



40th Session of Human Rights Council
Item 3: Clustered Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on the right to Food
and Independent Expert on Foreign Debt
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 welcome the Guiding principles on the human rights impact assessments of economic reforms report from the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights. Of particular note, we would like to commend the inclusion of Principles 7 and 8 addressing the multiple and intersecting discriminations that people face based on the sexuality or gender.

Structural adjustments and other short-term debt remedies have had serious consequences on the lives of the poor and the marginalised. It is important to note that these stresses on the economies of former colonies perpetuate a form of neo-colonialism and exploitation and infringes on the realisation of human rights of the people who have already paid many times over a debt that should have never existed. The resulting privatisation of health care services, and of basic services such as water in the name of “efficiencies” are further entrenching the marginalisation of women, girls, sex workers and LGBTQ people.

The negative impact of neoliberal policies imposed on countries of the Global South have also exacerbated problems related to food sovereignty and security. The right to food is intrinsically linked to sexual and reproductive health and rights as malnutrition can be associated directly with maternal health and the health of people living with HIV / AIDS. The lack of access to nutrition as well as participation and involvement in the economy should not be seen in isolation of other forms of intersecting oppressions affecting women and marginalised people.

We urge States to implement economic policies using principles 7 and 8 of the Independent Expert’s report by addressing the pervasive economic exclusion and exploitation of women, youth and adolescents that exacerbate their vulnerability to HIV and hinders their access to social and sexual and reproductive health services. We also urge States to put people before profits and stand firm against debtors and other actors pushing for the privatisation of public services.

Thank you!