

**46th session of the Human Rights Council
Action Canada for Population and Development
Annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming**

Theme: the state of play in the fight against racism and discrimination 20 years after the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action and the exacerbating effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on these efforts

Thank you, Madam President. Action Canada makes this statement on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative and the Coalition of African Lesbians

We read this statement during Black History Month, aware of March 21 as International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination honouring people of African descent whose murders were racially motivated.

10 years ago, Dr Koku Adomdza, said, 'If the UN is serious about the declaration, it must be seen to rapidly mobilise the oft-cited international community to end the causes of poverty, disease, discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation of all forms against Africa and Global Africans'. What we are observing is a regression and inaction, and unfortunately as COVID has exposed and exacerbated racism and inequality. The lack of movement and mobilisation smacks of scapegoating in regard to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

While the focus of the report was on the impact of COVID, reflections from last year's general debate on racism and police brutality in the USA, the structures of the colonial international¹, that manifest as nationalism, racism and Afrophobia² are alive and sustained in spaces such as the UN that are complicit and unwilling to confront, and address racism and other forms of oppressions such as Islamophobia, including Apartheid in Palestine.

There is no justice without reparations.

Thank you.

¹ A term Vivienne Jabri [coined](#) to describe how the international sphere is still permeated by imperialism and colonial power, and transform what sovereignty meant for all nations everywhere.

² Structural racism and discrimination targeting black people or people of African descent.