

**Human Rights Council 40th Session**  
**Item 6: UPR Nigeria**  
**Action Canada for Population and Development**  
**Speaker: Varyanne Sika**

Thank you Mr. President,

Action Canada makes this statement on behalf of Women Action for Gender Equality (WAGE), the Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL) and the Sexual Rights Initiative.

We welcome Nigeria's acceptance of Finland's recommendation to take specific steps to promote, protect and fulfil the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls, and look forward to seeing this being implemented. However, we note with concern that many women and girls still face human rights violations including high rates of gender based violence, forced marriages and other harmful and discriminatory practices. Despite the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act of 2015 being expanded, the implementation of this act remains dismal. Nigeria's Ministry of Women Affairs must be equipped with adequate human, technical and financial resources to effectively undertake the implementation of this act, to enable effective combating of violence and discrimination against women and girls, and to provide support and effective remedy and redress to victims.

Discriminatory laws and practices by state actors continue to undermine Nigeria's obligation to provide available, accessible, acceptable and quality health services and housing for all. As a consequence, access to and provision of HIV care has dropped and HIV prevalence has risen since 2014. Further, there is rampant inequality in access to housing as rental costs rise and arbitrary and forced evictions continue. We are disconcerted by the position of the Nigerian government following the enactment of the Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act (2014). This legislation has been the subject of recommendations in past UPR cycles and Nigeria has persistently refused to align this law with human rights norms, standards and obligations. This and other discriminatory laws and several pronouncements by the Nigerian government have ensured that women and LGBTQ people and groups are forcefully subjected to heteronormative corrective measures in violation of their human rights; leading to bodily harm, injury, mental distress and death. This position is in breach of the Constitution and contravenes international instruments to which Nigeria is a party.

We call upon the State of Nigeria to take the necessary steps to adhere to the human rights instruments to which it is a party and to uphold its constitution to ensure the protection of everyone's rights.