

Human Rights Council 13th session

Item 2 – Annual report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Statement by Norway

4 March 2010

Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Bente Angell-Hansen

Madam High Commissioner,

We thank you for your annual report and express our strong and continued appreciation for the important work you and your office are doing to promote and protect human rights. Victims of human rights abuses need a strong and independent voice to speak out on their behalf. We encourage you to continue to address situations of concern whenever and wherever they occur.

We would appreciate your significant efforts to develop an open, inclusive and transparent process on the SMP. We encourage all actors to engage in this informal dialogue in full respect of the independence of your office.

Madame High Commissioner,

We were impressed by your swift initiative to establish a joint protection team to Haiti with key partners in the UN. The most pressing issue in the relief operation is providing effective protection to vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. Protection must be mainstreamed into the design of all programs. Continued engagement by OHCHR is crucial to that end.

It is important that the Office continues its work in countries in critical phases of transition. Let me highlight the important work your office is doing in Nepal. We are impressed by the achievements so far and encourage continued co-operation between your Office and the Government of Nepal with a timeframe that ensures lasting results.

Norway welcomes your leadership in the fight against discrimination. We strongly encourage you to continue your broad and principled approach to these issues.

We are aware that the fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation is perceived as controversial. Again this is an area where you, Madam High Commissioner, show great wisdom and integrity in your approach.

On women's rights and gender equality - what do you consider to be the most important challenges in this field, and what are the most difficult obstacles for progress?

Madame High Commissioner,

The real test for the success of UPR is in the follow-up of recommendations.

Clearly, States have the prime responsibility to implement recommendations they have accepted. We agree that it is imperative that States under review involve UN entities and all other relevant stakeholders to accelerate implementation of recommendations. We would appreciate information about concrete elements in your strategy for strengthening follow up of UPR recommendations.

UPR is a unique tool to mainstream human rights in the work of the UN. How can we ensure a coherent UN engagement in the whole UPR-process, involving key UN development actors?

Madam High Commissioner,

Lastly, I would like to pose a question regarding your office's efforts in improving the regional balance in the composition of staff. How do you ensure that this balance is not reached at the expense of an equitable geographical distribution and of countries that are underrepresented or not represented at all?

I thank you again for all your efforts and dedication and look forward to continue the excellent cooperation.