

UPR INTERVENTION FOR PALAU

Wednesday 21 September 2011

Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

Mr. President,

We commend for its commitment to equality and non-discrimination. We are particularly pleased to see Palau accept recommendations to decriminalize sexual relations between consenting adults of the same sex. This commitment is consistent with Palau's support for the joint statement on ending acts of violence, criminal sanctions and related human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity, delivered last March to the Human Rights Council on behalf of 85 States.

As the UN Human Rights Committee has confirmed, laws criminalising same-sex relations are inconsistent with rights to privacy and non-discrimination, and inhibit measures to address HIV and AIDS by driving marginalised communities underground.

We therefore welcome Palau's commitment to amend current legislation and bring it into line with international standards. This development will send a strong message of encouragement to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens of Palau, who will be able to participate more equally in society. We would be interested to know the timetable proposed for this reform.

We also welcome Palau's acceptance of a recommendation to combat discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people through political, legislative and administrative measures. In order to develop these measures, we strongly encourage Palau to work together with civil society. We also call on Palau to provide sensitivity training to police, judicial and other authorities, as to promote the respect for all persons, including on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens are treated equally to all other citizens by state authorities.

Finally, we urge Palau to consider applying the *Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity* as a guide to assist in policy development.

Thank you Mr President.

MR VAN EMDEN
