

Kenita Placide, Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and United and Strong Inc. welcomes and is thankful for the government's commitment to accept a number of recommendations from this body and for its commitment to raise public awareness on issues of discrimination. This is in line with the 2010 Budget Address by the Honourable Prime Minister of Saint Lucia when he stated the following: "We must stand against stigma and discrimination in all its forms. The Government will engage in legislative reform to guarantee non discrimination against persons on the basis of health, gender, disability and sexual orientation."

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In spite of the above statement, there definitely exists State-sanctioned discrimination based on sexual orientation in St Lucia: there are discriminatory laws which have legitimised and perpetuated socio-cultural prejudices and facilitated violence and other violations by state and non state actors, as attested to by several recent cases of violence targeted against individuals based on their perceived sexual orientation.

In reference to the government's responses to 92 through 96 stating that Saint Lucia cannot accept these recommendations at this time due to contrary legislative provisions and deeply entrenched societal mores and values which are still to be overcome. We would like to see stronger recommendations by this honorable body to the government of St Lucia in regard to the following:

1. Reminding the State of St Lucia that the rights of any minority cannot be held hostage by the tyranny of the majority;
2. Requiring the Constitutional Reform Commissioners to publically release their final report and recommendations to ensure that this process remains accountable and transparent to the people of Saint Lucia.
3. Reminding the State of St Lucia that they are obligated under International Human Rights Law to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of everyone without discrimination.

The Saint Lucian lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community are not asking for extra rights, only the "same rights" and protection under the law which have already been afforded to the larger Saint Lucian society. Again, we thank the Government of Saint Lucia for engaging with us at various levels of the UPR process and look forward to working with the Government to implement those accepted recommendations to which we are most concerned about as a stakeholder.

