



ROYAL NORWEGIAN
MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND EQUALITY

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women (CEDAW)

Your ref

Our ref

Date

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**Written response following the CEDAW Committee's examination of
Norway's 10th periodic report on 9th February 2023**

We refer to Norway's dialogue meeting with the CEDAW Committee yesterday, where the committee requested that the delegation provide written answers to some of their questions regarding health and to their questions regarding climate within 24 hours.

We would like to provide the Committee with the following additional information:

Health

Abortion

Women have the right to decide for themselves whether they wish to have an abortion during the first twelve weeks of their pregnancy. Medical abortion is currently the most common method of abortion: over 90% of abortions are performed as a medical abortion. Most women choose to complete the abortion at home. The abortion is free of charge.

Abortion boards

The government has appointed a committee to review the abortion law, including to consider alternatives to the current abortion boards. The committee has also been asked to look at the counseling and guidance offered to women who are considering abortion and may recommend organizational changes. The recommendations will be submitted by the end of 2023.

Contraceptives

Youth younger than 20 years will receive contraceptives (also hormonal) free of charge. Youth aged 20 and 21 years old will be charged a fee (the whole cost is not covered and dependent on type of contraceptive). This applies to male and females.

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The care deficit

The health personnel commission launched its comprehensive report last week. They address the ways forward to amend the care deficit. The commission's report has been sent on a public hearing until 2 May 2023. The report will be followed up in the White paper on The National health plan.

Endometriosis

The Regional Health Authorities and The Norwegian Health Directorate have in 2023 an assignment from the government to develop guidelines and plans to ensure earlier and safer diagnosis for women with abdominal pain and severe menstrual bleedings, i.e. endometriosis. Surgery in the most serious and complicated cases of endometriosis is to be centralized to very few hospitals in Norway. The plans will also include measures to raise the awareness of the public on signs and symptoms of endometriosis and raise the competence in all parts of the health services. A National Competence Centre on endometriosis is due to be established in 2023.

Concerning the number of cases in Norway compared to other countries, there is no data that suggest an overrepresentation. A possible explanation for high numbers of cases would be the attention and growing awareness this condition has had in the public debate, often thanks to sivil society engagement. The attention has made more women suffering from abdominal pain and severe menstrual bleedings seek help, with the result of more cases confirmed.

Climate

Norway's oil and gas production

We know that climate change affect men and women differently. It is therefore important that all countries step up their efforts to solve the climate crisis.

The Paris Agreement is arranged in a way in which each country is accountable for emissions from its own territory and its economic zone. The Norwegian climate policy is based on this. In Norway, we are working on reducing the emissions from the production of oil and gas.

Emissions from the oil and gas production in Norway are declining and are in average already significantly lower compared to most other petroleum producing countries. This sector has long been subject to stringent climate and environmental requirements. The Norwegian Government will, in close cooperation with the petroleum industry, work to reduce the emissions from the Norwegian Continental shelf by 50 per cent by 2030 compared to 2005 levels and to net zero by 2050.

The solutions to the world's climate and energy challenges, as set out in the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, are global and must be solved through both global cooperation and domestic measures. Norway will contribute to achieve these goals, including helping the

global energy transition and supporting the green transition. For example, Norway has high ambitions on offshore wind power, hydrogen, carbon capture and storage and green shipping.

The government has extensive expectations to companies in which the state has ownership interests. The expectations relate to inter alia diversity, gender equality, climate change risk management, emission reductions in line with the Paris Agreement and reporting on emissions. The expectations are described in the government's White Paper to the Parliament called "Greener and more active state ownership (Meld. St. 6)".

Norway's climate goals and how we are going to reach them

Under the Paris Agreement, Norway submitted its intended nationally determined contribution (INDC) to reduce emissions by at least 40 percent compared to 1990 by 2030 on 3 March 2015. The INDC became Norway's nationally determined contribution (NDC) through Norway's ratification of the Paris Agreement on 20 June 2016 and the entry into force 4 November the same year.

On 7 February 2020 Norway updated and enhanced its NDC under the Paris Agreement. For the period 2021–2030 Norway has set a target of reducing emissions with "at least 50 percent and up towards 55 percent" compared with 1990, which will be fulfilled in cooperation with the EU.

Following the decision 1/CMA.3 Glasgow Climate Pact paragraph 29, Norway revisited the 2030 target in its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). In November 2022, Norway communicated its updated NDC to reduce emissions by at least 55 per cent by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. Norway's NDC is economy wide, covering all sectors and greenhouse gases. Norway's intention is to fulfil this target in cooperation with the EU. The updated 2030 target of at least 55 per cent has not yet been updated in the Norwegian Climate Change Act, but the Government will make a proposal to Parliament in order to amend the Act to update the target in line with this NDC. Norway's NDC is based on the IPCC reports, as described in section 6a of Norway's updated NDC (link: [NDC Norway second update.pdf \(unfccc.int\)](#))

In addition we have established a 2050 target by law stating that Norway is to become a low-emission society with emission reductions of 90-95 % compared to 1990-levels.

The Støre Government presented a climate status and plan to Parliament as part of the National budget for 2023, presenting the government's plan to achieve its climate targets. The climate status and plan will be updated annually; with status for to what extent Norway is on track to achieving its climate targets, as well as a summary of the government's climate policy. The government also intends to present a White Paper to Parliament with a plan for emissions reductions towards 2035.

Regarding the Norwegian fossil fuels production, Norway's climate policies and measures cover all sectors, including the Norwegian petroleum sector. The petroleum industry is thoroughly regulated through, inter alia, the Petroleum Act of 1996 and the regulation pertaining to it. Norwegian installations in the petroleum industry are moreover included in the EU Emission Trading System. In this system, there is a steep annual reduction in the total emissions cap.

A tax on CO₂ is levied on all combustion of natural gas, oil and diesel in petroleum operations on the continental shelf in accordance with the CO₂ Tax Act on Petroleum Activities. In its political platform, the present government stated that it will gradually increase the CO₂ tax on the continental shelf. This will be considered in annual budgets.

Gender perspective in Norwegian climate policies

We know that climate policies affect men and women differently. Last year, the Nordic Council of Ministers published a report which aimed to investigate how climate policies impact gender and vice versa. The report shows that climate policies in the Nordic countries have been lacking sufficient and actionable gender equality insights.

We want this to change. We are therefore working on gathering knowledge on the interconnections between gender and climate change, and how we can implement a gender perspective in our climate policies.

Last year, the Nordic countries presented a commitment on gender equality and climate change, which was presented during the UN Commission on the status of women last year. Through this, we have committed ourselves to promote international cooperation, build alliances and strengthen advocacy on the interconnections between climate action and gender equality.

Norway has over the recent years initiated several initiatives aiming to gather knowledge on the interconnections between climate change and gender equality in Norwegian climate policies:

- In January last year, Norway hosted a roundtable on the topic "Gender Equality and Climate Justice", together with the women's organization FOKUS and UN Women. The roundtable included ministers from several Nordic Countries, UN Women, actors from civil society and a number of business leaders.
- Norway hosted a high-level side event on gender and climate change at COP27, together with the African Union and UN Women.
- Norway is working on a new project on gender and climate change in 2023, in close cooperation with other Nordic countries. The topic of the project is yet to be finally decided.
- Norway is also working on a new White Paper to the Norwegian Parliament on climate change adaptation which will include perspectives on how climate change and adaptation policies affect gender equality.

Norway also contributes to funding climate activities in developing countries. Through this funding, gender is a cross-cutting concern:

- Awareness of how climate change affects men and women differently is particularly important in support to indigenous peoples and traditional communities, where women are often subject to multiple forms of discrimination.
- The Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Program, managed by the Norwegian Embassy in Brasilia, can be seen as a gender-specific program. 2/3 of the projects supported has gender as a primary objective.
- Norway is committed to being a global champion for sexual and reproductive health and rights, both financially and politically. We promote universal access to SRHR for all, including girls, LGBTIQ+ persons and marginalized groups. To increase access to family planning, abortion and comprehensive sexuality education are important priorities.
- Norway supports the Central African Forest Initiative's measures to reduce demographic pressure. CAFI combines studies on migratory flows and support to national policies on family planning. A target is to increase the uptake of modern contraceptives that helps reduce unwanted pregnancies.

How women are being included in decision-making processes on climate change

We are also working for equal access in decision-making processes on climate action. Women dominate the public sector and are also largely represented in national public decision-making processes. However, even though the share of women in several cases is higher than men among the civil servants - equal gender representation of policy makers does not necessarily result in gender mainstreaming of climate action plans. Increased awareness and knowledge on the interlinkages is needed. As mentioned above, Norway is working on gathering more knowledge on this.

At COP 26 in Glasgow, Norway announced a commitment at "Gender Day", stating that Norway will work to increase and strengthen the role and impact of women and girls in both international and national climate decision-making.

As an example, Norway has made arrangements for the participation of women's organizations in relation to the preparation of the climate change negotiations. We are also proud to have had a Norwegian female representative for the role as the SBI Chair under the UNFCCC for the period 2020-2022. She is the fourth woman to ever have this role in history. Women's organizations are also invited to give input on national climate policies through public hearings.

Sami rights

The temperatures in the Arctic continue to rise at three times the global annual average. Climate change threatens nature in the Arctic, and also threatens the livelihood of many local communities and indigenous peoples.

The Sámediggi's (the Sami Parliament) and other Sami interests have the right to be consulted on matters that may directly affect Sami interests. The obligations to consult is stated in Chapter 4 in the Sami Act. The provisions are developed in accordance with ILO Convention No. 169 Article 6.

This means that all government bodies are obliged to consult with affected Sami interests, for example when considering plans for wind power plants. Consultations with the Sámediggi and other affected Sami interests imply that it should be made a real effort to reach agreement on the proposed measures. However, the consultation obligation is not a right to veto. If agreement is not reached, the public authorities make the final decision.

The Government and ministries have regular dialogue with the Sámediggi on relevant topics where suggestions, needs and proposed measures are discussed.

Environmental standards for businesses

More than 80 % of Norway's emissions are covered either by the European Emission Trading System (EU ETS) or a CO2 tax. The Pollution Control Act lays down a general prohibition against pollution, which includes the release of greenhouse gas emissions. In accordance with the act, businesses have to have a permit issued by the pollution control authority for activities that lead to pollution, e.g. the release of GHG emissions.

In 2003, Norway passed the Environmental Information Act. Its purpose is to ensure public access to environmental information, and public participation in environmental decision-making processes. It allows citizens to request environmental information not only from public authorities, but also from private enterprises. As such, anyone can ask for information regarding a businesses' environmental footprint and policies, and the business would be required to provide that information.

Norwegian consumer legislation prohibits misleading marketing and shall, among other things, ensure that businesses do not portray their activities as less harmful to the climate and environment than is actually the case.

Norway's commitment to the COP 27 decision on a loss and damage fund

Norway welcomes the decision taken at COP 27 to establish new funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage, including the establishment of a fund that complement and include sources, funds, processes and initiatives under and outside the Convention and the Paris Agreement.

Norway looks forward to the recommendation of the transitional committee on elements for operationalization. Norway will be following with dedication the work of the transitional committee. We look forward to the deliberations at COP 28 in Dubai in order to operationalize the funding arrangements, including the new fund.

The establishment of new funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage will not put on hold our long-standing commitment to support countries and communities facing the effects of climate change. Norway stands ready to continue to support, through a variety of channels, efforts to prevent, prepare and respond to climate related emergencies.

Yours sincerely

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Norges faste delegasjon i Geneve