

**43rd Session of Human Rights Council**  
**ITEM 4: Annual debate: rights of persons with disabilities**  
**Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development**  
**6 March 2020**

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

Awareness-raising must confront ableism by addressing charity and medical models of disability that are still present in law and practice and through stigmatization, stereotyping and prejudices that lead to human rights violations and socioeconomic exclusion. However, awareness-raising should not focus only on media campaigns and generic trainings. States must be held accountable for the structural gaps not only in written law, but also in the ways that public policy is laid out and enacted that reinforces stigmatized and one-dimensional views of persons with disabilities.

States must promote a positive and nuanced portrayal of persons with disabilities by reviewing their laws and policies to eliminate paternalistic and monolithic views of disability, ensure that the enforcement of laws and policies, even when not pertaining specifically to persons with disabilities, does not reinforce social and economic exclusion, and provide information about their rights in a way that they can call States and structures to account. Comprehensive sexuality education, a necessary avenue for awareness raising and a State obligation, must be inclusive to be really comprehensive and provide an enabling environment for all persons to exercise their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Thank you.