

Human Rights Council - 45th Session
Item 6: Adoption of Universal Periodic Review – Lesotho
Action Canada for Population and Development
September 28, 2020

Thank you, President

Action Canada makes this statement on behalf of the Collective of Lesotho, the Coalition of African Lesbians and the Sexual Rights Initiative.

We commend Lesotho for their engagement in the UPR. We are encouraged by the acceptance of resolutions that call for strengthened legislative and policy framework on health, including sexual and reproductive health services, for people living with disabilities, women and young people, in particular.

We are however disappointed by Lesotho's noting of resolutions addressing rights relating to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. The noting of these resolutions leaves LGBTI persons in grave danger of discrimination, violence and has a detrimental impact on their health outcomes, economic and social wellbeing among other areas of life. Lesotho's use of culture and religion to justify its failure to accept UPR recommendations is unacceptable and is in contradiction to Resolution 275 of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and other international human rights commitments. It also undermines the Constitution of Lesotho.

We call on Lesotho to:

- Amend the legislative framework where necessary to explicitly decriminalize and protect same-sex persons and/relationships,
- Partner with LGBTI-led organizations to train state actors especially health care and law enforcement to eradicate stigma and promote non-discrimination.
- urgently approve the Domestic Violence Bill 2018 especially with the rampant rise in Gender-Based Violence during this pandemic, great focus must be attributed to the Child and Gender Protection Unit to fulfill the protection
- Ensure access to safe and legal abortions and thereby reduce the rate of maternal mortality and morbidity.