

Human Rights Council – 28th session – March 2015

Item 6: Consideration of the Universal Periodic Review Reports – BOLIVIA

Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development

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

We welcome the commitments made by the Bolivian government as part of the outcome of its review to protect human rights and its acceptance of recommendations related to sexual and reproductive rights.

In particular, we applaud Bolivia's acceptance of recommendation 113.31 raised by Uruguay, which calls on the government to revise penal laws that criminalize women and girls for seeking abortion, and the doctors who provide them. In order to fulfill recommendation 113.31, the Bolivian government must eliminate from the country's penal code Article 263, which criminalizes abortion.

We also draw your attention to recommendation 114.76 to eliminate judicial authorization for therapeutic abortion and in cases of rape and incest. We would like to highlight that besides the recommendation accepted, there is a decision of Bolivia's Plurinational Constitutional Court, issued in February 2014 that eliminates the requirement for judicial authorization for women seeking legal abortion in Bolivia.

Given the evidence provided throughout Bolivia's review, which demonstrated how legal restrictions on abortion violate women's human rights, specifically their reproductive rights, we recommend that the Bolivian state revise its penal code and create legislation providing unrestricted access to safe, legal and affordable abortion services. We reiterate, the government of Bolivia must remove Penal Code Article 263 in order to ensure legal access to abortion, under any circumstance, based on the woman's decision.

Thank you.