

UPR of the Gambia

10 February 2010

Statement by Norway

Norway thanks the delegation of Gambia for the presentation of the National Report.

Norway considers effective cooperation with the UN as fundamental to improving the human rights situation. We recommend that Gambia improves its cooperation with the UN Treaty Bodies by agreeing on the timelines for submitting overdue reports, and we recommend that Gambia considers the need for external assistance to that end.

Norway strongly believes that civil society organizations play an important part in fostering a culture of human rights and that their active participation is essential to a meaningful UPR process. We recommend that Gambia continues the inclusive process in the following-up of the UPR recommendations.

CEDAW has expressed concern about the persistence of strong patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes of the roles and responsibilities of women and men in society. The HR Committee has expressed concern about systemic discrimination against women. We recommend Gambia to follow up on their recommendation and introduce measures to eliminate cultural practice that discriminate against women, to enact legislation on violence, including domestic violence against women, and take measures to ensure that domestic laws and customary law, as well as certain aspects of the Sharia, are applied in ways compatible with the Covenant of civil and political rights.

We recommend decriminalising of homosexuality, and we recommend action to combat violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

We recommend the Government taking steps to enforce Gambia's Children's Act of 2005 on issues such as corporal punishment, early marriages, female genital mutilation and sexual exploitation of children, as well as the Child Trafficking Law of 2007.

Norway is concerned with the situation for human rights defenders, including journalists. We recommend taking all necessary steps to ensure their protection against violence, retaliation, adverse discrimination, or pressure as a consequence of their legitimate exercise their rights according to the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.