

45 Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 3
Action Canada for Population and Development
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Action Canada makes this statement on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative.

Black women and women of colour athletes continue to bear the brunt of racist and sexist policies and practices in sport. Many of these laws, policies and practices echo and reinforce colonial era ideas about 'womanhood' and 'beauty' which were always raced, classed and able-bodied; and the need to police, discipline and erase blackness.

Intersectionality, as a concept and approach, reminds us that we must look at the ways in which intersecting oppressions create the conditions for human rights violations. The regulations passed by IAAF requiring women and girls to undergo medically unnecessary interventions, and their revival in various forms reveal 'international' to mean white and global north. The IAAF regulations, and those modelled on them, prescribe particular cultural constructions of womanhood, where white, feminine-presenting, able-bodied, heterosexual womanhood serves as the standard and any deviation from this standard is seen as abnormal, deviant, wrong, requiring "fixing" and often experiencing public persecution.

Sports are not the only site of systemic, institutionalised racism and sexism. Even the international human rights system replicates its own racist, sexist and classist origins and ways of working. To a large extent it has failed at naming and addressing the ways in which race, gender, class, ability and nationality create conditions for inclusion or exclusion into the work of human rights. We need to begin a course correction and reflect internally on addressing systemic discrimination.