

**40th Session of Human Rights Council
ANNUAL FULL-DAY MEETING: RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (res. 7/29 & 37/20)
Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development
28 February 2019**

Thank you, Mr. President. Action Canada makes this statement on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative.

We would like to start by highlighting the fact that the only [quote]“accessible”[unquote] sessions of the HRC are those on the rights of persons with disabilities. As a result of the general lack of accessibility, persons with disabilities are segregated and not expected to participate in events related to anything other than disability rights, as if human rights could have such a narrow approach, and disability-related events will tend to reflect ableist views of what constitutes disability rights. As the foremost body for the protection and promotion of human rights for all, the Human Rights Council must lead by example. All sessions must be fully accessible.

Inclusive education requires the elimination of barriers to education and ensuring that all educational environments accommodate the requirements of all individual students. As a right of all persons, inclusive education is also a path to realize other rights. In the case of children with disabilities, it provides an enabling environment for supported decision-making and promotes the exercise of their will and preferences for autonomy.

Comprehensive and inclusive sexuality education is essential for all individuals, including persons with disabilities, to make informed decisions about their sexuality, reproduction and gender, free from violence, discrimination, or coercion. Exclusion of children with disabilities from mainstream education programs creates additional barriers to accessing inclusive comprehensive sexuality education in violation of their human rights.

Children with disabilities are also denied access to sexual and reproductive health and rights information, including comprehensive sexuality education, based on harmful stereotypes and assumptions related to their age, gender, and sexuality as well as disability. Accessible information is essential to ensure supported decision-making, bodily autonomy and the full realization of all human rights.

Thank you.