

Statement of Action Canada for Population and Development – Item 6 - Universal Periodic Review – Dominica – Adoption of UPR outcome on Dominica – September, 2013

Thank you Mr. President,

I make this statement on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative¹ and CHAP DOMINICA.

We welcome the commitment of the Government of Dominica with the UPR process and its support of the recommendation 93.40 on protection of human rights of people living with HIV/AIDS.

However, we are deeply concerned by the criminalization of same sex conduct under the Article 16 of the Sexual Offences Act 1998. The lack of protection of the right to equality and non-discrimination for members of LGBT communities in Dominica leads to stigma and discrimination against them as well as to their being rendered invisible in the eyes of the law. This deters lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people from reporting acts of discrimination, abuse and violence to the relevant authorities. Also, this reduces the effectiveness of all efforts toward prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

Regarding this legislation and its consequences Dominica has received recommendations of 13 states during this round of the UPR, and at the 13th session of the Human Rights Council in March 2010, similar recommendations did not enjoy the support of Dominica.

We urge the Government, adopt a holistic approach when dealing with violations of human rights, and to repeal laws that criminalise persons based on their gender or sexual orientation and affirm the rights of persons belonging to sexual minorities. We also urge the government to take a strong stand towards equality and non-discrimination.

Thank you.

¹ The Sexual Rights Initiative is a coalition of organizations comprising of Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD), Akahata, Coalition for African Lesbians, Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA), Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) and Federation for Women and Family Planning (Federa).