

**Human Rights Council – 34<sup>th</sup> session - Agenda Item 6 – Universal Periodic Review**

**Timor Leste**

*Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development*

Mr. President,

Action Canada makes this statement on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative.

We congratulate the government of Timor Leste for accepting the recommendation to strengthen the legal framework to ensure gender equality and banning discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. We also welcome Timor Leste's acceptance of the recommendation to develop and adopt legal and administrative measures to investigate and punish acts of discrimination, stigmatization and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons

While Timor-Leste has taken some positive steps to protect the rights of LGBTI persons, many continue to be subject to high levels of violence and discrimination. To counter discrimination, we urge the government to conduct sensitization campaigns across the country, to publicly condemn violence against transgender persons in Timor-Leste society and enact comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status in all areas of public life, including health care, education, employment and housing.

Furthermore, we urge the government to amend Article 52 of the Penal Code to include bias based on gender identity and intersex status as aggravating factors in the commission of a crime. The non-recognition of gender identity as an aggravating factor within Article 52 of the Penal Code is particularly problematic given that transgender persons experience high levels of physical and symbolic violence in Timor-Leste, including from their close relatives and are subject to degrading treatment by the police force when they report the injuries and seek protection. We call upon the government to implement rights based training of police and other law enforcement authorities to allow them to effectively protect and respond to LGBTI victims of crime without discrimination.

Thank you