

**CEDAW-hearing on the 7th of November 2017**  
**Minister Solveig Horne: Introductory speech**

Madame Chair,  
Members of the Committee,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

And thank you for giving me the opportunity to present Norway's report here today.

My government is committed to undertake measures on the national and international level, in order to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, in line with sustainable development goal number 5.

Norwegian society is based on equality in general and on gender equality in particular.

We passed our first Gender Equality Act in 1978, and Norway was among the first countries in the world to ratify the CEDAW Convention. Together with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the convention forms the basis of our gender equality policy.

The convention has proved to be an important tool in our work for human rights and gender equality.

It is therefore with great respect that I will present the Norwegian policies, and answer the questions of the Committee.

**Grunnloven**

Chair,

In 2014, the Norwegian Constitution was amended, and it now includes a comprehensive human rights catalogue. Section 98 of the Constitution states that: "All people are equal under the law", and that "No human being must be subject to unfair or disproportionate differential treatment."

**Likestillings- og diskrimineringsloven**

In June this year, Parliament adopted the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act. The Act aims specifically at improving the position of women and minorities. Parliament also enacted changes to the enforcement system. A new Equality Tribunal will be established, which can award compensation in discrimination cases within working life. This is a major improvement.

**Stortingmelding likestilling**

I would also like to highlight the White Paper on Gender Equality, that I presented to Parliament in 2015. The White Paper focuses on five domestic areas:

- Violence and abuse
- Upbringing and education
- Working life
- Health
- Business and entrepreneurship

The White Paper launched several measures to meet the challenges we are still facing.

### **Kvinner i arbeidslivet**

Chair,

Over the past 50 years, better social services and the increase in higher education have led to women's entry into paid jobs. Paid parental leave and affordable childcare have made it easier for more women to enter the workforce.

Today, women participate in the labour force almost at the same rate as men<sup>1</sup>. This is a big asset for our economy and contributes to the sustainability of our welfare state.

### **Foreldrepermisjon**

Chair,

Norway has one of the best parental leave schemes in the world. Parents having a child are entitled to paid leave for 49 weeks with 100 per cent pay or 59 weeks with 80 per cent pay. One quota is reserved for each parent. This gives fathers and mothers a unique opportunity to combine paid work and family life.

There has been a discussion in Norway about the length of the father's quota. When my government took office, we reduced the quota for fathers and mothers from 14 to 10 weeks. This was because we wanted a more flexible scheme to let families themselves decide what suits them best.

However, following our parliamentary elections in September, Parliament has made a resolution urging the Government to extend the father's quota to fourteen weeks. The Government will propose an extension of both the father's and the mother's quota from ten to fourteen weeks.

### **Positiv utvikling**

We are moving steadily towards an even more gender equal society. More women work full time. The number of women in management positions is growing. And the gender pay gap has been reduced.

### **Gjenstående utfordringer**

Chair,

Even though Norway has come a long way towards equality and ranks number 3 out of 144 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index, challenges remain – such as:

- Violence against women
- Gender segregation of education and of the labour market
- And the need to include more immigrant women in the workforce.

### **Vold**

Women are victims of violence in close relationships, sexual harassment and rape.

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<sup>1</sup> Men: 81%, women: 76% (2016, age 25-66).

The committee, in its "List of issues", is questioning the high incidence of violence in Norway.

I am, as well as you, worried about the level of gender based violence, sexual violence, and sexual harassment in my country. And I am worried that many victims do not report these crimes and do not seek help.

The Norwegian government's view is clear. Violence against women and domestic violence is unacceptable and punishable. It must be prevented through measures to help and protect the victims and through treatment and prosecution of the perpetrators.

To underline our intentions in this field we have ratified the Istanbul Convention.<sup>2</sup>

Norway has put in place a large range of preventive measures:

- The government has presented a new strategy for Youth health. It covers issues such as preventing violence and abuse, helping the victims, and prosecuting the perpetrators;
- Pregnant women are now routinely asked about violence at maternity check-ups;
- The government provides funding for prevention activities run by non-profit organisations;
- We have included the subject of violence and sexual abuse in training for school teacher students and police students;
- And we run awareness-raising campaigns, targeting youth.

The last few weeks, harassment through the internet has been highlighted in the media - and especially issues of sharing images with sexual content.

Most victims are girls, and this has a huge negative impact on their lives.

The Government will present a Strategy on internet related abuse. This will give us the opportunity to define a framework for our activities in this field.

We will also investigate a low-threshold enforcement system for sexual harassment cases.

The last years we have taken some important steps to improve the situation of women and children affected by violence:

- We have ensured that the police give these cases higher priority;
- We are improving the shelter services for victims of violence with drug addiction, mental health problems and disabilities;

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<sup>2</sup> 5th July 2017.

- And we have developed measures to protect victims in more efficient ways. We will establish 12 support offices located in police stations for victims of crime. They will:
  - give advice and practical help;
  - inform victims on the pending of a criminal case, from the bringing of charge to the court's judgment;
  - and assist with preparing applications for criminal injuries compensation.

In order to work effectively, plans and strategies have been developed. This includes an Action Plan to combat domestic violence for the period 2014-2017. We have also launched an Action Plan to Combat Negative Social Control, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation. Next year, we will launch a new Action Plan against rape.

In 2014, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security launched a five-year research programme on domestic violence. A total of 50 million Norwegian kroner has been allocated to the programme.

In 2015, a study on all intimate partner homicide cases in Norway from 1991 to 2012 was launched. The study identifies risk factors and effective preventive measures for the police, for health care and support services concerning domestic violence.

We will establish a commission on intimate partner homicide. The commission will review a selection of intimate partner homicide cases as part of the efforts to develop better preventive measures.

### **Hatefulle ytringer**

Chair,

Women in Norway are active participants in public debate about all issues in society. Some women are, however, reluctant to participate in the public debate because they have been met with hateful or abusive speech. This keeps important voices from speaking out, and it represents a loss for democracy.

The work against hate speech is high on the Government's agenda. One year ago, we launched a strategy against hate speech.

The Strategy aims to prevent hate speech on all discrimination grounds, including gender.

We also support the Council of Europe campaign No Hate Speech. And we are about to establish a website and launch social media campaigns directed at youth, parents and teachers.

### **Kjønnsdelte utdannings- og yrkesvalg**

Chair,

We have come a long way towards gender equality in working life in Norway. The inequalities that still exist are often associated with traditional choices of education and profession.

Utkast 3.11.2017

Business and industry are largely divided by gender. Women now account for 60 per cent of students in higher education, but there is a gender imbalance in the choice of subjects.

Women now make up the majority of the students in formerly male dominated studies such as law and medicine. But still, most health studies and education are dominated by women, and technological studies are dominated by men.

The Government supports the programme *Girls and Technology*, which aims at increasing the proportion of girls studying mathematics and natural sciences at all levels.

We have appointed an expert committee to acquire more knowledge about gender differences in school and to suggest measures to counter them.

We will also set up a public committee to investigate challenges to gender equality for children and youth.

### **Ledelse**

Chair,

In the public sector, organisations and in politics, many women hold management positions.

In business life, management positions are still dominated by men, especially the senior executive positions. But there has been some positive development. In 2016, there were 22 000 more women in management positions than in 2013. This number includes both the public and the private sector.

But in the 200 largest companies in Norway, 80 per cent of the members of executive committees are men.

And more than 90 per cent of the CEOs of these companies are men.

The Government funds the CORE Centre for Research on Gender Equality and has given CORE the task of monitoring the gender balance in the largest Norwegian companies over time. We will follow the development closely.

### **Integrering**

Chair,

To succeed in our work for gender equality, we need to include immigrant women in the workforce.

The employment rate for immigrants is lower than for the non-immigrant population. The difference between immigrants and the Norwegian-born population is much larger for women than men, due to very low employment rates among female immigrants from Asia and Africa.

On the other hand, among Norwegian-born persons with immigrant parents, women are more active than men, as a result of the large share of women under 25 engaged in education.

The aim of the integration policy is to introduce measures that provide incentives for participation in the workforce. This is a question of self-sufficiency and financial independence.

We have therefore proposed amendments to make the Introduction Program more job-oriented. The Job Opportunity Programme now includes more target groups.

Low income should not be an obstacle for children to attend kindergarten. More children than before now receive free core time in kindergarten, enabling the parents to join the workforce.

As from 1 July 2017 parents who claim cash-for-care benefits, must have lived five years in Norway. This requirement is set to encourage immigrant women to send their children to kindergarten. The requirement is also an incentive for better integration through education or paid work.

Women and girls who have immigrated, or have parents who have immigrated, have the same rights to make decisions about their own life as everybody else. That is why we have launched an action plan to liberate children and young people in Norway from negative social control and various forms of coercion.

### **Avslutning**

Chair,

Several organizations and institutions have presented their own reports for the Committee. I would like to thank them for their valuable contributions. Civil society organizations are a source of input and correction to policy makers. They challenge the authorities on behalf of different groups and play an important role in society. I meet regularly with representatives from civil society organizations and I am often impressed by their efforts.

Today we will be focusing on the achievements we have had since our last dialog meeting with the CEDAW-committee – and on the challenges we still face. I am looking forward to discussing gender equality issues with the distinguished members of the Committee.

The Norwegian delegation is made up of members from relevant ministries and from the Permanent Mission of Norway in Geneva. They will introduce themselves by name as they take the floor.

I will now give the floor to Ms. Hege Nygård and Mr. Jan Austad who will elaborate on some of the issues I have touched upon.

Thank you, chair.

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### **BLDs supplerende innlegg – CEDAW-høring 7.11.2017** **Ekspedisjonssjef Hege Nygård**

#### **Likestillings- og diskrimineringsloven**

As the Minister mentioned, a new comprehensive Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act was adopted by Parliament in June. The Act will enter into force in January.

It replaces the four current equality and anti-discrimination acts, and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender, pregnancy, parental leave, caring for children or close family

members, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age and combinations of these grounds.

There has been raised some criticism against such a holistic legal approach. Mainly due to the abolishment of a separate Gender Equality Act. A separate Gender Equality Act could have a symbolic value. However, it is important to underline that the new act will not weaken women's protection against discrimination – quite the opposite.

The new Act aims specifically at improving the position of women and minorities.

It applies to all areas of society, including family life and other purely personal relationships, just like the Gender Equality Act.

### **Forbedringer knyttet til kjønn**

In several regards, the new Act gives a better protection against discrimination against women, than the current Gender Equality Act.

For example:

- The protection against pregnancy discrimination has been made more specific.
- Caregiving is listed as a separate discrimination ground.
- And the prohibition against discrimination based on a combination of discrimination grounds is specified.

### **Håndheving**

The Act will be enforced by a new and strengthened Discrimination Tribunal.

The Tribunal will be given the authority to award redress in cases regarding working life. Today, only the ordinary courts of law can award redress in discrimination cases. This is a major achievement in the enforcement of these cases.

### **Kjønnsnøytralt lovverk**

Chair,

In the list of issues, the Committee raises the issue of an allegedly continuing and growing tendency for gender neutralisation in Norwegian legislation, policies and programmes.

We do not recognize any clear tendency, as the Committee refers to, towards increased gender neutralisation. Norwegian laws, policy and programs are, and have always been, mainly gender neutral.

At the same time, the Government maintains its focus on challenges and obstacles to equality that are gender specific in policy and programs in all areas of society.

### **Utredningsinstruksen**

Chair,

In the list of issues, the Committee also expresses concern that the revised legislative drafting instructions no longer explicitly mention the requirement of assessing implications for gender equality and non-discrimination.

According to the revised instructions, the potential implications of a measure for all affected parties must be accounted for in the analysis of the issue. This implicates that also effects on gender equality should be included in the analysis. The guidelines to the instructions specify that fundamental questions of equal opportunities and discrimination shall be assessed if relevant.

The ministry in charge shall present all proposed measures with major effects to affected ministries. This implies that if major effects regarding equal opportunities are anticipated, the measure shall be presented to the Ministry of Children and Equality prior to public consultations.

When the revised instructions have been in force for two or three years, an evaluation will be conducted in order to find out whether the quality of impact assessments has improved.

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### **CEDAW, innlegg Justis- og beredskapsdepartementet**

The Ministry of Justice and Public Security continues to oversee the development and implementation of new measures to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence.

We especially seek to improve training for law enforcement personnel and to increase the use of available tools for the police and prosecution service.

An offender can be made to wear a *Reverse attack alarm* as part of a sentence. The abuser – and not the victim – must bear the consequences of his crime in that his freedom of movement is restricted.

As of June 2017, five sentenced persons have been carrying a reverse violence alarm. The Director of Public Prosecutions underlines in his directive for the prosecution service for 2017 that prosecutors are too reluctant in seeking to obtain convictions that include the use of reverse alarms, and must consider this in more cases.

All police districts have carried out training in the use of the *Spousal Assault Risk Assessment tool – SARA*. From January 2017, we have introduced a more thorough reporting from the police districts concerning the use of SARA in order to closely follow developments.

All police districts have appointed a full-time *family violence coordinator* to help ensure that the police meet victims of violence as well as relatives and friends with understanding, knowledge and insight. As part of the ongoing reform process in the Norwegian police, all police districts will establish dedicated teams to work on violence and sexual abuse in intimate relationships.

We seek to *spread information and raise awareness* by the use of internet and social media. In February 2016, the Government established a new web portal on domestic violence and rape for persons exposed to such crimes and for the health and social services ([dinutvei.no](http://dinutvei.no)).

We continue to conduct broad *research* on domestic violence. Causes, extent and consequences of domestic violence are among the subjects for the research programs.

A large number of all reported cases of *rape* take place in so called party- situations. In the majority of cases, the perpetrators are boys or young men. Both perpetrators and victims are often intoxicated. We believe in the value of broad preventive measures to reduce the number of such crimes.



An internet campaign run by the police targets young men attempting to make them more alert and protective towards those they party with. In spring 2017, the campaign aimed at participants in secondary graduation celebrations (russetid).

We are constantly seeking ways to *improve police investigations* in rape cases. In 2016, the Director of Public Prosecutions presented a new report on the quality of investigations, having researched several hundred cases of rape. The advanced methodology and scope of this Quality Survey is groundbreaking for us in this field, giving specific information about quality at all stages of investigations. A major finding is that police interviews now meet a high standard. This is extremely encouraging, but also an expected development, since efforts to improve police interviews have been ongoing for a long time.

The Quality Survey of course also finds room for improvement and points at differences in the various police districts, thus paving the way for introducing specific follow-up measures in each district.

In several rape cases, the accused is found guilty in the district court, but is acquitted by the jury in the court of appeal. A jury does not give any grounds for its decision. I can inform the committee that Norway has recently abolished the jury system, and in the new system, the court of appeal will have to write down the grounds for a verdict. We will follow the effect of this change for rape cases with considerable interest.

Let me add that our courts also have increased penalties for rape. Many cases take place in connection with parties where individuals involved are heavily intoxicated, and where a man engages in sexual activity with a woman incapable of resisting the act. Such cases were previously dealt with quite leniently, with a few months in prison, but will now typically result in a prison term of 3 to 4 years.

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