

Human Rights Council 13th session

Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Vitit Muntarbhorn

Statement by Norway 15 March 2010

Norway commends the efforts of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights situation in the DPRK to collect information on the human rights situation from a society so isolated from the international community. We share his concerns that fundamental rights and freedoms continue to be violated, and welcome the constructive recommendations he makes for the DPRK authorities.

The people of the DPRK have serious humanitarian needs. Norway supports the international humanitarian presence in the country. It's essential to separate the humanitarian issues from political issues. Norwegian humanitarian assistance is not canalized through the government of the DPRK.

We are in particular concerned about the situation regarding food shortages and the significant reduction in the World Food Programme's capabilities mentioned in the report, and concur with the Special Rapporteur that food aid for the population is of key importance. However, we share his concern on the issues of food distribution and transparency.

We appreciate the Special Rapporteur's efforts to collect information and report on the situation for vulnerable groups such as women and children. In addition to the maltreatment of women's personal freedom, we are concerned that women and children are the main victims of malnutrition and food shortages.

Norway appreciates that the Special Rapporteur brings up the importance of a strategic framework for close cooperation between all UN agencies. This collaboration is key to ensure an optimal use of resources the international community has available to relieve the situation for the local population.

Finally, Norway acknowledges the DPRKs participation in the Universal Periodic Review process of the Human Rights Council and encourages the Government to follow up the recommendations received in cooperation with international partners.