

Human Rights Council – 41st Session

Resolution: Discrimination against women – tabled amendment L.37

12 July 2019

Australian Statement: Explanation of Vote

We would like to make a comment on L.37, which we cannot accept as seeks to remove language on comprehensive sexuality education, or ‘CSE’.

Australia supports equal access to evidence based comprehensive sexuality education for all. CSE provides young people with the knowledge and tools required to empower them to realise their health, well-being and dignity, including a well-informed understanding of consent, and it helps them understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

CSE is essential to the fulfilment of universal human rights, including the right to education and the right to health.

It is highly relevant to this resolution on the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, because it plays a critical role in supporting gender equality, and it even supports girls to stay in school.

Comprehensive sexuality education contributes positively to the reduction of the rates of sexually transmitted infections; HIV transmission; early pregnancy; preventable maternal death; child sexual exploitation and abuse; child, early and forced marriage, and gender-based violence.

The importance of comprehensive sexuality education has been acknowledged by different UN agencies, including the World Health Organization.

Amendment L.37 ignores the responsibility of states to take steps to achieve progressively the full realisation of the rights to education, health and non-discrimination, and to support young people, including women and girls, to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives.

Australia will vote against this amendment, and we urge other members of this Council to do the same.

246 Words