

Human Rights Council – 25th session – March 2014

Consideration of Senegal’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 welcome the Senegalese government’s willingness to engage in the UPR process. We commend the government’s acceptance of recommendations #123.6 to enact relevant legislation to promote and protect the rights of children in all settings,” and recommendation #123.33 to “incorporate clear definitions of “sale of children” and “trafficking in children” in the Criminal Code and Anti-trafficking Act respectively, and specify the penalties for offenders, under the Criminal Code, in accordance with the Palermo Protocol.”

Despite this, the rate of maternal mortality is persistently high. Senegal is ranked 28th among countries with high rates of maternal mortality. It is therefore critically important that the government take concrete actions to contribute to the realization of women’s right to health, specifically reproductive rights. We recognize the frequent use of inaccurate and/or lack of application of reproductive health laws and policies contributes to high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity. The implementation of the laws, including the law which permits therapeutic abortion, also remains a real challenge.

Our organizations remain equally concerned with Senegal’s complete refusal to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of individuals with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions. We therefore urge the government to revisit recommendations #126.1 - 126.14. Specifically, we are greatly disturbed by the rejection of recommendation #126.11 to take steps to combat the persecution of persons on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity, in particular by removing Article 319.3 from the Penal Code so as to decriminalise consensual sexual conduct between persons of the same sex;

As our organizations have previously recommended, the government must:

- Address the unmet need for family planning by providing all individuals with access to a range of affordable modern methods of contraception.
- Decriminalize consensual sexual relations between persons of the same sex.
- Address the sexual and reproductive health needs of young people and adolescents by, in part, increasing the budget for the Ministry of Health to provide young people and adolescents with access to the services and

information they are entitled to, and providing them with access to youth-friendly health information and services.

Thank you.