

**UPR Belize – report adoption**  
**25<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council**  
**20 March 2014**

Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and United Belize Advocacy Movement

*- Delivered by Sheherezade Kara*

Thank you Mr. President,

This statement is also on behalf of United Belize Advocacy Movement.

We wish to address three issues:

First of all, we would like to congratulate Belize for its sincere efforts in consulting its LGBT citizens in 2013 while drafting its national report, as well as the Prime Minister's statement underlining the State's responsibility to all its citizens.

However, the United Belize Advocacy Movement remains concerned that several recommendations accepted in the report have no timelines or budgetary allocations. We urge the State to include a timeline for steps to be taken and to assign a budget for implementation.

Secondly, contrary to the State's view on recommendation 97.7 on the right of equality before the law, equal protection of the law, and non-discrimination, Belize is not acting in conformity with its international commitments. Discrimination remains unaddressed in and out of the education system. We urge the State to develop a practical mechanism, and seek technical support to expand its capacity to respond to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Third, we consider Belize's commitment to the principles of the newly approved gender policy an important first step in strengthening policy frameworks that address rights concerns based on sexual orientation. However, its reluctance to address recommendations 99.28 to 99.39 affecting its LGBT citizens in any substantive way remains a cause for concern, and leads us to question the Government's commitment to human rights as laid down in the constitution and international law.

States have commended Belize on its progress in responding to HIV, gender issues and economic concerns of citizens, but these advances have not affected LGBT people in any visible way.

No adequate domestic institutional mechanisms exist for reporting and seeking redress from human rights violations; such reports go without investigation or prosecution. And no legislative amendment has been made to end current discriminatory laws based on sexual orientation and gender identity. While having little legal basis in the immigration act homosexual people are banned from entering the country, and a vague definition in Section 53 of the Criminal Code does not distinguish between consensual same-sex relations and rape. The current statute sanctions and promotes impunity, which drives violence, stigma, and legislative invisibility.

Will the Government follow the example of other States and substantively address the social disparities affecting its LGBT citizens in a timely manner?

Finally, we congratulate the State on its willingness to reflect on the recommendations affecting LGBT people in Belize and its recent embrace of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and thank the many other States who made many substantive recommendations.

Thank you.