

**Human Rights Council – 25<sup>th</sup> session – March 2013**

**Item 6: Consideration of UPR report of Belize**

**Statement for Action Canada for Population and Development**

Thank you Mr. President

I make this statement on behalf of Sexual Rights Initiative<sup>1</sup> and the United Belize Advocacy Movement (UNIBAM)<sup>2</sup>.

We appreciate the willingness and commitment of the government to improve laws and policies relating to an increase efforts to provide information and education on sexually transmitted infections to its population, as well as to combat stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS.

However, we are concerned that despite the outcome of the Belizean UPR in the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle, no activities were carried out to address discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation. In fact non-heterosexual persons remain one of the most discriminated groups in Belize.

Moreover, we are very disappointed at the lack of acceptance of several recommendations received by Belize regarding violations of human rights based on sexual orientation and gender identity. These include ensuring the prohibition of discrimination on that basis; ensuring that the Belizean Criminal Code does not criminalize individuals based on their sexual orientation or the removal of domestic legislation that outlaws same sex activity between consenting adults, among others.

We urge the Belizean government to address this issue by adopting and implementing laws and policies that will eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity as recommended by several states during the current UPR cycle.

Keeping this in mind, we urge the Government of Belize to reconsider its response and recommend the following;

To de-criminalize consensual same sex sexual activity between consenting adults by repealing Chapter 101 section 53 in the Belizean Criminal Code.

And to take all necessary measures to guarantee the human rights of LGBT individuals to ensure they do not face persecution of any kind.

Thank you

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<sup>1</sup> The Sexual Rights Initiative is a coalition of organizations comprising of Action Canada for Population and Development, Akahata – Latin America, Coalition of African Lesbians, Creating Resources for Empowerment In Action – India, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights and Federation for Women and Family Planning – Poland.

<sup>2</sup> The United Belize Advocacy Movement is an organization that uses rights-base approaches to reduce stigma and discrimination. It is the only advocate LGBT organization in the country that is managed and led by LGBT to address health and rights base issues.