

**Item 3**  
**27<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council**  
**Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development**  
**15<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

Thank you Mr. President!

This statement is supported by the Sexual Rights Initiative.

Large populations of marginalised and disadvantaged groups routinely face the violation of their human rights by State and non-State actors. Many face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and other violations of their rights, their lives and their bodies which prevent them from leading their lives with dignity. Most specifically we would like to highlight the impact of these violations on women, persons with disability and people with non-conforming sexualities and gender identity and expression.

Acknowledging the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination requires States to understand the root causes of violence and discrimination. Systemic forms of discrimination against women, sex workers, sexually active adolescents, and persons with non-conforming sexualities and gender identity and expression are rooted in the enforcement of gender and sexual stereotypes and patriarchal norms by institutions and individuals.

Mr. President, we would like to highlight the inalienable right of every individual to autonomy and choice over their bodies, sexualities and genders. Human rights can be protected and promoted by taking an intersectional analysis of:

- (a) the violence and discrimination faced by individuals based on their genders, sexuality sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, ability - consequently disability, HIV status, age amongst others
- (b) Laws and policies based on stereotypes and laws that exclude and marginalise people, denying them their rights.

These violations manifest themselves in many ways including through physical violence, sexual violence, maternal mortality and morbidity, marital rape, harmful traditional practices including child early and forced marriages, female genital mutilation, polygamy, discriminatory access to services including health, education etc.

Mr. President, the promotion and protection of human rights is possible only if every one of us as individuals, institutions and States, understands the powers and privileges that each one of us have or have not, and the exclusions and marginalisation that laws and policies promote. We urge the Council to address the root causes of discrimination and adopt measures to promote equality and non-discrimination in order to address the systemic discriminations faced by all individuals.