



Human Rights Council – 26th session – June 2014

Item 6: Consideration of Eritrea's UPR Outcome - Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development

Thank you Mr. President.

I make this statement on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative.

We commend the government's acceptance of recommendations to eliminate discriminatory practices against women and children, allocate resources for awareness-raising activities for women and girls' empowerment, as well as to hold perpetrators of violence against women accountable.

In addressing the issue of female genital mutilation, we strongly encourage the government to undertake public awareness raising activities pertaining to the legal implications associated with violations of the law against the practice. We urge the government to implement comprehensive sexuality education curriculums, in all educational institutions, at all levels. Comprehensive sexuality education is an effective intervention for the elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women, and to address negative gender norms and stereotypes which perpetuate harmful traditional practices. Related to this, schools and communities must be supported to set up seminars to raise their awareness of issues related to gender equality, women's empowerment and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

On the issue of child, early and forced marriage, we urge the government to establish multi-stakeholder committees to advocate for the elimination of practice. Such committees must be empowered with adequate resources and training in order to raise public awareness regarding the legal context surrounding the issue and hold its perpetrators accountable. The government must also meet the needs of those subjected to the practice of child, early and forced marriage by supporting effective policies and programmes that allow girls to continue their education, and to access the health information and services they need, including sexual and reproductive health services.

Finally, we are concerned with Eritrea's refusal to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of individuals with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions by rejecting the recommendation to launch a national dialogue and campaign, to tackle all forms of discriminations against LGBT persons. The government has the obligation to ensure that no individual faces discrimination or stigma, including on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

Thank you.