

**Statement of Action Canada for Population and Development – Universal Periodic Review –
Colombia – Adoption of UPR outcome on Colombia – September 19, 2013**

Thank you Madame President,

This statement is also on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative¹.

We welcome the Colombia government's willingness to engage in the UPR process and its attention to sexual rights.

We commend Colombian government's acceptance of recommendation to ensure that health care providers and medical professionals act in full conformity with the Constitutional Court ruling decriminalizing abortion in certain circumstances; adopting measures to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality and consider the possibility of enhancing the necessary measures for the protection and integration of the LGBT population, among others issues related to sexual and reproductive rights, some of which are already being addressing by the government.

We also welcome the rejection of the recommendation maintaining that the institution of the family and marriage is a conjugal union between a man and a woman, since according to the Colombian Constitutional Court the concept of the family is far broader.

However, in the context of concerns raised in the Outcome Report, we would like to draw your attention to legal restrictions of abortion and cases of sexual violence and murder against women, especially lesbians and trans women. These crimes should be investigated and publicized in order to guarantee their rights.

We urge the Colombian Government to:

a) Decriminalize abortion in all circumstances, guaranteeing access to safe abortion services for women and adolescents on demand and free of charge, thereby respecting women's autonomy and freedom to take decisions about their body and their sexuality.

b) Ensure that perpetration of violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity, including if perpetrated by law enforcement personnel, is vigorously investigated, those responsible are prosecuted, tried and duly punished, and that victims are provided with appropriate remedies and redress, including compensation.

c) Define femicide as an offence and establish special mechanisms to ensure justice for victims.

With respect to the implementation of accepted recommendations, we urge the Colombian government to work together with local NGOs working on sexual and reproductive rights to facilitate the meaningful and effective achievement.

Thank you.

¹ The Sexual Rights Initiative is a coalition of organizations including: Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD), Akahata (Argentina), Coalition of African Lesbians (South Africa), CREA (India), Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (Egypt) and Federation for Women and Family Planning (Poland).