

Human Rights Council - 49th Session

Annual interactive debate on the rights of persons with disabilities

Panel: *Statistics and data collection under article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.*

Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development

Action Canada makes this statement on behalf of Women With Disabilities Development Foundation, Bonhishikha and IWRAP Asia Pacific working with the Women Gaining Ground consortium

Women with disabilities have to bear the double burden of marginalisation – that of their gender and the disability. When we talk of disability, it is also the systemic nature of the problems rather than the disability itself that adds to the complexities. There are multiple layers of vulnerabilities and marginalization within the community. This is particularly heightened during any humanitarian crisis and climate change induced disasters.

Due to the stigma, socio-cultural reasons and lack of awareness, women with disabilities are not counted in the census in several contexts. Poverty and economic inequality increase a woman's risk of being subjected to violence. Negative attitudes of service providers, unavailability of adequate menstrual hygiene measures and required medicines and access to SRHR services broadly causes other types of suffering to girls and women with disabilities.

We share the excitement around the possibilities of Artificial Intelligence, but we must also ask questions on what is the role of women with disabilities in its design - how can we ensure better governance on how it is used without marginalising women with disabilities further?

We urge for adequate and efficient services, knowledge and information. We also stress on the need to collect gender-disaggregated and inclusive data that can be used to measure and monitor human rights obligations and to strengthen accountability mechanisms. Disability data that is gender disaggregated and inclusive lays the foundation for better policy making and implementation. Furthermore, data collected needs to be used to strategise on ways forward, and to open up more spaces such as this for sharing and learning.

The state and responsible authorities need to take initiatives to provide the needful to women with disabilities as it is their human right to be treated with dignity and have SRHR services and protection from violence, access to information and any regular service at all times.