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Human Rights Council 31st session
Item 6 Universal Periodic Review – Rwanda
Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development

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

The government of Rwanda must be applauded for its constitution, which underscores the central role of human rights and dedicated 41 articles to the guarantee of fundamental human freedoms, for the establishment of independent human rights institutions and for all the efforts made to implement a many previous UPR recommendations. However there are still issues and barriers that need the government's immediate attention for human rights to be realised by all. The continued existence of such barriers means that human rights in Rwanda only serve a fraction of the Rwandan population at the expense of those whose freedoms are curtailed as a result.

We therefore call upon the government of Rwanda to:

i)   Work to eliminate all the barriers to access to safe abortion as it impacts heavily on young and poor women in the country. Poor women and girls continue to be victims of sexual torture and oppression.

ii)   Accord women freedom of opinion and expression. The Community Policing Committee, a mechanism that is supposed to assist the government with crimes in communities is oppressive to women in vulnerable situation and has no regard for their privacy.

iii)   Address the issue of the unfair trials in courts of law and the harassment and reprisals that human rights defenders in Rwanda continue to face in their search for justice.

iv)   Strengthen implementation of laws and policies to recognise and protect the work of human rights defenders.

v)   Develop and implement a National Human Rights Action Plan.

vi)   Address discrimination of Human Rights Defenders from law enforcement officers.

vii)   Commit to ratifying human rights conventions from recommendations 135.1 to 135.77 because the delay or refusal to ratify such documents continues to put individual citizens' human rights in jeopardy.

Thank you!