

UPR of Egypt

17 February 2010

Statement by Norway

Norway warmly welcomes the delegation of Egypt and thanks it for the presentation of the National Report and for the answers to our advance questions. We appreciate the active role Egypt is playing within the UN Human Rights machinery, and would particularly emphasize their role as a bridge builder in the Durban Review Conference.

Effective cooperation with the UN Human Rights machinery is key to the human rights situation on the ground. We recommend that Egypt improves its cooperation with the UN Treaty Bodies by submitting overdue reports as a matter of priority.

Active participation of civil society is essential to a meaningful UPR process. We recommend that Egypt establishes an effective and inclusive process to follow-up on UPR recommendations.

We also recommend that the procedures governing registration of civil society organizations be revised to ensure transparent, non-discriminatory, expeditious and affordable procedures that allow for appeal and conform to international human rights standards. We further recommend the Government to better disseminate the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and ensure its full observance.

Despite greater press freedom in recent years, freedom of expression remains curtailed. We recommend Egypt to consider further steps to decriminalize acts of opinion and expression, repeal all articles in the penal code which allow the imprisonment of journalists for their writing and amending the press provisions of the penal code so that they state explicitly that journalists should not be imprisoned or otherwise punished for the sole exercise of their right to free expression.

Norway appreciates that 64 seats of the People's Assembly are reserved for women in this year's parliamentary elections. We recommend Egypt to consider further steps to ensure a higher number of women in decision-making positions. We also recommend that Egypt takes concrete steps to increase the protection of women, ensuring that complaints of domestic violence are properly registered and investigated by the police, and that perpetrators are prosecuted and convicted.

We further recommend that Egypt consider withdrawing the reservations to CEDAW articles 2, 16 and 29 and ratifying OP-CEDAW.

Finally, concerns have been raised regarding the draft anti-terrorism law. Norway recommend Egypt to ensure that all anti-terrorism measures comply with international standards. We further recommend the adoption and implementation of legal safeguards to prevent any use of counter-terrorism measures to hinder open dialogue and criticism, including against the Government.