

Human Rights Council – 28th session – March 2015

Item 3: General Debate

Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development

Action Canada makes this statement in collaboration with the Sexual Rights Initiative.

Mr. President, this year we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Conference and the resulting Declaration and Platform for Action, the adoption of which was a historic and much celebrated call for action towards gender equality and the advancement of women's human rights by all States.

However, we are deeply concerned that State commitments to women's human rights are empty words and in reality remain a low priority for many States. The gains made since the adoption of the Platform for Action 20 years ago remain under threat from increased militarism, the deepening crises in democracy, lack of political will, the neoliberal economic order, heteronormativity, patriarchy and fundamentalisms.

The low priority that many states have for the advancement of women's human rights has just been evidenced in the Political Declaration adopted at the UN Commission on the Status of Women to mark the 20th anniversary of the Platform for Action. This Declaration was nothing more than a weak reaffirmation of existing commitments and failed to match the level of ambition in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

If States are committed to advancing gender equality and all human rights of all women, words must be translated into meaningful action. Plans, strategies and programs must be developed with the active participation of marginalized groups of women and feminist movements, and their leadership recognized and supported. Resources must be made available for both implementation and accountability.