

UPR, Seventh Session
Madagascar, 15 February 2010
Statement by the Government of Norway

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states the fundamental principle that the authority of government shall be based on the will of the people expressed in genuine elections. We recommend that the transitional institutions foreseen in the Maputo agreement are put in place and that credible elections are held, leading to the restoration of democracy and the rule of law.

Norway is particularly concerned about the human rights impact of environmental degradation in Madagascar, including the ongoing plunder of biological treasures - recognized as World Heritage - which has escalated during the political crisis. We recommend that the principles of governance in the UDHR is applied as they are key to a sustainable management of natural resources, such as protected rainforests and essential to the realization of fundamental economic, social and cultural rights.

Norway underlines the role of civil society for any meaningful UPR process. We recommend that an effective and inclusive process to follow-up on UPR recommendations is established.

We note the focus on freedom of speech and the right to assembly in the report submitted, but we remain concerned about the increased number of politicians and journalists that are reported arrested and imprisoned. We recommend the immediate release of all political prisoners.

Media is crucial for ensuring freedom of expression. We recommend that no restrictions be put on the media, so that it may operate freely. We recommend reform of the Communications Code.

We recommend Madagascar to adopt appropriate measures to disseminate widely and ensure full observance of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. We recommend that crimes and violations against human rights defenders and journalists are effectively investigated and prosecuted, and that those responsible are brought to justice.

While noting certain progress, we remain concerned about reports of lack of judicial independence and effectiveness. We recommend that the process of judicial

and penitentiary reform be completed. We recommend that the death penalty be abolished.

We appreciate the stated determination regarding women's rights. We recommend that efforts are enhanced to improve women's rights and to combat human trafficking, sexual violence, domestic violence and exploitation of women and children. We recommend that the education reform be continued in order to ensure free primary education for all girls and boys.

We recommend that effective measures be put in place to reduce inconsistencies between laws and practice, in order to tackle gender stereotyping and traditional attitudes that conflict with human rights. We recommend that an independent national human rights institution be established in accordance with the Paris Principles.