

UPR of NORWAY – Interactive dialogue
(2 December 2009; 0900-1200h)

INTERVENTION BY INDIA

Mr. President,

We welcome the delegation of Norway led by His Excellency JONAS GAHR STOERE and thank them for their candid National Report. India commends Norway for undertaking a critical review of the human rights situation in the country and for adopting several constructive initiatives in 2009. Norway has ranked at the top of the UN's Human Development Index for several years now, scoring high in the sectors of health, education and living standards, indicating of Norway's commitment to the promotion and protection of economic and social rights.

India welcomes Norway's objective of promoting human rights through development cooperation, demonstrated by the allocation of one per cent of its GDP towards development assistance in its budget for 2009. India appreciates of Norway's efforts to support the exploration of an internationally accepted definition of illegitimate debt, through the funding of a project to be implemented by UNCTAD.

Mr. President,

India echoes CEDAW's concerns about the high prevalence of discrimination and violence against women, including domestic violence, clearly acknowledged in the National report itself. It is alarming that the number of reported rapes in Norway has increased by 34 per cent in the last five years. Further, while of the 19 cabinet ministers, 9 are currently women; concern has been expressed by CEDAW about the low numbers of women mayors, professors and judges at all levels of the judiciary. India takes positive note of the legal and other measures taken to combat discrimination and violence against women, Norway's instrumental role in putting the

issue of domestic violence on the agenda of the Council of Europe and the expansion of the gender- budgeting approach to encompass all Ministries.

We note the launching of the third Action Plan to combat FGM, referred to in paragraph 3.6 of the national report and comprising 41 measures. It would be useful to know whether the Government has put in place systems to ascertain whether acts of FGM have been performed before or after the entry of the women and the girls concerned into the country. As the efforts would seemingly concentrate on immigrants from particular regions of the world and their descendants, how does the Government ensure that measures against FGM do not become in themselves acts of ‘racial profiling’, with the attendant consequences for increasing mistrust between targeted communities and authorities such as public health-care services, police, child welfare services, schools and nurseries?

The National Report calls in to question Norway’s ability to combat discrimination, rising intolerance and hate crime as well as to secure the rights of its minorities, immigrant population and persons with special needs. India appreciates Norway’s initiative to appoint a Commission to provide for constitutional and legal protection from discrimination and the adoption of its *Action Plan to Promote Equality and Prevent Ethnic Discrimination 2009-12*. We welcome the announcement that Norway will ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010.

Thank you, Mr. President.