

**Statement of Action Canada for Population and Development  
Item 6 - Universal Periodic Review  
Adoption of UPR outcome on Netherland – September 21, 2012**

The Sexual Rights Initiative and Rutgers WPF, welcomes the responsiveness of The Netherlands to the recommendations made by states during the review session.

We echo the need to include both sexuality and sexual diversity in the attainment targets for schools and are looking forward to comprehensive sexuality education in all schools.

The commitments to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to sign its Optional Protocol by Netherlands are important steps to fortify the rights of persons with disabilities and specifically their sexual and reproductive rights which are stipulated in article 25 of the Convention.

Although The Netherlands has an obligation to protect people with disabilities from sexual violence, the sexuality of people with a disability is still neglected in some ways.

International research finds that lack of sexual knowledge, dependency on others for daily care, lack of privacy, social isolation, physical and mental vulnerability, and low self-esteem are risk factors for sexual abuse. A recent Dutch study, confirmed this and found that, 61% of women and 23% of men with intellectual disability have experienced sexual violence.<sup>1</sup> The research concluded that sexuality education and empowerment are crucial to enhance knowledge about sexual behavior and to establish self-esteem.

The Netherlands has an obligation to protect people with disabilities from sexual violence and should ensure accessibility of comprehensive sexuality education, put in place effective policies on sexuality and sexual abuse within all organizations working with persons with a disability and ensure that staff working with people with disabilities is trained to recognize symptoms of sexual abuse.

SRI and Rutgers WPF believe that to give full effects to its commitments, The Netherlands should make a long term strategic investment plan to address the issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights of people with a disability.

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<sup>1</sup> Berlo, W. van, De Haas, S., Van Oosten, N., Van Dijk, L., Brants, L., Tonnon, S., & Storms, O. (2011). *Beperkt weerbaar. Een onderzoek naar seksueel geweld bij mensen met een lichamelijke, zintuiglijke of verstandelijke beperking. [Limited defense. A research on sexual violence and people with a physical, sensory or mental disability]* Utrecht: Rutgers WPF/Movisie.