

Human Rights Council – 24th session – September 2013**Consideration of Canada's UPR Outcome – Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development**

Thank you Mr. President

I make this statement on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative and our national-level partner, Canadians for Choice.

Our organizations remain concerned with the substantial deficit in Canada's implementation of recommendations from international human rights bodies, including recommendations received during Canada's review during the 1st cycle of the UPR. Through its rejection today of all recommendations other than ones that the government considers it is already implementing, Canada's response to its second UPR outcome deepens this deficit. Canadian organizations call on this Council to demand that the government of Canada implements key UPR recommendations that it has rejected today, including those relating to the development of national action plans to implement fundamental human rights obligations.

For example, we are greatly disturbed by Canada's rejection of recommendations #97 and #99, which call for a comprehensive national plan of action to address violence affecting indigenous women and girls. We are further disappointed by the rejection of recommendation #101 to carry out, "with the Special Procedures of the Council, an independent investigation of cases of disappearances and murders of Aboriginal women and girls." Canada must take concrete actions to realize women's human rights, specifically the rights of indigenous women to live free from all forms of stigma, discrimination and violence. According to Statistics Canada, indigenous women are 7 times more likely to be murdered than non-indigenous women in Canada and more than 582 cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada have been documented.

Regarding the acceptance of recommendation #109, we would like to recall that the government has an obligation to meaningfully involve sex workers in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes that affect their rights or interests. We stress that the government also has an obligation to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of sex workers, including in the context of anti-trafficking initiatives.

Finally, we note favourably that the Government has accepted a recommendation relating to the right to access equitable health-care services that are of good quality, especially for indigenous peoples. In the implementation of this recommendation, the government must remedy substantial long-standing failures to ensure the availability and accessibility of safe abortion services, especially in rural or remote areas, and the realization of women's human rights. It must take necessary measures to ensure that abortion services are provided without financial or other barriers in conformance with the Canada Health Act and that the principles of comprehensiveness and accessibility, under this Act, are respected. As our organizations have previously recommended, the Canadian government can do so by: immediately imposing penalties, in the form of a reduction or withholding of the Canada Health Transfer Cash contribution, against provinces that do not uphold the criteria set out in section 13 of the Canada Health Act and initiating the Dispute Avoidance and Resolution process provided for by the Canada Health Act with provincial governments that contravene the Canada Health Act with respect to the availability and accessibility of abortion services.

Thank you.