

UPR: Guinea Bissau
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network & Pan-Africa ILGA
United Nations Human Rights Council, Geneva

John Fisher

Mr. President, distinguished members of the delegation,

I am pleased to make this statement on behalf of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and Pan-Africa International Lesbian and Gay Association.

We welcome Guinea Bissau's commitment to equality and non-discrimination, expressed in its national report, and reflected in the outcome document.

In keeping with that commitment, we commend Guinea Bissau for being one of six African countries that endorsed the General Assembly Joint Statement on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity, and we wish to recognise the positive steps and direction towards ending discrimination on the grounds of Sexual Orientation and gender identity.

In a high-level panel held in conjunction with the current session of the Human Rights Council, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon delivered a statement, in which he noted:

"Protecting human rights means protecting the rights of everyone, without distinction or discrimination. ... No doubt deeply rooted cultural sensitivities can be aroused when we talk about sexual orientation. Social attitudes run deep and take time to change. But cultural considerations should not stand in the way of basic human rights."

We appreciate the government of Guinea Bissau's understanding and leadership on the issues and equal rights on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. We welcome the government's commitment to take action on these matters.

We are here today to encourage Guinea-Bissau in view of its affirmation of support during the UPR for the principle of non-discrimination to further implement;

- Laws that protect lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people from discrimination.
- policies which ensure equality of access to public health services by all marginalised populations in respect of HIV/AIDS prevention and other key actors in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic.
- effective education and training for police, judicial and State officials on these and other human rights issues.

Thank you Mr. President.