

49th Session of the Human Rights Council
Item 8 General Debate
Action Canada for Population and Development

President,

Action Canada makes this statement on behalf of the Feminists for a People's Vaccine campaign and the International Network to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

The Vienna Declaration urges strong policies to combat discrimination in any form. For more than a year, this council has been presented with evidence on the devastating impacts of COVID on inequality within and between countries. The commitments made by this council to address this inequality are meaningless as countries prioritise the profits of corporations over the lives of people. Unless a comprehensive waiver of intellectual property rights of Covid diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines is adopted at the WTO - the world WILL SUFFER.

The TRIPS Waiver proposal, tabled by South Africa and India, sought to ensure equitable access. Yet, the leaked text on March 16th is a far cry from the original. It favors the EU position by erasing any mention of IP rights other than patents, establishing unworkable terms and conditions, and only covering vaccines, neglecting the equal need for tests and treatments. Furthermore, it excludes entire countries.

Against this backdrop, people marginalised on the basis of gender, race, class, caste and other social status are further marginalised in the global north, and especially in the global south. The particular gendered impacts include women and girls facing increased obstacles in accessing health care, increased levels of violence, and an increased burden of unpaid care work. We call on members of this council and all states to adopt the true TRIPS waiver.