

Elimination of Discrimination against Women (L1)

Explanation Before the Vote on amendment L.24 Permanent Representative to the UN, Sally Mansfield

Mr. President,

As a co-sponsor of this resolution, we cannot accept Amendment L24. This proposal ignores the responsibility that we share, as States, to ensure the fulfilment of the universal fundamental rights to education, health and non-discrimination. Supporting this amendment would be to deny young people, particularly girls, access to evidence-based comprehensive sexuality education. This outcome is inherently harmful because it undermines their full, effective empowerment.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education is a recognised component of universal human rights, including the right to education and the right to health. Comprehensive Sexuality Education has proven to contribute positively to the reduction of preventable maternal death; child, early and enforced marriage; early pregnancy; gender-based violence; sexually transmitted infections; HIV transmission and violence against women and girls.

The importance of Comprehensive Sexuality Education has been acknowledged by different UN agencies which, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, developed the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education, providing a framework of human rights and gender equality to the implementation of universal effective sexuality education, adapted to every State's context based on up to date scientific evidence.

The objective is to provide young people with the knowledge and tools required to empower them to realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships, including a well-informed understanding of consent; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and, understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

Taking this into consideration, we call on all members on the Council to vote against this amendment, as we will do. We cannot refuse to guarantee the universal fundamental rights of young people, especially girls. We must guarantee their right to education, to live a life with dignity, to enjoy their physical and mental health and to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives.

Thank you Mr. President.