

Human Rights Council – 28th session – March 2015

Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child

Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development

Action Canada makes this statement in collaboration with the Sexual Rights Initiative. We welcome the report of the High Commissioner on better investment in the rights of the child and the discussions during this annual full-day meeting.

We would like to emphasise the importance of 6 investments critical to enabling the healthy development, the empowerment and the realization of the rights of the child:

ONE. Reviewing laws and policies in order to eliminate obstacles to the enjoyment of rights of the child, including third party authorization requirements for sexual and reproductive health services, unreasonably high minimum age for sexual consent and gender transition *et cetera*.

TWO. Addressing prejudices, taboos and stigma around child and adolescent sexuality together with those around the sexuality of various marginalized groups.

THREE. Providing comprehensive sexuality education that is scientifically accurate and evidence based, and includes information on *inter alia* biology, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, relationships, gender-based violence and sexual violence, sexual and gender diversity, consent and human rights. Such education empowers children from an early age and enhances their individual autonomy.

FOUR. Providing available, accessible, acceptable and high quality sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents; eliminating user fees; keeping accessible timings and locations; training personnel to be non-judgemental and maintain privacy; and informing adolescents about the availability of services.

FIVE. Investing in the leadership and participation of children; trusting and enabling them to participate in policy and program formulation and evaluation and public awareness initiatives.

SIX. Establishing and strengthening mechanisms to ensure accountability for children's rights, beyond complaint mechanisms and systems to ensure access to justice, towards a constructive approach to accountability such as data collection and disaggregation for all relevant age groups including 5-9 and 10-14, transparency and access to information, and participation mechanisms.