

40th Session of the Human Rights Council
Clustered Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights
Action Canada for Population and Development
& Association for Women's Rights in Development
1st of March

Thank you Mr. President. Action Canada makes this statement on behalf of Sexual Rights Initiative and the Association for Women's Rights in Development.

We welcome the report of the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights and reiterate the critical need for states to continue to work towards realization of cultural rights for all, including women and persons with non-conforming genders and sexualities.

Increasingly, both state and non-state actors instrumentalise culture to justify violence and discrimination, and to dismantle the human rights system as recently evidenced in the withdrawal by the African Commission of the Coalition of African Lesbians' observer status, compromising the institution's independence. Across the world, anti-rights actors are complicit in creating or furthering a forced homogeneity which makes invisible violations perpetuated by multiple oppressions, including racism, patriarchy, capitalism, sexism, misogyny, heterosexism, transphobia, classism among others. The consequence of this is a fragmentation of lives and experiences of people, denying their right to diversity and to form, (re)negotiate their culture. Simultaneously, States are using the essentialised and reductive single identity narrative denying human rights and often persecuting anyone who does not conform to these mostly patriarchal constructions of identity.

Feminist movements, activists, WHRDs, queer movements in all parts of the world, working at all levels have articulated and continue to resist this homogeneity and opportunistic interpretation of a monolithic culture We commend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for highlighting the multiple dimensions of cultural rights and supporting the call by feminist movements and gender non-conforming people to protect their right to culture on basis of equality.

We urge states to implement the recommendations by the Special Rapporteur and voice their support for a strong and well-resourced mandate to protect embattled cultural rights and the universality of rights and continue to hold states and non-state actors to account.

Thank you!