

49th session of the Human Rights Council

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing

Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development

16 March 2022

Thank you, President

Action Canada makes this statement on behalf of the Sexual Rights Initiative and the Global Network of Sex Work Projects. We welcome the Special Rapporteur's report on spatial segregation and the right to housing. In particular, we appreciate the Special Rapporteur's attention to the rights of sex workers in this context.

Who lives where and under what conditions, is perhaps one of the most visible manifestations of State policies and a crucial point of reference to understand multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Sex workers are subject to spatial segregation through a confluence of reinforcing legal and social measures that stigmatize and exclude sex workers and their families, including in States where sex work has been legalized with regulation, and those that take a 'Nordic Model' approach. These harmful measures are rooted in patriarchal norms about sexuality, gender, bodily autonomy and women's agency as independent human beings and compounded by racism, classism, ableism and other forms of oppression.

Moreover, given the criminalization of sex work in many countries, access to justice and effective remedies for most sex workers subject to spatial segregation remains completely out of reach. States rely on the perpetuation of stigma and social exclusion to evade their obligations to fulfill every person's right to housing, including sex workers.

We therefore ask the Special Rapporteur, how can people whose very existence is criminalized contemplate claiming their right to housing?