
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Canada: Community Organizations and Organizations of People with Disabilities Report on the “List of Issues Prior to Reporting”

Plain English¹ version of: Submission of Canadian Civil Society Organizations to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

On the List of Issues Prior to Reporting [Canada] to be adopted during the 22nd Session of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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¹ This plain English summary was prepared by the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) and People First of Canada.

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About Us

We are Canadian groups of people with disabilities, organizations of people with disabilities, community organizations, **human rights** groups and other people and organizations. We work together to share information on what is happening in Canada for people with disabilities.

Before You Start

This is a long document. It can be hard for some people to read a document this long. Some things you can do to make it easier are:

- Read a few pages at a time
- Have someone help you to understand it

There are some words in this document that might be hard to read or understand. Hard words in this document will be written in **big black letters**.

If you want to know what these words mean you can go to the **Word Bank** in this document on **page 39**.

About This Paper

This document is about Canada's report on the United Nations **Convention** on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The **Convention** is also called the CRPD. We will use **CRPD** in this paper.

This document is a plain English guide to the full document that was given to the United Nations. You will need to look at the full document if you want to know what exactly the report says.

What is the CRPD?

The CRPD is an agreement that says persons with disabilities should have the same support and treatment as everyone else. When a country signs and

ratifies (approves) a convention, it becomes a legal promise. It guides the actions of the government.

- The CRPD was adopted on December 13, 2006
- Canada ratified the CRPD on March 11, 2010

By ratifying the CRPD, the Canadian government has agreed to follow the articles of the CRPD. The CRPD makes many promises. Its 50 Articles clearly explain what those promises are.

Why have community organizations and groups of people with disabilities made this report?

There is a United Nations Committee that looks after the CRPD. The Committee is a group of experts who check that countries are following the CRPD. The Committee also helps countries understand what to do to make sure persons with disabilities get their **rights**.

Countries that sign the CRPD must give **periodic reports** to the Committee. These reports show progress and tell the Committee how things are going.

It is important for groups of persons with disabilities, community organizations, **human rights** groups or other people or organizations to help the Committee know what is happening in Canada for people with disabilities. This helps the Committee decide what information to ask the country to send in their report.

Some good work has already been done in Canada. But there are still many problems.

This document will help everyone know:

- What the problems are in Canada
- What questions we think the UN Committee should ask the Canadian government

Articles 1-4: General Principles & What Countries Must Do

This article explains what countries must do when they sign the CRPD.

- Canada does not have a national action plan to make sure the CRPD is used in all parts of the country and in everything that happens there.
- Canada does not have a **human rights-based approach** to the supports and services people with disabilities need.
- Canada does not have an **independent** organization that checks whether all parts of the country are following the CRPD.
- Canada needs to work on supporting different organizations of persons with disabilities in decisions about making the CRPD work.
- Canada has not changed its laws to include all of the **rights** in the CRPD.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. When will Canada develop and put into force a plan to make all their laws and plans follow the CRPD, no matter where you live in Canada?
2. What is Canada doing to make sure different organizations of persons with disabilities are supported and involved in decisions about making the CRPD work?

Article 5: Equality and Not Discriminating

This article says everyone is equal.

- Canada has laws about **discrimination** that give persons with disabilities the same chances as other people to have **access** to information, buildings and services.
- But, people with disabilities in Canada still experience **discrimination**, and especially if they belong to other groups like being an Indigenous person with a disability, being a woman with a disability, or being a LGBTQI2S+ person with a disability.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. What is Canada doing to take action against people or organizations that **discriminate** against persons with disabilities?
2. How is Canada collecting the numbers of persons with disabilities who complain about **discrimination**, including how old they are, what **gender** they are, who they complained about, and whether they took legal action?
3. What is Canada doing to take action on the **discrimination** of people with disabilities who also belong to other vulnerable groups, like women and girls with disabilities, Indigenous persons with disabilities, and others?

Article 6: Women with Disabilities

The CRPD says that women and girls are often treated less fairly than men. If they also have a disability, they can be **discriminated** against because of this too.

- It is harder for women and girls with disabilities in Canada to get a good education, earn money, and have a say in decisions about their health.
- Women and girls with disabilities experience more violence and abuse than women and girls without disabilities. Women and girls with disabilities also experience more violence and abuse than men and boys with disabilities.
- Women with disabilities also face problems when they use health services related to sex, relationships, and children. For example, health workers often refuse to give women with disabilities the information they need about safe sex, relationships, and children.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. What steps have been taken to make sure that the government's plan against violence based on **gender** includes women and girls with disabilities?
2. How is Canada making sure that Indigenous women with disabilities have **access** to education programs, and are given information about all of their **rights** in the CRPD?
3. What is Canada doing to give power to girls and women with disabilities and involve them in organizations that make decisions?

Article 7: Children with Disabilities

The CRPD says children with disabilities should have all the same **rights** and basic freedoms as other children.

- There is a lack of **data** (numbers and information) on children with disabilities in Canada.
- There is a lack of **access** to services and supports for children with disabilities, especially:
 - supports to help move from the family home into a home of their own;
 - supports to help move from school into a paid job; and,
 - supports that make sure all of one's service providers and supporters are sharing information with each other.
- **Access** to these supports and services is different depending on where you live in Canada.
- Children with disabilities who belong to other vulnerable groups, for example girls with disabilities, face more **discrimination**.
- Deaf children are not always given opportunities to learn sign languages at an early age.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. What is Canada doing to make sure all children with disabilities and their families are supported and involved in decisions about making the CRPD work?
2. What will Canada do so that children with disabilities have **access** to the same services and supports no matter where they live in Canada?
3. How will Canada do better at collecting information on children with disabilities?

Article 8: Raising Awareness

The CRPD says countries must help other people understand about the rights of persons with a disability.

- **Discrimination** because of disability is the most common **discrimination** in Canada.
- Canada does not have a plan to help other people understand that people with disabilities should be respected for what they can do and what they can give to society.
- The government does not always involve people with disabilities and their organizations in planning and checking ways to raise **awareness**. The government also does not involve people with disabilities who are part of other groups.
- Plans to raise **awareness** are not inclusive of all kinds of people.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. How will Canada work with diverse organizations, schools, health care services, and others to get rid of things like **stigma, prejudice**, bullying, hate crime and bad language against persons with disabilities?
2. How will Canada make sure that there is money to pay for helping other people understand that people with disabilities should be respected for what they can do and what they can give to society?
3. When will Canada celebrate Indigenous Disability **Awareness** Month?

Article 9: Accessibility

The CRPD says persons with disabilities have the right to live **independently** and get involved in all the same things as other people.

- In 2019, Canada made a law (“The **Accessible** Canada Act”) to get rid of things that make life harder for people with disabilities. Under the law:
 - Certain organizations will have to make **accessibility** plans
 - The government will make **accessibility** rules that will tell organizations what they need to do to get rid of **barriers**
 - The government will create a group to check the law and make sure that it is working to help people with disabilities
- This law only applies to things the Canadian government takes care of at the national level. Some provinces in Canada already have a law like this.
- The government of Canada still pays for housing to be built that is not designed so that anyone, including people with disabilities, can use it.
- There is still a big need for plain language and communication supports in Canada, especially in government documents and in important situations like health care, end of life care, and with police and the justice system.
- There is still a big need for guides, readers and sign language **interpreters** in order for people to use public buildings and services, and in important national communications.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. How will Canada make sure that its new **accessibility** law will be used by future governments and government departments?

2. How will Canada help other people know about and understand the new **accessibility** law?

3. How is Canada making sure that plain language versions of government documents and special **human rights** documents are available?

Article 10: The Right to Life

The CRPD says every person has the right to life.

- Canada has a law that allows people to ask for and get a doctor's help to end their life, if they meet special rules. People with disabilities are not protected in this law.
- Some people in Canada are asking for this law to include a special rule that allows people to end their life because they have a disability.
- Canada does not have an **independent** group to check how this law and its special rules are being used.
- Canada does not check to make sure people who ask for a doctor's help to end their life are not being told they should do so by other people.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. How will Canada improve how it checks on this law and its special rules, to make sure that people with disabilities are protected?
2. How will Canada make sure that people with disabilities are not being told to end their lives by other people?
3. Does Canada promise to always have a special rule for this law that says people must be near the end of their life in order to get a doctor's help to die?

Article 11: Times of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies

Countries must make sure persons with disabilities are safe and have their **human rights** if there are wars, emergencies or natural disasters.

- Canada does not usually include persons with disabilities and their organizations in planning what happens if there is an emergency in the country.
- Canada's plan for what happens if there is an emergency in the country does not include information in formats and languages that everyone can understand.
- Canada does not have enough people who work in rescue and emergency services that are trained to think about **human rights** and move everyone away from danger.
- There is no sign language **interpretation** for people who are D/deaf, Deaf-Blind, or Hard of Hearing at the Canadian border and during entrance to Canada.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. How will Canada collect better information so it can make better plans for what happens to people with disabilities if there is an emergency in the country?
2. How will Canada make sure emergency plan information is available in formats and languages that everyone can understand?
3. How will Canada make sure emergency training and information includes people with disabilities?

Article 12: Everyone is Equal Under the Law

The CRPD says the law is the same for everyone. But sometimes people with disabilities face **discrimination** when it comes to making their own decisions.

- Canada has not removed its **Reservation** on Article 12. This means that even though Canada has agreed to the CRPD, Canada does not agree to make a legal promise and fully follow this article.
- People with disabilities in Canada face a lot of **discrimination** when they want to make their own decisions, especially people with intellectual, psychosocial, and communication disabilities.
- There are over 50,000 people with disabilities in Canada that are not treated the same way as other people by the law. These people have had their **legal capacity** taken away from them and other people are allowed to make decisions for them.
- People with disabilities in Canada have their **legal capacity** taken away from them when they are labelled with “mental disorders”.
- People with disabilities in Canada can be forced to take medication in order for them to stay living in the community (and in order to not be put in a hospital or an institution).
- Most laws in Canada do not allow people with disabilities to use their chosen supporters or other supports to help them make decisions.
- Canada’s national survey does not include questions that ask if people are allowed to make their own decisions. This means there is little **data** (numbers and information) on decision making for people with disabilities.
- Canada still does not have a plan to make sure **legal capacity** is treated the same for everyone, no matter if you have a disability and no matter where you live in the country.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. Will Canada remove its **reservation** on Article 12?
2. How will Canada lead the provinces and territories to make sure people's right to make their own decisions is the same no matter their disability and no matter where they live in Canada?
3. How will Canada lead the provinces and territories to pay for information, training, and projects on **legal capacity**?
4. Will Canada include questions that ask if people are allowed to make their own decisions in its national survey?
5. Will Canada work with the provinces and territories to collect information on when other people make decisions for people with disabilities?

Article 13: Access to Justice

The CRPD says persons with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else to get help from police, courts and justice system.

- Canada does not have a national **legal aid** program. Each province and territory have their own **legal aid** programs. There are big differences across the country in **access to legal aid** and the services that are covered.
- **Access to legal aid** programs is based on tests about how much money a person has. People with disabilities who have jobs are usually not able to get **legal aid**, but they do not have enough money to pay for private legal services.
- Across Canada, governments have lowered the amount of money they spend on **legal aid** – this is bad for people with disabilities.
- There are lots of **barriers** that stop people with disabilities from taking part in the justice process. Some of these **barriers** are lack of clear information, having to show medical files in order to get support, and other people thinking a person with a disability cannot make their own decisions.
- Communication support services are not always available in police or legal and justice situations.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. Will Canada provide more money for **legal aid** to provinces and territories?
2. What steps is Canada taking to make sure that courts and justice systems are fully **accessible** for persons with disabilities, especially for people with intellectual, psychosocial and communication disabilities, and D/deaf people?

Article 14: Freedom and Safety

The CRPD says people with disabilities should be free and safe, the same as everyone else.

- Governments in Canada have laws which allow people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities to be shut away, forced to have treatment, or kept away from other people. This can happen in psychiatric institutions, jails, long-term care facilities, and supportive housing.
- These laws now take place in communities and people's homes through what is called "Community Treatment Orders". With a Community Treatment Order people with disabilities can be forced to take medications in order to be let out of an institution or to stay living in their home in the community.
- People with disabilities under Community Treatment Orders say they take away a person's freedom and **independence**.
- The laws in British Columbia, a province in Canada, say that a person can be forced to take treatment or medication without their full **consent**. People who are forced to take treatment or medication do not have **access** to supporters to help them make their own decisions.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. When will Canada review the forced use of medication and treatment for people with disabilities?
2. When will Canada review its use of forcing people to be shut away from other people?
3. What is Canada's plan to provide services and supports to **prisoners** with disabilities across the country?

Article 15: Not Being Tortured or Treated Cruelly

This article says that no one should be tortured, punished or treated in a way that is **degrading**. This means persons with disabilities should never be abused, punished or given too many drugs to manage their behavior.

- Canadian **human rights commissions** are very concerned that people with psychosocial disabilities are being shut away from other people.
- Some **prisoners** with disabilities are not given good care or disability supports and are shut away from all other people.
- Two recent court cases found that Canada's practice of putting **prisoners** with disabilities who are in jail away from all other people for long periods of time goes against their **human rights**. The Government of Canada has **appealed** one of these decisions to the Supreme Court.
- Canada has changed its law about federal prisons and has said that these changes end **prisoners** being kept away from all other people. But many experts say that it is still happening under a new name.
- The new law allows **prisoners** to be kept away from all other people for 90 days before the situation is **independently** checked. But Canadian courts say that a person can be hurt by being kept away from all other people after only a few days.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. What will Canada do to make sure all **prisoners** with disabilities, and especially **prisoners** with psychosocial disabilities, have disability-related supports and services?
2. How will Canada make sure there are checks on **prisoners** being kept away from all other people so that **prisoners** are not hurt?

Article 16: Not Being Exploited or Abused

The CRPD says persons with disabilities should be safe from **exploitation**, violence and abuse both inside and outside their home.

- Women with a disability in Canada are at a greater risk for abuse, violence by their romantic partner, and violent crime. The risk of violence for women with disabilities is greater if they also belong to other groups, like being an Indigenous person, being an **immigrant**, or being LGBTQI2S+.
- Women's shelters in Canada are not **accessible** to women with disabilities.
 - Shelters cannot test for serious brain injuries, a common injury for women with disabilities hurt by their romantic partner.
 - Shelters are not physically **accessible** for women with disabilities and information is not available in plain language or other **accessible** formats.
 - Shelters do not have enough money to make the spaces **accessible**.
- There is not enough **data** (numbers and information) about people with disabilities in Canada who are being **trafficked**. **Trafficking** is the illegal sale of human beings for sexual work or forced work.
- Current information shows that addiction, mental health and intellectual disability are risk factors for being trafficked in Canada.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. Does Canada's plan against violence based on **gender** include services to help stop violence against women with disabilities?
2. What has Canada done to make supports and services better for parents of children with disabilities, in order to prevent abuse and violence?
3. Does Canada have a way to keep track of places and programs for people with disabilities that help prevent them from being **exploited** or a victim of violence?

Article 17: Treating People with Disabilities as People First

The CRPD says everyone has the right to control what happens to their mind and body.

- People with psychosocial and other disabilities continue to have treatment forced on them. This can mean being medicated, being institutionalized, and other forced treatments.
- People in Canada can lose their **legal capacity** when they are under treatment. They can be labeled as 'incapable' due to their disability.
- Some treatment plans include forcing women with disabilities to take medication so that they cannot have children.
- Indigenous women with disabilities and people with intellectual disabilities are sometimes **sterilized** without their knowledge or permission.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. How will Canada stop the forced **sterilization** of persons with disabilities, and other forced treatments that stop people with disabilities from having children?
2. How will Canada stop the forced medication and treatment of people with disabilities?
3. Will Canada make it illegal under the *Criminal Code* to stop people with disabilities from having children?

Article 18: Moving Around and Choosing One's Nationality

The CRPD says persons with disabilities should have the same freedom as other people to move from country to country and choose their nationality.

- Canada's laws say that it can exclude **immigrants** who may need "too many" health and social services. This affects **immigrants** with disabilities.
- Families have a hard time trying to move to Canada if their children have a disability.
- Canada has made some changes to **immigration** laws so that **immigrants** who may need more health and social services are not excluded from living in Canada. But people can still be told they cannot live in Canada if the costs of their supports and services are too high over five (5) years.
- Information about **immigration** is not available in **accessible** formats for people with hearing and vision disabilities.
- There is no sign language interpretation for people who are D/deaf, Deaf-Blind, or Hard of Hearing at the Canadian border and during entrance to Canada.
- When applying to work or live in Canada, people with hearing and vision disabilities are often turned away.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. Is Canada going to remove the 'excessive demand' clause from the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*?
2. Does Canada plan to develop **accessible** information about **immigration** to people with hearing and vision disabilities?

Article 19: Living Independently and Being Included in Community

The CRPD says being **independent** and being part of society are important **human rights**.

- People with disabilities in Canada do not have equal **access** to choose housing and supports.
- Canadians with intellectual, psychosocial, and cognitive disabilities continue to be placed in institutional settings.
- Even when large institutions have closed, people are still institutionalized in other places like nursing homes, seniors' homes, personal care homes, and long-term care facilities.
- Across Canada there is not a **rights-based approach** to supports for people with disabilities that live in the community.
- There are not enough disability-related services and supports available to Indigenous people with disabilities living in First Nations communities.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. When will Canada develop a national action plan on Article 19?
2. Does Canada have a plan and timeline to close all remaining institutions for people with disabilities?
3. Will Canada adopt a **rights-based approach** to disability supports, and make sure people with disabilities have the same **access** to supports and housing no matter where they live in Canada?
4. How will Canada make sure that people with disabilities living in First Nations communities have **access** to supports and services without having to leave their communities?

Article 20: Personal Mobility

The CRPD says persons with disabilities have a **right** to aids and equipment to help them move around.

- People who use Guide Dogs in Canada have **access** to excellent, free North American-wide and worldwide guide dog training, but people who use Service Dogs in Canada do not have this same **access**.
- There is a need for specialized training of Service Dogs.
- Some laws in Canada require people who use Guide and Service Dogs to be **registered**.
- People who use Guide and Service Dogs are sometimes stopped and not allowed **access** to public spaces.
- There is a need for **enforcement** of the **rights** of people who use Guide and Service Dogs.
- Services and supports for people with disabilities stop when a person moves between provinces and territories in Canada.
- In some places, no public or **accessible** transportation means that people with disabilities are **isolated**.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. What steps will Canada take to stop **discrimination** against people who use Guide and Service Dogs (such as not being allowed to enter public spaces)?
2. What programs will Canada put in place to pay for **access** to mobility aids across the country?
3. How will Canada help the provinces and territories give people better **access** to mobility aids, no matter where you live in Canada?

Article 21: Saying What You Think and Access to Information

The CRPD says persons with disabilities should be able to say what they think and have support to communicate and understand information.

- Canada does not have equal **access** to important information delivered through television and radio, social media, and emergency alert messages. This information is not provided in sign languages, plain language, descriptive video, and other **accessible** formats.
- Canada does not have a plan to support the needs of people who do not use words to talk and who need communication devices and other supports in order to communicate their opinions, questions, and decisions.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. What is Canada doing to support the communication needs of people with disabilities?
2. What steps are Canada and the provinces and territories taking to make sure that ASL and LSQ sign languages are officially recognized and made available at all levels of government?
3. What steps are Canada and the provinces and territories taking to make sure all government websites and information is **accessible** to all persons with disabilities?

Article 23: Respect for Home and the Family

The CRPD says persons with disabilities have the same **rights** as other people to marry, be part of a family, be parents, and have relationships.

- People with disabilities in Canada continue to face **discrimination** when it comes to marriage, family, children, and relationships.
- Parents with disabilities, especially mothers with disabilities, do not get enough services and support from Canada's **child welfare agencies**.
- Parents with intellectual, psychosocial, and cognitive disabilities have their children taken from them more often than other groups of people. This usually happens in the hospital when the child is born.
- Canadian hospitals are often not aware of disability supports for parents with disabilities. Parent training opportunities do not include information and supports for people with disabilities.
- There is no effort to make sure that a child is not separated from their family on the basis of disability, if the parent has a disability.
- There are more children with disabilities, children of parents with disabilities, and Indigenous children in the Canadian **child welfare system** than children from other groups.
- When leaving the **child welfare system**, many young people with intellectual disabilities end up in institutional care or in the criminal justice system.
- More reporting and checking into the injuries and deaths of children with disabilities in **child welfare** is needed.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. How will Canada work with provinces and territories to make sure that all parents with disabilities have **access** to needed supports and services in order to keep and care for their child at home?
2. How will Canada look at and stop **discrimination** against parents with disabilities, especially mothers with disabilities?
3. How will Canada work to make sure that families are not separated because of disability?
4. What is Canada doing to make sure that Indigenous families have **access** to supports so that they can keep their children in their community?
5. How will Canada keep track of family court outcomes for families with disabilities?

Article 24: Education

The CRPD says the right to **inclusive education** means children with disabilities learn and spend time with other children their own age.

- Education in Canada is under the control of the different provinces and territories. However, students in First Nations communities are under national control.
- Inclusion in school is encouraged in many places. But only one province and one territory have an **inclusive education** policy.
- Students with complex disabilities or medical needs and students with intellectual disabilities are often excluded from regular schools and classrooms.
- Students in segregated schools and classrooms do not have **access** to the same education or social opportunities as students in regular classrooms. This has a negative effect on their future in terms of work and money and inclusion in community.
- Students with vision and hearing disabilities do not have enough **access** to sign language or technology in the classroom.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. What will Canada do to encourage leadership on **inclusive education** across the country?
2. What is Canada doing to improve **data** collection so that best practices in **inclusive education** can be recorded?
3. How will Canada work with the provinces and territories to make sure that information about the **rights** of people with disabilities and the CRPD is taught in schools?

Article 25: Health

The CRPD says people with disabilities have the **right** to be as healthy as possible.

- People with disabilities in Canada experience **barriers** to **accessing** healthcare. These **barriers** can be because of physical **access**, lack of information or support in communication, and people's attitudes about disability and health.
- People with disabilities in Canada do not have equal **access** to **sexual and reproductive health care**.
- Adults with disabilities, and especially adults with intellectual disabilities, are often kept in the hospital longer than needed because services and supports in the community or at home are not available.
- Young people with disabilities are often put in nursing home with seniors because there is not enough community supports and housing.
- People with disabilities often do not have the money to buy medication, dental care, mental health care, and vision care. These are not covered by Canada's public health insurance.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. What steps will Canada take to make sure people with disabilities have **access** to affordable health services no matter where they live in Canada?
2. What steps will Canada take so that people with intellectual, cognitive, and psychosocial disabilities have information about their **sexual and reproductive rights**?
3. How will Canada make sure healthcare workers are trained in the **rights** of persons with disabilities and know how to provide **accessible** supports and services?

Article 26: Habilitation and **Rehabilitation**

The CRPD says that countries should help persons with disabilities be as **independent** as possible and involved in all aspects of life.

- Across Canada there is a big difference in how good a service is and the number of services that are available for persons with disabilities.
- How good a service is and the number of services available for people with disabilities can depend on where you live in Canada and how much money you have to spend on services.
- Canada's healthcare system is hard to understand and people with disabilities often have to figure it out by themselves.
- Doctors in Canada often do not know how important it is to prescribe **rehabilitation**. **Rehabilitation** services are not always included in treatment plans.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. What steps are Canada and the provinces and territories taking to make sure **rehabilitation** services are prescribed by doctors so that people are supported to live **independently**?
2. What steps are Canada and the provinces and territories taking to make sure communities are **accessible** so that people can be supported to live **independently**?
3. Does Canada have a plan to help improve **access** to equipment and supports that will help people return to living in community, going to school, and working?

Article 27: Work and Employment

The CRPD says persons with disabilities have the same **rights** and choices as other people about having a job.

- Canada does not have an inclusive employment plan for all people with disabilities.
- People with disabilities are employed less and earn less money than people without disabilities.
- Many people with disabilities get some money from the government in order to pay for their daily needs. Many people with disabilities are afraid they will lose their disability supports and services if they get a paid job.
- People with intellectual disabilities are employed less than any other group. They are also placed in special workshops where they are paid much less than the lowest pay allowed in Canada.
- The programs for employment supports are different all across Canada.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. How will Canada make sure that employment policy and programs will work for many different people with disabilities?
2. How will Canada make sure that people with disabilities have equal **access** to different kinds of employment supports no matter where they live in Canada?
3. How will Canada make sure that youth with disabilities can get paid employment after finishing school?
4. When will Canada develop a transition plan and a timeline for closing sheltered workshops and supporting real work for real pay for people with developmental disabilities?

Article 28: Having a Good Standard of Living

The CRPD says all people should have things that give everyone the same chances in life. For example, having enough food, basic healthcare, going to school, or money to help pay for things.

- Many people with disabilities in Canada are poor.
- People with disabilities who are part of other vulnerable groups are very poor. These groups include women with disabilities, and people with intellectual, cognitive, psychosocial, and vision disabilities.
- People with disabilities are one of the biggest groups in Canada that are homeless or do not have safe housing.
- Canada has a plan to help people have enough money to pay for their basic needs, but it does not have the goal of making sure no one is poor.
- Some provincial and territorial governments in Canada have cut the amount of money they spend on helping people with disabilities.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. Will Canada promise to keep the National Advisory Council on Poverty after it has reached the 50% goal?
2. Will Canada collect information on who is poor in Canada, broken down by **gender**, age, where they live, and disability?
3. Will Canada make national standards for provinces and territories to follow the **rights** within the CRPD?

Article 29: Being Involved in Political and Public Life

The CRPD says everyone has the **right** to be involved in political and public life. This means things like standing for **election**, **voting** or being on a **jury**.

- People with disabilities are less likely to **vote** in Canada, and do not usually know about the tools and supports that are available to them.
- People with vision and hearing disabilities face **barriers** in political life at all levels of government. Information is not **accessible**, there are no **interpreters** at political events, and political parties do not provide **accessible** information.
- The rules in Canada say that a family member or romantic partner can help more than one person **vote** in an **election**, but a friend or helper can only help one person **vote** in an **election**. This rule makes it difficult for people with disabilities to **vote**, especially people who live in institutions or who share support.
- National **elections** use printed paper ballots in order to **vote**. For some people with disabilities, printed paper is not **accessible**.
- Printed paper ballots mean that more people with disabilities need someone else to help them **vote**, and that many people with disabilities cannot check to see whether their **vote** was written down correctly.
- Printed paper ballots also mean that images cannot be used on ballots, which would help more people **vote independently**.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. Will Canada make sure national, provincial, and other **election** debates that are on television have ASL and LSQ sign language interpretation on the screen, along with English and French captioning?

2. Will Canada use plain language for its ballots and include photos of the candidates on the ballot?

3. Will Canada make sure **voters** can **vote** online, by telephone, or by **voting** machine so that **voting** is **accessible** to everyone?

Article 30: Being involved in the arts, recreation, leisure and sport

The CRPD says everyone has the **right** to get involved in all areas of life.

- People with disabilities do not have equal **access** to the arts, recreation, leisure, and sport in Canada.
- Canada does not collect enough **data** (numbers and information) about people with disabilities being involved in the arts, recreation, leisure, and sport.
- Organizations and groups that are in charge of programs for the arts, recreation, leisure and sport are not always aware of the laws and policies that make sure people with disabilities are not **discriminated** against.
- People with disabilities are not often included when making programs in order to make sure the programs are **accessible** and do not **discriminate**.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. What steps is Canada taking to collect better **data** (numbers and information) about the **right** of people with disabilities to be involved in the arts, recreation, leisure, and sport?
2. How is Canada helping people with disabilities take leadership roles in the arts, recreation, leisure, and sport?
3. How is Canada making national parks, museums, and national media more **accessible** for all persons with disabilities?
4. How is Canada working with the provinces and territories to make sure the arts, recreation, leisure and sport are **accessible** for all persons with disabilities, no matter where they live in Canada?

Article 31: Collecting Numbers and Information

The CRPD says that countries must collect information about **human rights** and things that stop persons with disabilities doing the same things as other people.

- People with disabilities and their families, organizations of people with disabilities, and indigenous communities need more **data** (numbers and information) in order to improve the lives of people with disabilities in Canada.
- These groups also need more **access** to **data**; **access** is difficult because government departments do not share information between each other.
- Organizations of people with disabilities need more **resources** in order to help break down information about people with disabilities in Canada.
- Collecting information on people with disabilities in Canada is not the same everywhere, so it does not give a true picture of what is happening.
- Some major surveys with information about disability in Canada have been cancelled, and others have been changed so information is not the same across years.
- It is not clear who leads the national collection of information on people with disabilities.
- People with disabilities and their organizations are not always included when collecting information, doing **research**, and reporting on the information.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. Does Canada have a plan to fix all the gaps in the way it currently collects information on people with disabilities?
2. What is Canada's plan to make sure people with disabilities and their organizations are included in the collection, **research**, and reporting of information?
3. How will Canada make sure that a **human rights** approach to disability is used in all **research** that the government gives money to?

Article 32: Working with Other Countries

The CRPD says countries will work together as partners to make the CRPD happen.

- Canadian governments and their departments need to work together more when working with other countries.
- Canada does not use a **disability lens** in international projects. This means the **rights** of some groups may be included, but not the **rights** of persons with disabilities.
- Compared to other **Commonwealth** countries, Canada does not have clear policies on international development practices that are inclusive of people with disabilities.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. What is Canada's plan to support a **human rights** model of disability when doing work in other countries?
2. Will Canada make a rule so that all international partnership projects must include a **disability lens** and collect information broken down by **gender**, age, and disability?
3. What is Canada's plan to increase the involvement of organizations of people with disabilities in future international projects?

Article 33: Making the Convention Work and Checking Whether Things Get Better

The Article tells countries how to lead, check, and involve people with disabilities in making the CRPD happen.

- Canada does not have an **independent** way to check that the **rights** of persons with disabilities are included in all plans and laws.
- Canada does not have a way to make sure people with disabilities and their organizations are involved in checking that the **rights** of persons with disabilities are included in all plans and laws.
- Canada does not have a way to make sure that different parts of government work in the same way so CRPD **rights** are included at every level.

Questions the Committee should ask the Government of Canada:

1. How will Canada make sure that people with disabilities and their organizations are involved in collecting information, making laws and policies, and checking that the **rights** of persons with disabilities are included in all plans and laws?
2. How will Canada make sure there is enough money to make the CRPD work and check whether things get better for people with disabilities in Canada?
3. How will Canada make sure there is enough money for disability supports (like ASQ and LSQ **interpretation**, plain language translation, captioning, and other communication costs) to make the CRPD work and check whether things get better for people with disabilities in Canada?

Word Bank

Word	What it means
Access	Being able to use something, like a building or transportation. Access also means being able to get the information you need and getting information in a way you understand.
Accessible	Whether something is easy to get into, understand, or use.
Appeal	In this document, appeal means to apply to a higher court for a legal decision to be reversed.
Barrier	Something that stops you from being able to use, understand, or get into something else.
Child welfare system	A group of public and government services that help make sure all children live in safe places and are supported to live good lives.
Commonwealth	A political group of 53 countries.
Consent	Permission for something to happen or agreement to do something.
Convention	An agreement between different countries. The UN has many conventions.
CRPD	Another name for the UN Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities.
Data	Information and numbers collected together for research or reporting.
Degrading	Taking away your self-respect. Making you feel ashamed.
Disability lens	A way to make sure laws, policies, programs, and practices support the rights of people with disabilities.

Discriminate, Discrimination	Treating someone worse than other people because of who they are.
Election	An organized way to choose members of government.
Enforcement	Making sure that others are following the rules and giving punishments if they do not.
Exploitation	Treating someone unfairly so you gain or do well from it.
Gender	How a person feels about whether they are male, female, a mix of male and female, or not male or female.
Human Rights	All people have human rights. Governments need to make sure that people can get their rights at all times. Human rights are things like the right to food and water, housing, and being safe.
Human Rights Based Approach	This means a way of working that makes sure people get their rights.
Human Rights Commission	These are organizations that work on human rights for a country. They tell the UN what is happening about human rights in their country.
Immigration	When people move to live in a new country.
Immigrants	People who have moved to live in a new country.
Inclusive education	When children with disabilities learn the same things in the same places as other children without disabilities.
Independent	In this document, independent means not working for the government or the organization in charge. Independent can also mean not with anyone or anything else.

Interpreter	People who can communicate with people who are D/deaf or Deaf-blind. Interpreters use sign language and help people to communicate with others.
Isolated	Far away from other places, buildings, and people.
Jury	A group of people in court who decide if a person is guilty or innocent.
Legal aid	Support for people who cannot pay for a lawyer or access to the court system.
Legal capacity	Legal capacity means that anyone over 18 years old can make legal agreements or decisions.
Periodic reports	Reports that show progress and tell us how things are going.
Prejudice	When you dislike someone without any real reason.
Prisoner	A person legally held in prison as a punishment for a crime or while waiting for their trial.
Register	To put on an official list.
Rehabilitation	Helping someone get back to health or normal life after they are ill or become disabled.
Research	A planned and organized way to look for an answer to a question you have, or when trying to find out how to do things better.
Reservation	In this document, a Reservation means that even though a country has agreed to a United Nations Convention, the country does not agree to make a legal promise and fully follow a particular Article.
Resources	Money, materials, staff, and other things you have and can use to do things properly.

Sexual and reproductive rights	The right to enjoy safe sexuality and keep well and healthy. The right to decide whether or not to have children and support to have healthy children.
Sterilized	A person who has had an operation so that they can never have a baby.
Sterilization	An operation to stop someone from ever being able to have a baby.
Stigma	Something that marks you as different and can make you feel ashamed.
Vote	An organized way to choose between one or more people.