



PERMANENT MISSION OF NORWAY

**Examination of Norway by the UN Committee
on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the basis of
Norway's 8th state report on the implementation of the
International Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

CEDAW 51st Session

STATEMENT

BY

Norway

**delivered by Audun Lysbakken, Minister of Children
Equality and Social Inclusion**

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Check against delivery

Madame Chair Silvia Pimentel,

Members of the Committee,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to present the latest developments in Norway since the submission of our 8th State Report in 2010.

I am proud to say that Norway is among the first countries in the world, if not the first one, to submit its 8th State Report on CEDAW.

Madame Chair,

I am pleased to inform you that experts representing different sectors and ministries are represented in the Norwegian delegation together with two representatives for the Sámediggi (the Sami Parliament), who are observers. Sámediggi has taken part in the national preparations prior to the report and prior to this examination.

Norwegian NGOs and The Equality and Discrimination Ombud are here today and have been in dialogue with the committee on core issues related to Norway's implementation of CEDAW prior to this examination. I value these important voices in our dialogue.

My Ministry has granted financial support for the finalization of a shadow report and for travelling expenses for Norwegian NGOs.

Madame Chair,

Norway is considered a frontrunner in gender equality. Nevertheless, challenges of gender inequality still remain in Norway.

To reach real gender equality and prevent discrimination are top priorities for the Stoltenberg Government.

Madame Chair,

The first issue, I consider to be of particular interest to you and The Committee, is gender-based violence.

The violence that happens in the street often makes the headlines, but everyday domestic violence rarely does. It only does so when the violence ends in loss of life. Even then, it is often described in the media as a “family tragedy”, not as the brutal and severe crime it actually is.

The numbers speak for themselves; In Norway the “partner homicides” constitute between 20 and 30 % of murders committed every year.

The Government’s position is clear; no religion, culture or tradition can ever serve as excuse for violence against women. Further, violence against women is not a private matter but should be dealt with by governments.

The Norwegian government will continue and strengthen the efforts to combat violence against women and children.

Madame Chair,

The second issue of particular interest is political power and women’s representation in politics.

Equal representation of men and women in all political positions in society is necessary for democracy and an equal society.

I am concerned about the representation of women in local government in Norway after the 2011 – Municipal elections. The results from the elections last year show that the number of representatives in elected bodies is 4 115 women and 6 670 men. These figures tell us that women’s representation at local government has gone down slightly compared to the outcome of the 2007 election. Furthermore the results show that the level of elected women in local councils and women who are chairpersons and mayors is the same as in the 2007 local election.

The Government’s aim is to stimulate for a sufficient gender balance in all elected bodies in particular working to increase women’s representation among mayors.

Madam chair,

The third issue of particular interest is economic power. Over the past 30-40 years there has been a positive trend toward more equal distribution of the economic resources and powers between women and men. The main reason for this is the high level of women's participation in the labour market. However, women still have a lower income compared to men. Mainly because women work less hours, are less active in the labour market compared to men and because they have less pay per hour when compared to men.

The Government aims at reducing the pay gap between men and women. Furthermore, to increase women's and men's knowledge about consequences of their choices in how they participate in the labour market for their economic situation and for their pension rights.

Norwegian gender equality policies allow men and women alike to combine work life and family life. The policies include a well developed system of day care-centers, paid parental leave and paid leave to take care for sick children, flexible working time regulations and opportunities to work part-time.

This is all part of the bigger picture and it shows us that these issues are all connected.

Madame Chair,

The fourth issue is gender mainstreaming. This Committee has, very timely, questioned the effectiveness of the method of Norwegian state's policy of gender mainstreaming vis-à-vis the specific measures taken to eradicate discrimination against women.

This calls for an overall assessment of the Norwegian gender equality policies, which is exactly what we at present are doing.

As mentioned in our written reply to The Committee's list of issues, a commission appointed by the Government in 2010 is working on an assessment of existing gender equality policies in the context of ethnicity, class and life cycle. Their final report is expected in August this year. However, this Commission has already published a critical report reviewing how central, regional and local governments work to mainstream the gender perspective. The results show that many elected bodies and their administrations are still not working effectively and systematically with mainstreaming, taking their sectorial responsibility.

My ambition is to have a solid knowledge based foundation for the making of our future road map on gender equality. The reports are sent on a broad public hearing and consultation. I will wait for the results from the consultation before I take my proposal to the Government and present a White Paper to Storting (the Norwegian Parliament).

Madame Chair,

The fifth issue is the national gender equality machinery. The Commission (I just referred to) in their first report in November last year also evaluate our national gender equality machinery.

The Report points out several critical issues relating to this. Among others is the lack of incentives for regional bodies and the municipalities to actively work for gender equality.

To follow up The Commission's proposals, my ministry is planning to submit a White Paper (as already mentioned) on Norway's future gender equality policies to Storting (the Norwegian Parliament) in 2013. Furthermore, my ministry is at present working on different legislative proposals to adjust existing anti-discrimination legislation with an aim to harmonize the rules in our different legal acts. I intend to emphasize multiple discrimination. This bill will be presented to Storting (the Norwegian Parliament) early in 2013.

The sixth issue is our Action Plan on Gender Equality – 2014. I am proud to inform you that in November last year our Government launched the first action plan on gender equality in all areas of society in 20 years in Norway.

The Action Plan consists of political goals, descriptions of political challenges for gender equality and the government's new initiatives in nine specific areas: gender stereotypes, gender and education, equal parenthood and family friendly work life, the gender segregated work life, distribution of economic power, gender and power, gender and health, domestic violence and international cooperation for gender equality.

Furthermore the plan includes a set of statistical indicators for each area, so that it will be possible to monitor the results, in a long term perspective. The action plan will be available in English in the near future.

Madam Chair,

I will now leave the floor to my expert on gender equality and family matters in Norway, Director General Ms Arni Hole, from the Department for Family Affairs and Equality in the Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, to elaborate further on *The Norwegian Crisis Centre Act of 2010*, our work on *Gender-based violence*, the situation for *women with an immigrant background in the labour market* and on *women with disabilities*.

Thank you for your attention.