means that may be suggested as time goes on.

**Aims could include:** Increasing the visibility of African LGBTI people, encourage confidence, changing attitude, create a space for Black LGBTI people.

In the UK, there is a need to create more understanding of the LGBTI people of Africa, changing the attitude of society family and the gay community, demystify the myth on the notion of being Black and Gay.

Visibility is key; promote support for LGBTI migrants and a genuine formation of the Black LGBTI community. The issues of “Coming Out” publicly was discussed but raised a lot of other problems. How the UK media report issues affecting Black people in the society.

It is also important that politicians in the UK and African nations listen and give attention to the problems, UK member of parliament are doing a lot more to tackle these issues and JFGA can approach both MP and MEP where necessary.

There is the need to initiate an interface with different groups of activists, in order to promote the relevance of LGBTI rights and the involvement of celebrities, such as making statements that support African LGBTI course.

On racism in the gay community, there is a need to find ways to help black people who choose to use the scene to feel welcome.

### **Mission Statement**

Eddie Bruce-Jones to lead on the development of the mission statement and send out an email for comments.

### **Remit/Scope/Network**

A meeting has been scheduled with the Commonwealth on the 1<sup>st</sup> September.

Other areas for JFGA are the African Union, United Nations (Human Rights Council)

Connecting with other civil organisations such as ILGA, British Nigerian Law Forum, Law Society England & Wales.

### **Update:**

- Participated at LGBTI Asylum conference at the University of Greenwich
- Met LGBTI Asylum Seekers at UKLGIG
- Discussing possible relationship with the British Museum
- Upcoming meeting with the Head of Human Rights at The Commonwealth
- On-going planning for an event during the Black History month, October 2010
- Writing abstract to submit for ILGA World Conference, December 2010

### **Summary of Actions.**

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Due</b>
1.	<b>Mission Statement &amp; Strategic Notes</b>	Eddie Bruce-Jones	Within 2 weeks then liaise over email
2.	<b>Governance</b>	Eddie Bruce-Jones	By next meeting
3.	<b>Events including planning and outreach</b>	Christopher Banda Supported by Jide	By next meeting
4.	<b>Abstract for conferences</b>	Godwyns Supported by Jide & Seon	Before closing date
5.	<b>Name suggestions</b>	All	By next meeting
6.	<b>Next meeting (within a month but not more than 6 weeks)</b>	Godwyns & Michael	Within 10 days

# Justice for Gay Africans Society

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## Strategic Planning Meeting

### Welcome brief

Thank you for agreeing to participate in today's meeting. As detailed in the invitation email you received, our objective today will be to come up with the scope of how this group will operate and go about achieving its aims (see below).

Before we go on, I would remind us again the reason and focus of this group.

I founded Justice for Gay Africans Society as a result of a desire that runs in almost every gay black person I have come across: and that desire is for us to be recognised for who we are, respected and counted as equal members of the society. But for us, it is not just the *society* in this case that matters, it goes beyond that. It includes family, community, institutions – both private and public, civil society, etc. The gay black person is still, to a large extent, a myth even in the eyes of people of other races; anyway, we are non-existent within our own race. But it has not always been so.

The above myths, like a riddle, are what JfGA is poised to explain, solve, challenge, and revert. Sounds too ambitious? But the passion that spurs me to work hard these past 10 months is the belief in the saying that 'there is no harm in trying' and that if you try hard enough, you will always get somewhere.

And so friends, below is the somewhere black and African gay people want to get to;

- **Protection for LGBTI people and access to basic needs.**
- **Highlight the plights of LGBTI people in homophobic countries; and**
- **Repeal of homophobic and discriminatory laws.**

But the greatest achievement would be to leave a legacy, a platform that will serve as a collective voice, not just for our present but for future generations. A legacy that will inspire and spur them to challenge oppression, hatred, stigma, discrimination, harassment, etc.

I hope that your passion to see justice done will continue to be alive and active as we embark on this journey left to us by those who have come before. Their efforts are worthy of praise.

**And with this, I invite you to become owners of this project because together, we are stronger.**

**Godwyns Onwuchekwa**