

Human Rights Council 13th session

Statement by Norway

10 March 2010

Annual full day meeting on the right of the Child : “The fight against sexual violence against children”.

Afternoon Panel: Protecting boys and girls from sexual violence: Prevention and response

We would like to thank the members of the panel for their contributions to the discussions on prevention of and response to sexual violence against children. It is important that we acknowledge the complexity of the problem as we face the challenge of combating sexual violence and abuse. Progress in one area of concern may be dependent on moving forward on a number of fronts.

The development of adequate domestic legal framework and competence is a prerequisite in the fight against sexual violence. Partnership and co-operation between governmental bodies, private enterprises and NGOs are also important.

Norway has recently implemented a comprehensive plan of action against sexual and physical abuse against children. The plan contains measures which deal with prevention, discovery, assistance and treatment, as well as research and skills upgrading

As a measure to combat violence and abuse committed by employees in child welfare institutions, all persons working with young people are required to obtain a police certificate ensuring that those with a record of committing abuse are weeded out.

Several Child Advocacy Centres of children’s shelters have been established in Norway. These houses are designed to help and support children who have been subject to violence or sexual abuse. Children who have been subject to violence and/or abuse are received by specially trained staff. This has proved a constructive measure to support victims.

Sexual violence against children in situations of armed conflict continues to be a serious source of concern. There must be an end to the impunity for these severe crimes. As guardians of international humanitarian and human rights law it is our collective responsibility to ensure that such acts do not go unpunished.

Norway supports the UN Action against Sexual violence in Conflict, which unites 12 UN entities’ efforts to end rape in war. It is crucial that both UN organisations and donors strengthen their coordination in order to provide a stronger and more effective response.

Deployment of child protection advisers to UN peacekeeping operations, the incorporation of children and children's issues throughout peacekeeping processes and the engagement and interaction with civil society are important in this respect.

Finally, we agree that children and young people should not be seen only as victims of conflicts and emergencies; they should also be given the possibility to participate actively in the processes that concern them. We would like to ask the panellists views on what can be done in order to secure and enhance child participation in this particular context.