



**Annual Full Day of Discussion on the Human Rights of Women
Human Rights Council – 32nd session
16 June 2016**

Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development

Thank you Mr. President.

I make this statement also on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative.

The 2030 Agenda represents a promise to every individual that world leaders will work together to ensure all people can reach their full potential and live out their lives in dignity, free from violence and discrimination. We have seen and heard similar promises before and while some have most definitely benefitted, many have not. Progress has been uneven and unequal, with women and girls consistently being the ones left behind.

We are told that laws criminalizing and restricting health services only women and girls need are not relevant to meeting health development targets. We are told that the impunity for intimate partner violence, sexual violence and violence against sex workers, has nothing to do with the legitimacy of criminal justice systems. We are told that learning about our bodies without shame, the meaning of consent and exploring our sexuality in a safe and supported way is completely unrelated to goals of empowerment. And we are told that nonconformity in our gender expression and sexual orientation is not connected to housing, employment and social indicators.

The integration of human rights into the 2030 Agenda provides a critical opportunity for States to recognize and act on these intersecting issues and also for women and girls to hold them accountable for their obligations to do so. This requires thinking about sustainable development in a different way, one that fully respects the autonomy of the person and challenges the gender based status quo that exists in all parts of the world. The data, research and our experience tells us that we will never achieve the targets and goals of the 2030 Agenda without taking into consideration the application of discriminatory laws, policies and practices that criminalize, marginalize and disempower women and girls and prevent them from reaching their full potential.

We urge States and the international community to deliver on their promises by acknowledging and addressing the root causes of gender inequality and fulfilling their duties to respect the human rights of women and girls.

Thank you.