

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
39th session, 13th September 2018
Action Canada for Population and Development

Item 3: Clustered interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to development and the Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures

Thank You Mr President,

Action Canada makes this statement on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative.

The Special Rapporteur in a recent statement to the Working Group on the right to development underscored that while economic growth is important, it is a quantitative and value-neutral concept that can have both negative and positive impacts on people's lives. It is often the case that the negative impacts of economic development efforts fall on the poor. It is more often than not the poor who are evicted without notice or relocated to give way for real estate or road developments, and the poor whose shelters are demolished to provide space for housing projects they cannot afford.

While we welcome the report's focus on inequality, it is crucial that we draw attention to the importance of exposing, analysing and addressing the underlying structural and systemic causal factors of inequality. Patriarchy, racism, classism, nestled within larger neoliberal economies also perpetuate the widening gap between the rich and the poor.

The right to development, and inequality which impedes its realization, encompass and impact other human rights such as the right to health. Poor access to health services persists, particularly accessible, available, acceptable and good quality health services, including HIV-related services for people who are marginalised based on their sexuality and gender. While HIV incidence is declining in many parts of the world, a decrease in incidence among adolescents, key populations and marginalised groups is less marked in comparison. The exclusion of key populations is often institutionalized in national laws and policy frameworks and has a direct negative impact on health outcomes.

We call upon States to focus on a people-centered and rights based approach to development, and to gather comprehensive data on the inequalities and their negative effects to ensure the accurate assessment and development of appropriate measures to eliminate inequality. We further call on states to double their efforts to provide accessible, available, acceptable and good quality healthcare for all and to impress upon all healthcare practitioners, policy makers, decision-makers and service users to address stigma, discrimination, harassment and violence towards women, key populations and marginalised people in their access to health. Lastly, we call upon States to recognize that economic development for only a portion of the people who reside within its borders is not progress and should not be hailed as such.