

Human Rights Council – 36th session
Item 6: Universal Periodic Review Outcomes – Netherlands
Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development



Thank you Mr President. Action Canada makes this statement in collaboration with Rutgers and the Sexual Rights Initiative.

We welcome the Government's acceptance of the recommendations by Belgium and Slovenia related to comprehensive sexuality education and to paternity leave.

We note that in its response, the Government of the Netherlands gives the impression that these recommendations have already been fully implemented. However, we still see room for improvement in order to fully meet its obligations.

Although elements of sexuality education are included in the national education policy, independent research shows that it is only incidentally taught, and that a comprehensive approach to sexuality education is often missing. The national education policy is not in line with the international commitments to comprehensive sexuality education as defined by UNESCO, which requires a structural approach. Further, training on the delivery of comprehensive sexuality education to new and existing teachers is not integrated into the regular training of teachers.

The Government of the Netherlands refers to an expansion of paid paternity leave from two to five days. However, sufficient follow up to this recommendation by Slovenia asking for 'paid paternity leave of adequate length' requires more than five days in order to meaningfully participate in their child's care.

Therefore, we urge the Government to:

- Ensure that in addition to sexuality and sexual diversity, gender equality and sexual rights are indeed compulsory elements of the curriculum, and that more concrete instructions will be provided to schools to ensure that comprehensive sexuality education is actually taught in all schools and classes, touching upon all the essential topics outlined by the UNESCO Guidelines.
- Ensure all teachers are provided with training on comprehensive sexuality education by structurally including it in new teachers' curriculum, as well as by training existing teachers;
- Substantially increase paid paternity leave beyond the minor increase from 2 to 5 days that is currently foreseen.

Thank you