

## **Human Rights Council 13th session**

### **Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana**

#### **Statement by Norway**

**15 March 2010**

Norway thanks the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in Myanmar for presenting his report.

The Special Rapporteur points to the continued gross and systematic violations of human rights in Myanmar. We share his concerns that fundamental rights and freedoms continue to be violated and that perpetrators are not held accountable. We call on the Government of Myanmar to take prompt and effective measures in order to investigate human rights abuses, and to remove restrictions on human rights.

The challenges are many. The Government of Myanmar has announced that elections will be held in 2010. In order for the elections to be free, fair, transparent and inclusive – it is crucial that the people of Myanmar can exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms. The elections will not meet any international standards without the freedoms of opinion and expression, and association and assembly.

We share the concern by the special rapporteur that the conditions at present do not allow for the exercise of these rights. While the election represents an opportunity for positive change, the Government of Myanmar has yet to demonstrate a genuine positive will to remove the restrictions on fundamental rights. This also concerns freedom of media. All voices should be allowed to express themselves freely, including through media and publications. Furthermore, all prisoners of conscience must be released.

Finally, the Human Rights Council has a responsibility to continue to address the human rights situation in Myanmar. We call on Government of Myanmar to cooperate fully with the Council and its mechanisms and to assume its responsibility to protect its own population against abuses and to hold perpetrators responsible.