

**Human Rights Council – 30th session**

**Item 6: Universal Periodic Review Outcomes: Maldives**



**Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development**

Action Canada makes this statement in collaboration with the Sexual Rights Initiative.

We welcome the Maldives government's acceptance of recommendations calling for the adoption a gender equality bill, guaranteeing women's participation in important spaces, legislating against domestic violence and providing more shelters, and addressing the practices of FGM and early and forced marriage.

With respect to the implementation of these recommendations we urge the Maldives government to consult and collaborate with local NGOs in particular those that work with women and on gender issues, in order to facilitate the meaningful participation of those who are marginalised in the policy making processes.

However we are deeply concerned with the rejection of recommendations to adopt a law against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, which would have guaranteed LGBT persons the same human rights as everyone else by repealing the norms that criminalise them. We also regret the rejections of recommendations calling on the Maldives to decriminalise consensual extra marital sexual relations including the provisions of the penal code related to sex outside of marriage. This would have ensured that survivors of sexual violence were not persecuted for the choices they make about their own sexual lives. Clearly, this undermines the government's commitment to ensure protection and non-discrimination against women and other vulnerable groups.

We are also deeply concerned on the lack of response to recommendations to withdraw reservations to CEDAW, ICCPR and CRC, and ratify the Palermo protocol.

We also notice that issues addressed by stakeholders during the review such as formulating policy to address unsafe abortion and providing sexual and reproductive health education were absent in recommendations.