

# CFMS/FEMC Policy Statement: Comprehensive Sexuality Education

## Introduction

Access to high quality, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is a right of young people. CSE provides young people with the opportunity to protect themselves from potential adverse sexual, reproductive and mental health outcomes. In the spring of 2013, the IFMSA approved a policy statement<sup>1</sup> on CSE which has been adapted into the following:

*Approving* the International Planned Parenthood defines CSE as “seeking to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they need to determine and enjoy their sexuality – physically and emotionally, individually and in relationships. It views ‘sexuality’ holistically and within the context of emotional and social development. It recognizes that information alone is not enough. Young people need to be given the opportunity to acquire essential life skills and develop positive attitudes and values.”<sup>2</sup>

*Observing* the UN convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children and young people have the right to the highest attainable level of health, access to health facilities (Article 24), and access to information that will allow them to make decisions about their health (Article 17) including family planning (Article 24). Young people also have the right to be heard, express opinions, and be involved in decision making (Article 12). They have the right to education which will help them learn, develop and reach their full potential and prepare them to be tolerant towards others (Article 29)<sup>3</sup>

*Acknowledging* the affirmation of the 45th session of the Commission on Population and Development to properly enact its Programme of Action which includes access to Comprehensive Sexuality Education for all young people<sup>4</sup>

*Alarmed* by the continuing poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes amongst young people<sup>5</sup>

*Recognizing* that a comprehensive sexuality education leaves young people better prepared to make positive decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health, and empowered to enact these choices<sup>6</sup>

## Recommendations

The Canadian Federation of Medical Students/Fédération des Étudiants et des Étudiantes en Médecine du Canada:

1. Recommend that all providers of sexuality education implement programs that are receptive to the needs of young people and are in accordance to the IPPF Framework for Comprehensive Sexuality Education<sup>1</sup>
2. Urge all provinces/territories to ensure adequate provision of CSE to all young people
3. Advocate for the provision of high quality, comprehensive sexuality education regionally, nationally and internationally
4. Broaden access to CSE by encouraging student-led CSE within their own communities
5. Call upon nation states to honour their commitment to the Programme of Action of ICPD and the UN convention on the Rights of the Child

6. Strongly condemn the restriction of young people's access to education and information regarding their sexual and reproductive health

## References

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2. IPPF Framework for Comprehensive Sexuality Education. 2010. International Planned Parenthood Federation. Retrieved from <http://ippf.org/resources/publications/ippf-framework-comprehensive-sexuality-education>
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4. 45<sup>th</sup> Session Commission on Population and Development Agenda item 3: Actions in follow-up to the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development. 2012. United Nations. Retrieved from [http://www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/cpd2012/Agenda%20item%203/Country%20statements/Finland\\_Item3.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/cpd2012/Agenda%20item%203/Country%20statements/Finland_Item3.pdf)
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