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Thank you Chairperson,

Campaign Life Coalition is a national, non-profit organization, involved in political action and advocacy for legal and cultural change in Canada with respect to protecting human life, at every stage of development. On behalf of our supporters we call upon Member States at the 52nd session of the Commission on Population and Development to uphold and promote the standards of state sovereignty as detailed in the 1994 Programme of Action, especially in regards to the issue of abortion, around which there exists tremendous social pressure within the international community, despite the obvious division among Member States.

The Programme of Action states that "Any measures or changes related to abortion within the health system can only be determined at the national or local level according to the national legislative process." With the issuance of General Comment 36 on article 6, which discusses the right to life in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the civil, social and political pressure surrounding the issue of abortion has increased significantly. It is therefore, in the best interest of the commission to reassure states, both in word and deed, that the international community will be held accountable for all violations of state sovereignty.

Given the divisive nature of the abortion issue, maintaining authentic state sovereignty is of crucial importance. There is much at stake, including the individual national and cultural integrities of each nation, the preservation of international diversity as well as the democratic ideal, and, of course, the respect for the dignity of every human being.

Concerning the nature of state sovereignty within the context of globally acknowledged human rights, it is important to note that there remains no legal right to abortion. The Programme of Action itself affirms in the preamble that the whole document, in its integrity, does not contain any affirmation of a new internationally recognized right to abortion. The same remains true in the modern context where even Member States remain intractably divided on the issue. Therefore, we call upon Member States to uphold their legal responsibility to defend the right of

each nation to restrict abortion according to their deeply rooted cultural and traditional values. This free exercise of their right to uphold the right to life is of paramount importance for the integrity of the democratic process, authentic multilateralism, the preservation of individual national identities, and the elimination of colonial tendencies, which so often leads to the institutionalization of dependency, poverty and violence.

Thank you for your time.