

**Item 6 - Statement of Action Canada for Population and Development
Universal Periodic Review – United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Adoption of UPR outcome 20 September 2012**

Thank you, Madam President.

I make this statement on behalf of FPA and the Sexual Rights Initiative¹.

We are dismayed and concerned that the UK government has rejected the recommendation of Finland 'of ensuring by legislative and other measures, that women in Northern Ireland are entitled to safe and legal abortion on an equal basis with women living in other parts of the United Kingdom', and have not even provided a reason for doing so. It is unacceptable that the UK Government continues to ignore the following:

Women from Northern Ireland, despite being UK citizens, are not entitled to free, safe and legal abortions on the National Health Service in Northern Ireland or any other region in the UK. This health care service is available to other UK citizens in England, Scotland and Wales.

This is discrimination.

Women from Northern Ireland have to travel to England and pay for an abortion privately, paying up to €2283. This includes women who have been raped, have been given a diagnosis of foetal abnormality and young girls who are the victims of incest. Furthermore, they have chosen to ignore public opinion polls that have been carried out in Northern Ireland over the last decade, which have consistently shown support for abortion to be available under these circumstances.

The current economic climate means that increasingly, those who cannot afford to travel to England potentially put their health at risk by accessing unsafe abortions by purchasing abortion medication online and by self-administering.

Significantly, human rights monitoring bodies, namely the CEDAW Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights have stated that the abortion law should be amended to prevent unsafe abortions and that the punitive provisions should be removed. It is imperative the UK Government accept that this is a human rights issue for women, which must not be ignored

Thank you

¹ The Sexual Rights Initiative (SRI) is a coalition of organizations including Action Canada for Population and Development (Canada), Akahata (Argentina), CREA (India), Coalition of African Lesbians (South Africa), Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (Egypt), Federation for Women and Family Planning (Poland).