

**Human Rights Council- 36th session
Statement- South African UPR report
22 September 2017**

Thank you, Mr. President. Action Canada makes this statement in collaboration with the Sexual Rights Initiative.

Of the 243 recommendations made by member states to South Africa many echo the recommendations made in the previous cycle, having been pointed out by civil society. These relate to a set of commonly identified injustices – gender based violence, HIV and AIDS, poverty, inequality and discrimination.

The repeated commitments by the government of South Africa to addressing these issues are undermined by the historical and ongoing extraction of the country's natural resources by multinational corporations; the political economy of aid, whose conditionalities represent the modern face of old colonialism in the name of development and human rights; corruption; poor and inconsistent political leadership on policy, institutional transformation and delivery; lack of coordination between government ministries; lack of recognition and an enabling environment for meaningful participation by civil society groups (who all too often are relied on to do the work of government service provision in relation to HIV and GBV) – all packaged within a macroeconomic and political framework that privileges the rich and the powerful and deepens already existing and multiple inequalities including race, class and gender, amongst others.

More than half of South Africa's population — over 30 million people — live in poverty or on less than two and a half dollars per day. This represents three million more people living in poverty today than in 2011. Closer inspection of the data reveals the ways in which poverty, like any other social injustice or concern in South Africa, is profoundly raced and gendered. Race, class and gender – among other identity and geographical markers – continue to dictate the destiny of those who reside within South Africa's borders.

We call on the government of South Africa to undertake:

- Focused and sustained prioritization of key areas that pertain to the lived realities of people facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion demonstrated through adequate resourcing, proper coordination and open and transparent monitoring and evaluation and accountability to those most affected.
- Disciplined and rigorous implementation of the many progressive laws and policies and where necessary to engage in law reform to align laws, policies and practices to ensure accordance with the Constitution. This includes the full decriminalization of all aspects of adult sex work, ensuring access for women and girls to safe and legal abortions, and the roll out of comprehensive sexuality education.
- Develop with the involvement of civil society and other key role-players a plan for effective and accountable delivery of the UPR outcomes paying particular attention to the expressed needs and realities of women and others who have been excluded and marginalized.

Finally, we call on international donor / financing community to challenge the dominant market approach and conditionality-driven aid architecture, and establish one based on gender equality, human rights and sustainability.