



**46th session of the Human Rights Council  
Action Canada for Population and Development  
Meeting on the role of poverty alleviation in promoting and protecting human rights**

Thank you, Madam President. Action Canada makes this statement on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative and the Coalition of African Lesbians.

The reduction and eradication of extreme poverty has been at the top of the global development agenda since the 1990s. Since its establishment, the Human Rights Council and other regional human rights accountability mechanisms have drafted and passed multiple resolutions and states have adopted numerous policies to combat poverty.

Unfortunately, these resolutions and policies have often taken a neoliberal leaning and logic - that insists on economic growth at all costs. For example, an Oxfam study conducted during 2020, the first year of the covid-19 pandemic, found that the top US 25 companies were earning on average an 11% profit margin - that is net profits as a percentage of total revenue, in the 2020 financial year, with Microsoft expected to make 82% more in net profits than in the previous four years in average, Merck expected to make 81%, and CVS Health expected to make 61%.<sup>1</sup>

We cannot hope to eradicate poverty and economic violence when the tools and mechanisms that are developed are watered down and provide no real prospect of change because they do not tackle the root causes of poverty which are historical, colonial, neo-colonial, racialized and gendered.

Economic violence is a lethal form of abuse, with poverty being both a cause and consequence of economic violence. The current economic order of neoliberal capitalism brings about oppressive societal, economic and political systems that devastate entire populations.

We cannot alleviate poverty when we fail to acknowledge the inherent truth that the neo-colonial international system exacerbates poverty.

I thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Oxfam America, [Pandemic Profits Exposed](#), Jul. 22, 2020, p. 3.