

Human Rights Council – 29th session – June 2015

Item 6: Universal Periodic Review – Guyana – Adoption of UPR outcome on Guyana – June 2015

Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development

Action Canada makes this statement in collaboration with the Sexual Rights Initiative.

Mr President,

We are deeply concerned by the failure of the government to provide an addendum report that responds to recommendations 132.29 to 132.42. These recommendations concern the decriminalisation of adult consensual same sex activity and the need to amend Article 129 of Constitution and the need to repeal sections 351 to 353 of Criminal Code. The absence of this addendum goes to the very heart of the UPR process and shows indifference by Guyana to being held accountable in this forum.

We note that recommendations 130.25 to 130.27 calling for the strengthening of protection measures for LGBT people, the investigation of hate crimes and discrimination based on SOGI enjoy the support of Guyana. However, measures to achieve these recommendations will not be effective in a country where homophobia is sponsored by the state through legislation and the criminalization of same sex activity .

The lack of respect for the right to equality and non-discrimination for members of LGBT communities in Guyana reinforces stigma and discrimination. . This deters lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people from reporting acts of discrimination, abuse and violence to the relevant authorities.

We urge the Government of Guyana, to 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 by making the suitable amendment to the Constitution.

Thank you,