

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



Action Canada makes this statement in collaboration with Beyond Beijing Committee and the Sexual Rights Initiative.

The government of Nepal has stated that a number of recommendations enjoy its support and are already implemented or in the process of being so. These include recommendations on ensuring accessible, affordable and quality healthcare, accelerating efforts to decrease rates of maternal mortality; and implementing measures to ensure all women and girls have equal access to quality sexual and reproductive healthcare.

A key component of reducing maternal mortality and morbidity is access to safe abortion services. While women in Nepal have had a right to access safe abortion services since 2002, this right remains unfulfilled due to a lack of knowledge about the law among the general populace; a lack of human resources including certified doctors and nurses, particularly in rural and remote areas; financial obstacles that restrict low-income women's access to safe abortion; cultural taboos and stigma; and geographical barriers, among others.

Despite the Supreme Court's instruction, a comprehensive safe abortion law has not been enacted. Further, the free safe abortion service at public health facilities announced during the last fiscal year has not been put into practice yet.

We urge the government of Nepal to take urgent action to eliminate unsafe abortion and stigma attached to it, address maternal mortality and morbidity, improve access to healthcare, and ensure that all women and girls have equal access to quality sexual and reproductive healthcare and rights enshrined in the new constitution of 2015.

Speaker: Meghan Doherty