



Annual Report

Human Rights 2001

Annual Report on Norway's efforts to promote human rights

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UTENRIKSDEPARTEMENTET

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs





*Minister of Foreign
Affairs
Jan Petersen*



*Minister of International
Development
Hilde Frafjord Johnson*

This Annual Report deals with Norway's efforts to promote human rights, both in Norway and internationally. Human rights apply to all individuals. Every person is of equal value and is entitled to the same protection irrespective of his or her colour, gender, political opinion, religious affiliation and national or social origin.

In December 1999, the Centre Coalition Government presented Report No. 21 (1999-2000): Focus on Human Dignity. A Plan of Action for Human Rights to the Storting (the Norwegian parliament). This Plan of Action established a number of goals for human rights efforts in the next five years, both in Norway and in the Government's activities abroad. The Plan of Action is to be precisely that, an action plan, and not merely a document that gathers dust in a desk drawer. It is a commitment. The Government takes the promotion of human rights seriously and gives high priority to these efforts.

Human rights are often regarded as something that concerns countries with different systems of government and a different level of economic development from our own. However, there is also continuous focus on strengthening human rights in Norway. If our efforts to promote human rights in the international arena are to have credibility, we must take our responsibility for ensuring respect for human rights here at home seriously.

Norway intends to contribute towards promoting respect for human rights at the international level. Observance of individuals' civil and political and economic, social and cultural rights is important in order to ensure respect for human dignity and promote peace, stability and development. Norway plays an active role in this connection, both through international forums such as the UN and bilaterally in relation to individual countries with which we cooperate.

The purpose of publishing this annual report is, firstly, to take stock of the progress that has been made in implementing the measures described in the Plan of Action - but at least as importantly, to focus on the areas in which work still remains to be done, and to serve as a source of inspiration for future efforts to promote human rights both in Norway and in the rest of the world.

Jan Petersen
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hilde Frafjord Johnson
Minister of International Development

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Introduction

Report No. 21 to the Storting (1999-2000): Focus on Human Dignity. A Plan of Action for Human Rights was presented by the Centre Coalition Government that was in power in 1999 and debated by the Storting in November 2000.

The Plan of Action covers a period of five years. The preparation of annual reports is primarily intended to provide a status report on the implementation of the Plan of Action. The Annual Report is therefore structured in the same way as the Plan of Action. This enables the reader to see how much progress has been made in the practical implementation of the Plan of Action. It also provides a broad picture of the measures and initiatives undertaken by the Government in the field of human rights in 2001.

Like the Plan of Action, the report consists of a national section and an international section.

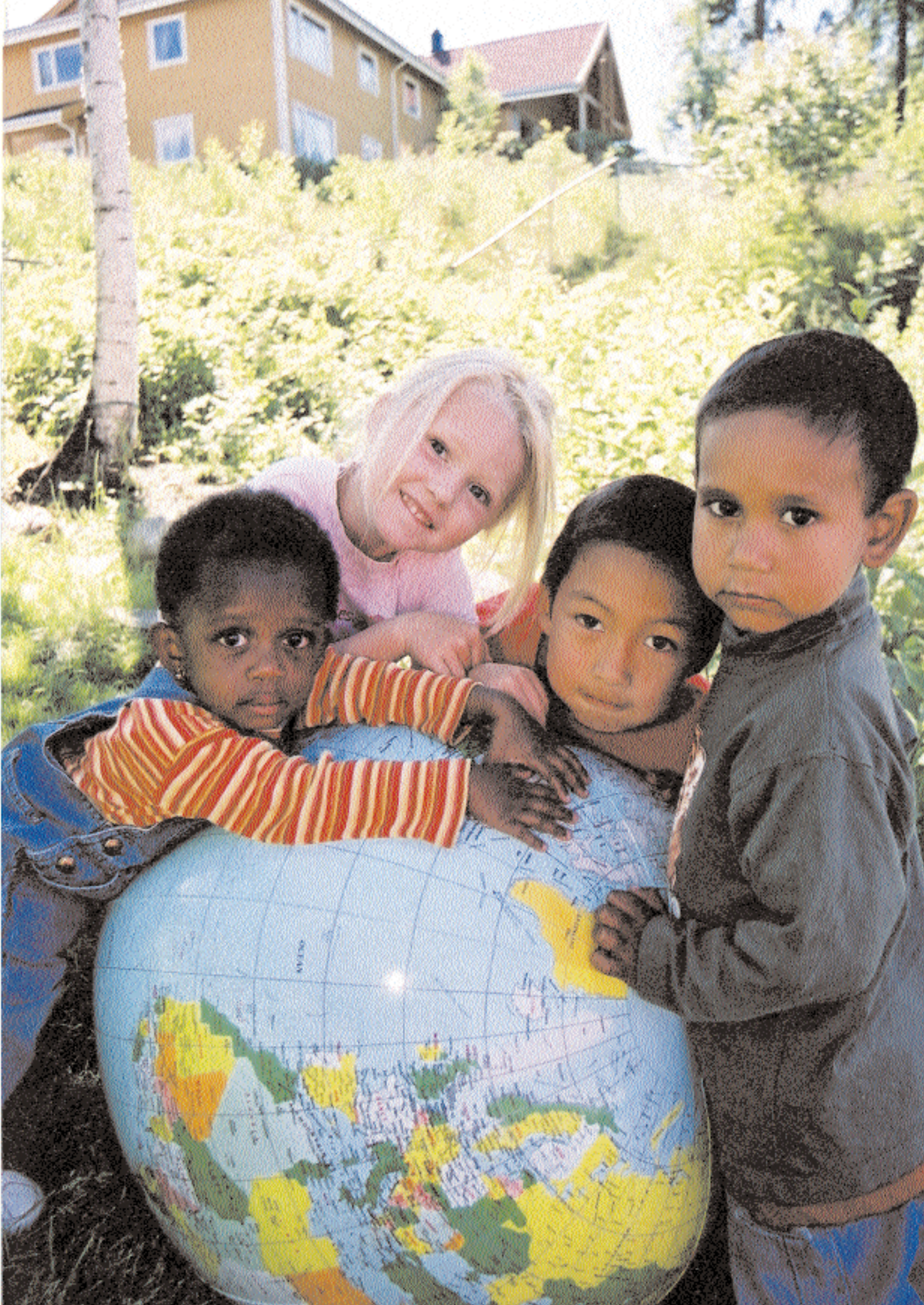
The national section is a review of the efforts of the public authorities to strengthen the protection of human rights in Norway. The information in this section was provided by the ministries responsible for implementing the various measures. The Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination and the ombudsmen who are most concerned with human rights issues have also contributed to the report.

The international section deals with Norway's efforts to promote human rights abroad. Norway contributes towards developing rules through multilateral forums, cooperates directly with other countries on a broad range of human rights issues, and provides financial assistance for projects to promote human rights. One chapter of the Annual Report is devoted to human rights and development.

An introductory chapter on the challenges that have arisen in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 has also been included.

The Annual Report focuses on measures carried out in 2001, but where it is appropriate to provide an updated picture of the current status, it also describes certain measures carried out and decisions made in the first half of 2002.

The Annual Report is intended to serve as a reference tool for everyone who is concerned with the human rights situation in Norway and internationally. The report also includes an appendix containing statistics and a list of organizations involved in efforts to promote human rights.



Summary

The promotion of human rights is one of the main objectives of the current government's political programme and value base.

Implementation of the Plan of Action for Human Rights is a key element in this connection, and in the document defining its political platform, the Sem Declaration of 8 October 2001, the Government explicitly declared its intention to follow up the Plan of Action for Human Rights.

The Plan of Action provides a coherent, systematic presentation of Norwegian human rights policy, and proposes the implementation of more than 300 projects and initiatives in Norway and abroad over a five-year period.

Implementation of the Plan of Action will be based on the principle that each cabinet minister is responsible for carrying out individual measures within his or her field. To strengthen the implementation process, the Government, shortly after taking office, established a system of human rights liaisons to be responsible for human rights issues in each ministry. These persons are part of a newly established, inter-ministerial coordination group headed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This group of senior civil servants has initiated a systematic review of the implementation of the measures in the Plan of Action. Each ministry reports to the group on the progress made in carrying out the measures in its sphere of responsibility. The Minister of International Development has been assigned particular responsibility for coordinating this work in the Government.

The Plan of Action is a follow-up of the recommendation of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. However, relatively few countries have elaborated a plan of this nature. The Plan of Action adopts a holistic approach, comprising both national and international measures to promote human rights. It addresses the entire range of human rights: political and civil, and economic, social and cultural. The Plan of Action has been received with great interest and positive responses internationally, and has been translated into English.

a) Implementation of the Plan of Action at the national level

Through the Human Rights Act of May 1999, the three main human rights conventions were incorporated into Norwegian law: the European Convention on Human Rights, the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN International Covenant on Social, Cultural and Economic Rights. In the Recommendation of the Storting's Standing Committee on Justice in this connection, the Stor-

ting requested the Government to continue its efforts to incorporate human rights conventions into Norwegian law, beginning with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Preparations for the incorporation into Norwegian law of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child were underway throughout 2001, and a proposition is expected to be presented to the Storting in the course of the 2002 spring session.

In 2000, Norway was one of the first countries to sign two Optional Protocols to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, one on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the other on the participation in armed conflict of children under 18 years of age. The former was ratified in October 2001, and thus became legally binding for Norway. The protocol on children in armed conflict has not yet been ratified since certain amendments will first have to be made to Norwegian statutes.

In November 2001, the Government also presented a proposition to the Storting on consent to the ratification of an Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The protocol was ratified by Norway on 15 March 2002.

In May 2001 Norway also signed the revised European Social Charter, at the same time ratifying several specified provisions in the Charter. The Charter covers a number of social rights relating to employment, health care, social welfare and family affairs.

The Plan of Action includes a special emphasis on information on and education and training in human rights, and proposes the establishment of a national human rights institution. The Norwegian Institute for Human Rights was accorded such status during the Storting's budget debate in autumn 2000, and has now been guaranteed basic financing from the budget of the Ministry of Education and Research.

The Holocaust Centre Foundation was established by the University of Oslo in April 2001. It has been decided that the centre is to be located in Villa Grande (Vidkun Quisling's home during World War II) in Oslo, and the aim is to open the centre in the course of 2003. In the debate on the government budget for 2002, it was also decided to allocate over NOK 2 million to the Falstad Centre in Nord-Trøndelag,



The Holocaust Centre Foundation was established by the University of Oslo in April 2001. The centre is to be located in Villa Grande in Oslo, and is scheduled to open in the course of 2003.

Photo: Ashild Barkved Støylen

law. The committee is to submit its recommendation on 14 June 2002.

In accordance with the Plan of Action for Human Rights, work has been in progress since 2001 on establishing a centre of expertise on the rights of indigenous peoples. The centre will be located in Kautokeino, and will become operational in the course of 2002. The purpose of the centre is to increase knowledge and understanding of the rights of the Sami and indigenous peoples.

A Report to the Storting on national minorities in Norway was debated by the Storting in 2001. The report is the first holistic review of the principles that form the basis for government policy in respect of Jews, Kvens (people of Finnish descent living in Northern Norway), the Roma (Gypsies), the Romani people (Travellers) and Skogfinns (people of Finnish descent living in Southern Norway), and critically examines the Norwegianization policy formerly pursued by the authorities in respect of these groups. In connection with Norway's ratification in 1999 of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, it was determined that these groups satisfy the criteria for designation as national minorities in Norway. As a follow-up to the Report to the Storting, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development began preparations in 2001 for drawing up a plan, identifying measures and setting a time frame for implementing them.

The current Immigration Act was passed in 1988 and does not fully reflect the complex challenges that society faces today in this field, such as the need for efficient administrative procedures. Consequently, the Government appointed a legislative committee in December 2001 which is charged with presenting a recommendation for a new statute by the end of 2003.

On the basis of an official report, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development has prepared new legislation on an introduction scheme for newly arrived immigrants. The report proposes to enact a scheme for newly arrived immigrants that combines a programme to help them obtain the necessary educational and professional qualifications with an introductory benefit. The purpose is to shift the focus of a guaranteed income from passive social benefits to active qualification measures. A draft Bill is due to be presented to the Storting in the 2002 spring session.

The UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights establishes that every person has the right to a satisfactory standard of living and social security. Consequently, the Government has designated poverty reduction

which is a centre for education in and documentation on the history of prisoners of war, international humanitarian law and human rights.

Efforts to combat racism and discrimination have high priority, and in 2001 the Government started preparing a new plan of action targeting this field. The plan is expected to be presented in July 2002.

Work is continuing on drafting new legislation for housing cooperatives to prevent racism and discrimination, and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development aims to have formulated new draft legislation on housing/house-building cooperatives by summer 2002.

The Government is also preparing a separate Act prohibiting ethnic discrimination, and has appointed a legislative committee in this connection. The committee is also examining how to incorporate the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination into Norwegian

The Plan of Action to Combat Female Genital Mutilation was presented in December 2000 and covers a period of three years. It is now available in Norwegian, English, French and Somali.

■ Illustration: SYDVEST



as one of its main priorities, and will present an action plan in this connection.

Measures to strengthen legal safeguards in the social and health care sectors also have high priority, including the elaboration of new rules for the use of coercion in respect of persons suffering from dementia.

A strategic committee to promote the rights of and full participation and equality for persons with disabilities presented its report in autumn 2001. The committee proposed a number of initiatives to eliminate the institutional and structural barriers that persons with disabilities encounter in Norwegian society.

The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs is responsible for coordinating efforts to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Norway, and after a comprehensive consultative process the Ministry intends to present a draft Bill on incorporation of the convention into Norwegian law in spring 2002.

The Act of 19 January 2001 raised the age limit for military service. This Act, coupled with an amendment to section 104 of the General Civil Penal Code, will ensure that Norway complies with the requirements of the Optional Protocol of 25 May 2000 to the Convention on the Rights of the Child relating to children in armed conflict, thereby enabling Norway to ratify the protocol.

In 2001 the ministries concerned continued work on implementing the Norwegian follow-up plan to combat the sexual

exploitation of children. Measures to increase knowledge of child and youth prostitution in Norway and of trafficking in children were given special priority in 2001. The Norwegian Board of Health prepared a new general guidance document for work in connection with child sexual abuse which it aims to publish in the first half of 2002.

Work is in progress in the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs on evaluating how the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women can best be incorporated into Norwegian law, and in 2001 the ministries concerned commented on this issue, as well as on whether the convention can be given greater visibility in current legislation.

The Plan of Action to Combat Female Genital Mutilation was presented in December 2000 and covers a period of three years. It is now available in Norwegian, English, French and Somali. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs has coordinated an inter-ministerial steering group that is responsible for implementing the plan. The Act prohibiting female genital mutilation in Norway has been translated into seven languages and distributed in the form of a brochure.

Work is also ongoing on implementation of the Plan of Action to Prevent Violence and Abuse that particularly Target Women (2000-2002). A Forum for Violence Against Women was established and is headed by the Ministry of Justice, and a special committee on violence against women was also appointed. This committee focuses primarily on women who are victims of violence and threats, and on the situation of children who grow up in violent families.

The Government has begun work on a report to the Storting on family affairs in which the proposals of the Committee on Cohabitants appointed in 1999 will be considered. Among other things, the Committee has proposed an amendment to the Children Act that will give cohabiting parents joint parental responsibility based on a declaration that the child is their common child and that they will care for him or her jointly. Under the current Act, only spouses automatically have joint parental responsibility for children that they have had together. Moreover, only the man to whom the mother is married at the time of the child's birth is automatically regarded as the child's father.

The Government's plan of action to prevent forced marriages expired on 31 December 2001, and work has been in progress with a view to presenting a proposal for further efforts in March 2002. The Oslo Red Cross International Centre has operated a telephone hotline since 2000 aimed at preventing forced marriages.

A new Act on Mental Health Care came into force on 1 January 2001. The aim of the Act is to achieve clearer regulation of the use of coercion in mental health care, thereby strengthening patients' legal safeguards. A project run by the Norwegian Medical Association to evaluate changes in work routines with a view to reducing the use of coercion has received funding from the budget of the Ministry of Health.

Report No. 25 (2000-2001) to the Storting on living conditions and quality of life for lesbians and homosexuals in Norway was presented to and debated by the Storting in spring 2001. The report proposes amending the General Civil Penal Code to the effect that if a crime of violence or gross vandalism was motivated by the sexual orientation of the person against whom the criminal act was directed, this may, as in the case of racially motivated crimes of violence, be an aggravating circumstance in relation to the assessment of sentence. A suicide prevention project targets groups that are particularly at risk, including lesbians and homosexuals. A group comprising representatives from relevant ministries was established to jointly implement the proposals in Report No. 25 (2000-2001) to the Storting.

In 1999 the Governmental Commission on Freedom of Expression presented a proposal for new wording for Article 100 of the Constitution of Norway relating to freedom of expression. Based on the Commission's report and the Government's follow-up of the report through Report No. 42 (1999-2000) to the Storting, the Ministry of Justice is preparing a new Report to the Storting which is due to be presented in the 2003 spring session. The report will contain

a closer analysis and evaluation of the issues raised by the Governmental Commission on Freedom of Expression.

The Storting has decided that adults who require primary and lower secondary education are to have an individual right to such education. This right will come into force as from the 2002-2003 school year.

Since August 2000 adults have also had a statutory right to upper secondary education. The amendment to the Regulations pursuant to the Education Act applies as from February 2001.

The Ministry of Health has worked on an evaluation of the Act on the Medical Use of Biotechnology, and a report to the Storting is due to be presented in March 2002. In order to enable children who have been conceived by artificial insemination using donated sperm to obtain information about their biological father, the report will propose the abolition of the current system of anonymity for sperm donors.

The Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights visited Norway in 2001, after which he submitted a report on the human rights situation in Norway. The report concluded that human rights in Norway are generally well protected. Nevertheless, there are areas in which observance of the rights of certain groups should be improved, particularly remand prisoners, juvenile criminals and foreigners, especially asylum-seekers.

In 2001 the European Court of Human Rights pronounced judgment in only one case against Norway, and the judgment was in Norway's favour.

b) Implementation of the Plan of Action at the international level

Human rights are an increasingly important focus of Norway's involvement in the international arena. International efforts take place at many levels, and in 2001 Norway was active in many areas within the framework of the various UN bodies and assemblies, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The UN Commission on Human Rights, which plays a central role in the UN's efforts to promote human rights, held its 57th session in 2001. The session was the last in Norway's current term as permanent member, during which Norway was able to play a relatively high profile role in the Commission.

However, the Commission's session was fraught with strong political differences, and the "North-South" politicization was very apparent. Many resolutions that were previously adopted by consensus were the object of lengthy debates on wordings and procedures that did not necessarily culminate in any major amendments to formerly accepted texts.

Norway is particularly satisfied with the resolution relating to human rights defenders, which was tabled by Norway and adopted by consensus. Norway thereby realized its goal of consolidating the mandate and activities of the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Human Rights Defenders. Furthermore, an addendum was added urging States Parties to initiate effective measures to protect human rights defenders.

The main Norwegian intervention at the session was held by Minister of Foreign Affairs Thorbjørn Jagland.

The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance was held in August-September 2001. The world conference was a unique opportunity for the countries of the world to join forces in the fight against racism and racial discrimination. For a long time, due to the text of the conference documents on the Middle East conflict and compensation for the slave trade and the colonial era, it looked as though the conference was going to be a failure. In the end, however, agreement was reached on a final document (declaration and plan of action).

Norway was represented by a broad-based delegation, and the main Norwegian intervention was held by Minister of International Development Anne Kristin Sydnes.

In 2001 Norway contributed NOK 25 million to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Norway has actively promoted the establishment of the UN's Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues. The forum has now been established and will hold its first session in May 2002. The former President of the Sami Parliament, Ole Henrik Magga, has been elected the forum's first chairman.

Priority was also given in 2001 to promoting human rights within the framework of the OSCE, where Norway focused particularly on trafficking in persons and gender equality and provided support for specific projects in these fields.

The Government continued to conduct human rights dialogues throughout 2001 with particular emphasis on dialogue with China. In the Plan of Action, the dialogues are described as cooperation on human rights with countries

where human rights problems exist, but where there is potential for improvement through dialogue and contact.

Efforts to create increased awareness of the social responsibility of business and industry (KOMpakt) also continued.

The provision of support for the scheme to provide refuge for writers who are victims of persecution was one of several important measures at the international level. In November 2001, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs entered into an agreement with Norwegian PEN on the administration of a grant scheme for persecuted writers. In 2001 three foreign writers had been granted refuge in Norway under the scheme, in Stavanger, Kristiansand and Oslo.

In accordance with the Plan of Action, Norway's efforts to promote human rights at the international level focused on certain vulnerable groups such as children, internally displaced persons, women, homosexuals and lesbians, human rights defenders, minorities and indigenous peoples, and on specific topics such as capital punishment, torture, fundamental standards of humanity, discrimination, racism, freedom of religion and belief, the right to development, the right to education, the rule of law, freedom of expression and labour standards.

The development of democracy is also a priority task, and to this end the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has worked closely with the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights (NORDEM). In 2001, NORDEM's functions comprised election monitoring, the provision of election personnel and training programmes for election personnel in Montenegro, Ethiopia, Moldova, Peru, Uganda, Croatia, Kosovo, Bangladesh, Belarus, Zambia and Slovakia. Personnel were also deployed for various OSCE operations.

In 2001, Norway provided a total of NOK 1.9 billion from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for activities related to the promotion of human rights. These funds were distributed multilaterally, through Norwegian and foreign NGOs and through research bodies and institutions, cf. the statistics section.

Challenges in the aftermath of 11 September 2001

The situation after 11 September has placed human rights on the agenda, both nationally and internationally, with renewed urgency.

Certain countries cite the need for tighter security and the

The clean-up operation after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001. The situation since 11 September has placed human rights on the national and international agenda with renewed urgency.

Photo: Charles Olsen/The Salvation Army International News



fight against terrorism as grounds for violating the human rights of groups such as minorities, religious groups and political dissidents. In Norway's view, the promotion of greater respect for human rights is an important part of efforts to achieve greater security for all and a vital cornerstone of efforts to combat terrorism. Both in bilateral talks and in multilateral forums, Norway therefore underscores the importance of the fight against terrorism being waged in full accordance with human rights and international humanitarian law.

To some degree, moreover, there has been a tendency towards less overt international criticism of states that commit human rights violations. Norway does not wish to make any compromises as regards human rights and will therefore not change the proactive role it plays in strengthening the protection of human rights.

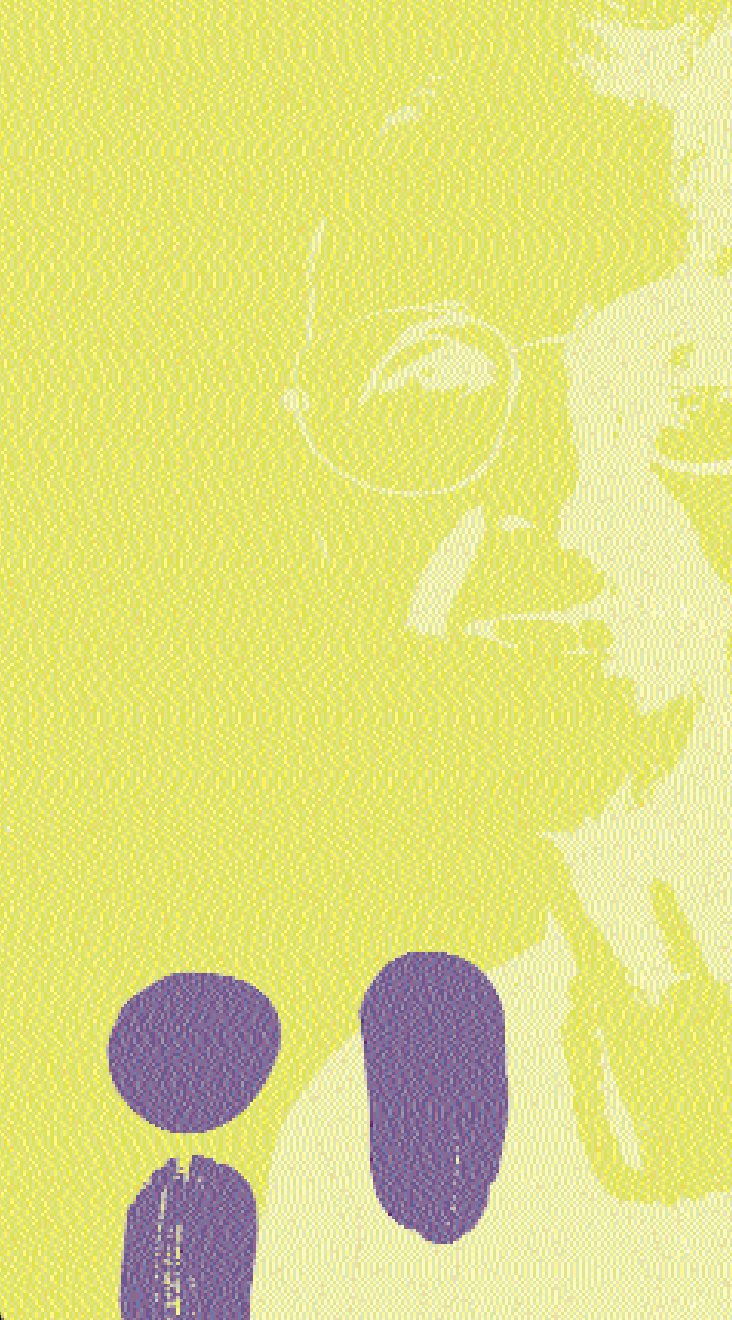
The situation for human rights defenders has become more acute and has deteriorated in several countries. The UN's Special Representative for Human Rights Defenders is one of the persons reporting on such trends. She has expressed concern about changes in the operating parameters of human rights defenders in the wake of 11 September. Human rights defenders play a vital role in international and

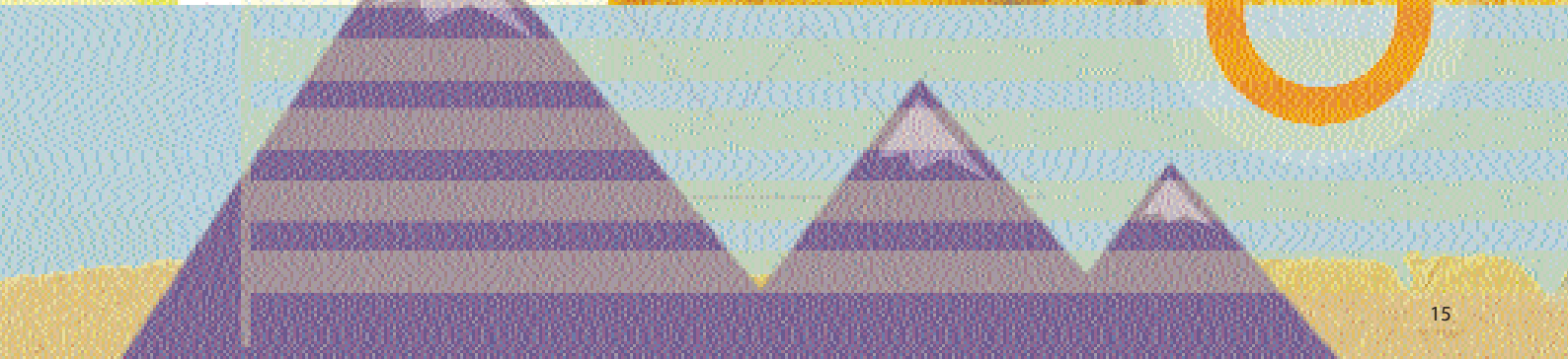
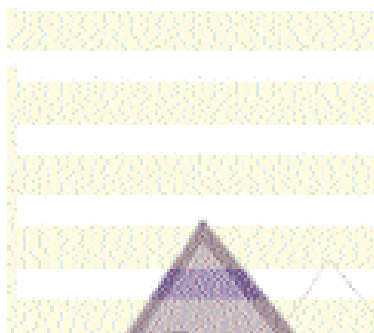
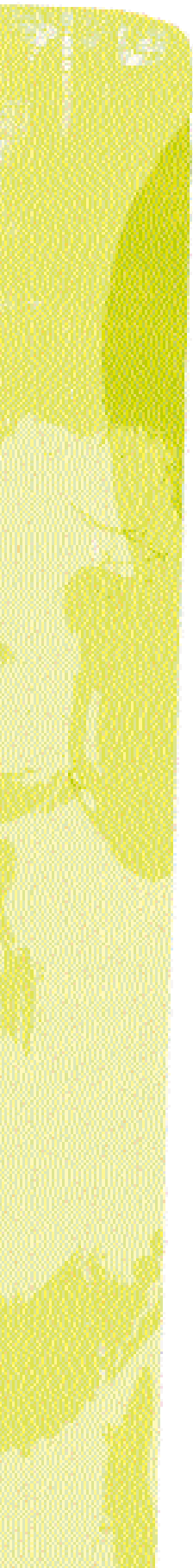
national efforts to promote human rights. It is therefore essential to ensure that this non-violent activity can continue. Their role is pivotal, not only in drawing attention to actual and possible human rights violations, but also in fostering increased tolerance and understanding between population groups and between the authorities and the population at large. Norway has played a key role in international efforts to strengthen the protection of human rights defenders and their organizations for many years. In view of the current situation, this work must continue with undiminished vigour.

The increased focus on the risk of terrorism has also contributed to some degree towards reinforcing fronts between different population groups. In some cases, it has led to growing racism, discrimination and intolerance on grounds of religion and ethnic or national origin. Particularly vulnerable groups such as refugees, asylum seekers and minorities have increasingly become the targets of such injustices. The Norwegian Government has, on a number of occasions, emphasized that efforts to combat racism, discrimination and intolerance must be prioritized and that efforts to combat terrorism must be carried out with full respect for human rights.



Human Rights in Norway





Reports from Ombudsmen and the Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination

The Parliamentary Ombudsman

The Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Storting's Ombudsman for Public Administration, considers it an important task to promote the implementation of human rights, both in Norwegian administrative practice and internationally. The Storting's Standing Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs has commended the Parliamentary Ombudsman's information activities at home and abroad, which help to increase awareness of the important role played by the Ombudsman, both in Norway and in other countries.

Through his work on individual cases in which human rights issues are raised, the Parliamentary Ombudsman helps to spread knowledge and understanding of the importance of Norway's international human rights commitments. He also emphasizes the promotion of human rights during visits and meetings at home and abroad.

In 2001 the Parliamentary Ombudsman met with the Norwegian section of Amnesty International and received a visit from the Institute for Human Rights. In September, members of the Ombudsman's staff were present during interviews with asylum-seekers at the Directorate of Immigration.

The Ombudsman also participated in several seminars arranged by the Council of the Baltic Sea States, including a seminar in Copenhagen on trafficking in persons.

In April the Parliamentary Ombudsman had talks with the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights. A Chinese guest researcher at the Institute for Human Rights also visited the Ombudsman, as well as a Serb professor working on human rights issues. The Human Rights Association of Honduras also paid a visit.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman also considers it important to provide information to countries wishing to develop their protection of human rights. There is great interest in the institution of the Parliamentary Ombudsman abroad, and in the course of the year the Ombudsman receives many delegations and representatives from various countries and informs them about democracy and human rights. He also gives lectures and participates in meetings and conferences abroad, thereby helping to disseminate knowledge of a democratic institution that can make an important contribution towards promoting human rights in many countries.

In the past year, the Parliamentary Ombudsman received visits from parliamentarians from a number of countries, including Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Rwanda, Croatia and Mongolia.

These visits provide an opportunity to exchange experience and information on efforts to develop the protection of human rights.

The Ombudsman for Children

Under the Act relating to the Ombudsman for Children, the Ombudsman is responsible for ensuring that Norwegian law and administrative practice correspond with Norway's obligations pursuant to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This is the first direct reference to the CRC in Norwegian legislation, and it has given the Ombudsman's function of monitoring the legal position of children a new dimension. The Ombudsman for Children seeks to ensure that children's interests are safeguarded in all decision-making processes that concern individual children and, more generally, to improve conditions for children and young people between 0 and 18 years of age.

A status report for 2001 will shortly be submitted to the Storting. An important focus for the Ombudsman for Children in 2001 were the disparities that exist between children growing up in Norway. The Ombudsman particularly focused on the fact that the conditions in which children and young people grow up vary depending on the municipality in which they live. In this connection, the Ombudsman has launched the idea of a municipal childhood environment statute, designed to provide binding principles to ensure the overall protection of the childhood environment of all children. Holistic legislation of this nature will make it possible to establish minimum statutory requirements in all fundamental spheres of life. The Ombudsman will follow up this initiative in 2002.

The Ombudsman for Children considers children to be important players in society and strives to ensure that the participation of children and young people in society is regarded as a matter of course and a natural element of a democracy. In 2001 the Ombudsman promoted various projects that reflected the demand for the increased social participation of children and young people.

The Ombudsman for Children has long wished to find a good method of compiling the opinions of children and young people and ensuring that they have a voice in matters that concern them. The Education Act provides that children and young people must have an opportunity to state their opinion concerning issues that interest them. Through the Ombudsman's Internet Parliament, children and young people can tell the Ombudsman what they think about matters that concern them, either in connection with school

Pupils' participation in deciding what goes on at school is an area of focus for the Ombudsman for Children.

Photo: Jon Eeg/ Norwegian Red Cross



or in society in general. The Internet Parliament is based on pupils' councils and can thus become a democratic platform where all children and young people in Norway can be heard.

The Ombudsman for Children intends the Internet Parliament to strengthen the rights of children and ensure that children and young people are taken seriously. The project initially comprises fifth and ninth grade classes at 18 pilot schools, where pupils are to vote on a new issue each month.

Pupils' possibility of participating in deciding what goes on at school was another area of focus for the Ombudsman for Children. In addition to the Handbook for Pupils' Councils, which will be published in 2002, the Ombudsman wished to strengthen pupil democracy and provide support for pupils' councils in primary and lower secondary schools that have good ideas for projects to increase pupil participation.

Issues relating to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in Norwegian law have been a key focus of the Ombudsman's work in 2001. In the Ombudsman's view, incorporating the convention will create an irreversible, strong legal basis for revising all the rules that concern minors. Incorporating the CRC will provide a solid, stable framework for children's interests, thereby ensuring stronger emphasis on the interests of children in all relevant spheres of life.

The Gender Equality Ombud

The Gender Equality Ombud enforces the Gender Equality Act, which prohibits differential treatment on the basis of gender. For instance, it is not permitted to differentiate between men and women when hiring, laying off, dismissing or promoting employees. However, the Act permits the differential treatment of women and men if this promotes gender equality. The Gender Equality Act requires equal pay for women and men who perform work of equal value and equal rights to education for women and men, and that the membership of public committees, boards and councils must consist of at least 40 per cent men and 40 per cent women. Enforcement

of the Act entails dealing with individual cases and providing guidance and information on the provisions of the Act. The Gender Equality Ombud received 337 complaints in 2001, an increase of 26 per cent compared with the previous year. The Act applies to all areas of society, but most of the complaints concern matters relating to employment.

The Gender Equality Ombud believes that much still remains to be done in the field of gender equality in Norway:

- There are still differences in pay even when women and men do the same job and have the same qualifications.
- Almost half of the labour force today are women, but the percentage of women in management positions is still low. There is a particularly large deficit of women in the management and on the boards of directors of the largest private companies.
- More than 50% of university and college students are women, but girls and boys still make very traditional choices with regard to occupations.
- Careers and family life are closely interrelated. It is important to encourage a more equal distribution of care functions between men and women than is the case at present.
- There is a need to strengthen efforts to promote gender equality that target minority women in Norway.

The annual meeting of Nordic ombudsmen was held in Greenland in April 2001. These meetings are important venues for exchanges of experience and views between

countries with relatively similar problems and cultures. Furthermore, they offer an opportunity for the Norwegian ombudsman to meet agencies in neighbouring countries that can provide useful information on the development of rights in the EU.

The Gender Equality Ombud is represented on the EU's Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, and is Vice Chairman of a working group that is preparing a draft of a new directive on equal treatment for men and women.

In 2001, Gender Equality Ombud Kristin Mile was a member of the Norwegian delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women, where the agenda featured such topics as women and HIV-AIDS and women and racism. The Ombud received visits from a number of international delegations in 2001 from countries such as South Korea, Rwanda, Japan, China and Lithuania.

International cooperation is important in order to be able to develop the right to gender equality in accordance with Norway's international commitments. The Gender Equality Ombud is also aware of the important role played by international activities in promoting the right to gender equality in a global perspective.

The Ombudsman for the Armed Forces and the Ombudsman for the Civilian National Service

The Storting's establishment of the Committee of the Ombudsman for the Armed Forces in 1952 and the Committee of the Ombudsman for the Civilian National Service in 1957 was in itself an important step towards safeguarding the rights of individuals in relation to the defence authorities and the Ministry of Justice, which is the administrative authority for conscientious objectors (persons performing civilian national service). According to their instructions, these ombudsmen systems are to protect the rights of military personnel and civilian national service personnel, respectively.

Since soldiers and civilian service personnel are supposed to have equal rights while performing their compulsory service, the policy of the Storting has always been to have the same persons on both committees.

The Storting, government ministers and the Chief of Defence may submit cases concerning personnel performing compulsory military service and employees of the Defence Forces to the committees for advisory comment.

The ombudsmen systems are to protect the rights of military personnel and civilian national service personnel, respectively. Each year, the Ombudsman reports on approximately 110-150 complaints from individuals in the Defence Forces or the civilian national service.

Photo: Scanpix



The role of the committees as protector of the rights of service personnel is laid down in the instructions mandating them to deal with cases of general interest. Besides issuing comments, the committees take up matters on their own initiative when this is deemed to be necessary. The Ombudsman must also deal with complaints from individuals who consider that they have been unlawfully or unreasonably treated by their respective administrative authorities. Over the years, a number of cases concerning the protection and broadening of the rights of individuals have been raised and resolved.

With regard to activities in 2001, particular mention may be made of the fact that the Ombudsman for the Armed Forces raised the question of physical abuse against Norwegian soldiers who were taken prisoner during the Joint Winter 2001 military exercise. The North Norway Regional Command (NNRC) deplored the fact that personnel who participated in exercises and were taken prisoner were subjected to the type of treatment now known to have occurred. The NNRC regretted the incidents and will place great emphasis on providing thorough briefings on these issues prior to exercises.

The Ombudsman has observed to the NNRC that he has noted that those responsible for the breaches of regulations will be dealt with in accordance with the recommendations of the Judge Advocate. The Ombudsman also wished to comment on the late reporting of cases in which prisoners are assumed to have been subjected to unlawful treatment, and on the fact that the investigation revealed certain deficiencies as regards knowledge of the current rules. In the opinion of the Committee of the Ombudsman, moreover, if the final investigation and inquiries were to confirm the need for stricter rules, it necessarily followed that such rules would be introduced.

Each year, the Ombudsman reports on approximately 110-150 complaints from individuals in the Defence Forces or the civilian national service. Between 30 and 40 per cent of these complaints culminate in a decision in the complainant's favour.

The Committee of the Ombudsman has also carried out surveys of the Defence Forces' treatment of soldiers and other personnel belonging to minority religions. The field chaplains are the Defence Forces' advisers in cases concerning the right to free exercise of religion. The Committee has ascertained that no cases of violation of a person's freedom of religion by military authorities have been found.

Based on their insight into the situation as regards the rights of Defence Forces personnel, the Committee and the Ombudsman also play an active monitoring role to ensure a corresponding positive trend as regards the rights of civilian national service personnel.

The Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination

The Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination was established by Royal Decree on 11 September 1998. The main purpose of the Centre is to ensure that individuals are protected against ethnic discrimination. The Centre has three different functions:

- providing legal aid for people who believe themselves to be the victims of ethnic discrimination,
- documenting the nature and scope of ethnic discrimination in Norway, and
- presenting proposals for measures to prevent discrimination in society.

In the Centre's mandate, ethnic discrimination is defined as negative discriminatory treatment on grounds of religion, race, skin colour or national or ethnic origin. The work of the Centre is based on the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination seeks to strengthen the protection of individuals against violations of their human rights by providing legal aid. In 2001, the Centre dealt with 253 individual complaints, bringing the total number to 679 complaints since its inception. Through its legal aid services, the Centre obtains first-hand information on the way discrimination manifests itself in various areas. Discrimination on the labour market is the area about which the Centre has received the most complaints each year. These cases included harassment at the workplace and

discrimination relating to recruitment, promotion or dismissal. Another large category of complaints received by the Centre concerns relations between the police and ethnic minorities. Some of these cases concerned the unnecessary use of force, racist language and immigrants being regarded as less trustworthy than ethnic Norwegians. The Centre also received complaints about discrimination by the social services and national insurance authorities, on the housing market, in schools and in relation to the administration of the Immigration Act.

Ethnic discrimination takes place in Norway today and can affect persons directly or have an indirect impact by a group of persons being excluded through the application of apparently neutral rules. Several of the Centre's cases show that discrimination is difficult to concretize, render visible and prove. Indicators of ethnic discrimination are the rendering invisible or ridiculing of groups of persons, withholding of information, harassment and generalization.

2001 was the organization's third year of operation. In addition to providing legal aid, the Centre has focused attention on discrimination in society in general, in the legal system, and by public service offices, employers, the police and the prosecuting authorities, and has attempted to map the scope and nature of discrimination in these sectors. The Centre has challenged all Norwegian political parties to conduct an election campaign that is free of racism. It has also produced an overview of measures currently being implemented in 16 municipalities to combat racism and discrimination.

Considerable attention was focused on the topic of Racism and Discrimination in 2001. Several public agencies, schools, workplaces and police districts initiated a process to implement measures to prevent and combat discrimination. The trend in 2001 was positive. To combat discrimination effectively, long-term efforts to find solutions and promote cooperation in this area are required.

Norway has no general statute that provides protection against ethnic discrimination. In June 2002 a committee that is currently drafting an Act against ethnic discrimination will submit its recommendation. Knowledge of the extent of discrimination in Norway is fragmentary and inadequate. The Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination urges the public authorities to strengthen their efforts to develop barometers for various spheres of society such as the employment sector, the education sector, the housing sector and political participation. Documentation of discrimination is a prerequisite for the success of efforts to promote ethnic equality and equal treatment.



Measures under the Plan of Action

Norway's ratification of human rights conventions

In May 2001, Norway signed the Revised European Social Charter, at the same time ratifying a number of specific articles in the Charter. Like the original European Social Charter of 1961, the Revised Charter lays down standards for various social rights for citizens in fields such as employment, health care, social welfare and family affairs.

In October 2001 Norway ratified an Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) regarding the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The CRC contains several articles aimed at protecting children against exploitation. The Optional Protocol supplements the CRC, and requires States Parties to adopt legislation that makes a number of acts related to the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography a criminal offence. The Protocol defines the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and emphasizes the need for international cooperation, for instance in the form of mutual legal assistance. Pursuant to the Protocol, States Parties are required to report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on their progress in implementing their commitments pursuant to the Protocol.

In June 2000, Norway also signed another Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child regarding children in armed conflict. However, Norway's ratification of this Protocol, which raises the age limit for the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, requires legislative amendments. In connection with the incorporation of the CRC into Norwegian law, a proposal for the amendment of the General Civil Penal Code was circulated for consultative comment in 2001.

In November 2001 the Government presented a Proposition to the Storting on consent to ratification of an Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Protocol establishes an individual communications procedure for complaints to the CEDAW Committee concerning alleged violations of CEDAW, and gives the Committee power to undertake certain investigations to ascertain whether serious or systematic violations of the convention are taking place in a state.

Revision of important legislation in the justice sector

In accordance with a proposal by the Ministry of Justice, a

new Act relating to Execution of Sentence (Act No. 21 of 18 May 2001) was adopted and will enter into force in spring 2002. Particular importance has been attached to human rights and children's right to access to their parents, even if the latter are in prison. It has also been important to find prison procedures to prevent the adverse effects of solitary confinement.

Proposals for new rules in the field of civil procedure will be presented in connection with the follow-up of the report from the Civil Procedure Act Committee. The report was submitted to the Ministry of Justice in December 2001, and was circulated for consultative comment in February 2002.

The Plan of Action also includes a review of the Criminal Procedure Act to assess the need for amendments in the light of Norway's human rights obligations. So far, no plan has been drawn up to implement this measure.

Evaluation of current regulations relating to the defence forces

A Working Group on Human Rights in the Defence Forces, appointed in 1999 and consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Defence, Headquarters Defence Command Norway and the Director General of Military Prosecutions, has considered certain issues relating to regulations in the defence sector. Partly as a consequence of this process, certain amendments to the Regulations on Authority relating to Military Discipline are currently being finalized.

At the request of the Norwegian servicemen's union and the Ombudsman for the Armed Forces, the working group has also decided to examine certain other issues more closely. This includes an assessment of the authority to conduct a military search of the personal belongings of soldiers performing compulsory military service and of the legality of the use of detention as a means of reprimand in relation to the European Convention on Human Rights.

Strengthening the Defence Forces' knowledge of human rights

Work also began in 2001 on an assessment of ways of increasing knowledge of human rights in the Defence Forces, which rights training should focus on and which groups of personnel should be given training in human rights. It was also decided that this measure should be seen in conjunction with a scheduled review of the training provided on humanitarian law.

The Ministry of Justice has initiated a review of the lay judge system, including an assessment of the use of persons with different ethnic backgrounds as lay judges.

Photo: SYDVEST



Age limit for soldiers

In preparation for Norway's ratification of an Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on children in armed conflict (which was signed in May 2000), certain amendments to the Home Guard Act and the Compulsory Military Service Act were adopted in 2000. These amendments raise the age limit for military service, thereby ensuring that persons under 18 years of age cannot participate in an armed conflict. Work on making the necessary amendments to regulations so as to be able to implement the legislative amendments began in 2001 and is expected to be completed shortly.

Human rights liaisons

The system of having a human rights liaison in each ministry was re-established in autumn 2001. These liaisons are responsible for providing information on and coordinating the human rights activities of their ministries, and they participate in an inter-ministerial coordination group headed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This coordination group has been established because the Minister of International Development has been given particular responsibility for

coordinating national human rights efforts in the Coalition Government.

Right to re-open a case after it has been tried by a treaty body

By the Act of 15 June 2001, the Storting resolved that statements by the UN Human Rights Committee may also constitute grounds for re-opening a case. Existing legislation already provided that judgments pronounced by the European Court of Human Rights could give grounds for re-opening a case. It was further established that a demand to re-open a case may also be made if the proceedings have been in contravention of a treaty. These amendments will come into force in 2003.

Procedures for dealing with requests to re-open a criminal case

By the Act of 15 June 2001 the Storting resolved to establish a special commission to deal with petitions for the re-opening of criminal cases. The commission itself is to be respon-

sible for examining the factual and legal aspects of a case before it decides whether to allow the case to be re-opened. If the commission decides that the case is to be re-opened, the case must be tried by a court other than the one that pronounced the contested judgment.

The need for legal aid

The international human rights conventions do not impose an explicit obligation on States Parties to provide free legal aid in civil cases, but under certain specific conditions states will be obligated to ensure that a person who does not have sufficient funds of his own to institute legal proceedings receives free legal aid.

In 2001 the income ceilings prescribed in the Legal Aid Act were raised, with the result that close to 40 per cent of the population are now covered by the scheme. Ministries also initiated information campaigns to generate greater awareness of the legal aid scheme among the general public.

In connection with the follow-up of Report No. 25 (1999-2000) to the Storting on free legal aid, the Ministry of Justice is in the process of simplifying the rules of the legal aid scheme to ensure that the population at large can more easily determine when they are entitled to free legal aid. A proposal to expand the substantive scope of the Legal Aid Act to encompass more cases against the public authorities is also being considered. Furthermore, a proposal is expected to be presented to make entitlement to legal aid in order to bring complaints against international appeals bodies a statutory right.

Representation in the courts

The Ministry of Justice has initiated a review of the lay judge system, including an assessment of the use of persons with different ethnic backgrounds as lay judges.

Provisional establishment of an Ombudsman for the Elderly and an Ombudsman for the Care of the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities

On the basis of a Storting resolution, a development programme has been initiated to test ombudsman schemes for the elderly and for the care of the elderly and persons with disabilities. The primary functions of the ombudsmen are to assist people in their dealings with municipal health and social services, take up individual cases on their own initiative, provide information to the municipal authorities and individuals and investigate circumstances that may weaken the case of individuals in the municipality. Cooperation has been established with the Norwegian Association of Local Authorities with a view to testing the schemes during the period 1999-2002. Based on the lessons learned in this period, the possibility of establishing the scheme on a permanent basis will be considered. A midterm report will be published in summer 2001. The results have been too scanty and variable to draw any clear conclusions about the scheme, and a more detailed report is expected in June 2002.

Information, training and education

Primary and secondary education

Survey of human rights education

According to the Plan of Action, the survey was initially to focus on upper secondary education and be carried out in 2000-2001. Towards the end of the five-year period, the need for a comparable survey targeting primary and lower secondary schools would then be assessed. Unfortunately, this measure will be implemented later than indicated in the Plan of Action.

Optional course on democracy and human rights

Work on a curriculum for an optional course on democracy and human rights has also taken somewhat longer than originally anticipated. The aim is now to have the curriculum ready by the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year.

Establishment of a human rights website on the School Network

The Norwegian Board of Education reports that a variety of resources and links relating to human rights have been developed on the School Network, including a separate topic under the subject of Society and Politics/International Affairs. In this connection, the Board of Education works in close cooperation with the Norwegian Human Rights House on designing a training programme that takes an educational approach to human rights. Through the School Network, schools will thus have access to a wide range of information on human rights and on various educational programmes in this field. As recently as December 2001, the School Network and the Norwegian Human Rights House launched an advent calendar that focused on human rights.



Higher education and professional training

Prioritization of in-service teacher training in human rights

In 2001 the Network Norway Council (a national advisory body on higher education) again facilitated the provision of in-service training in human rights for teachers and teacher training staff.

Teacher training research fellowship in the field of human rights

As a follow-up to Report No. 21 (1999-2000) to the Storting, two colleges were awarded fellowship posts for research on human rights issues in the educational system. One of these posts is at the University College of Nord-Trøndelag in cooperation with the Falstad Centre. The other post has been advertised at the University College of Oslo, and will be located under the master's degree programme on multicultural, development-oriented education. Both posts are intended to lead to a doctorate and subsequent employment on the college staff.

Prioritization of in-service training in human rights

In 2001 the Ministry of Education and Research again gave priority to courses on human rights for schoolteachers and teacher training staff, allocating NOK 600,000 to the Section for Continued Training of Teachers.

The human rights knowledge base

Increase in the basic allocation for the Institute for Human Rights at the University of Oslo and the institute's upgrading to a national institution

In the government budget for 2001, the basic allocation for the Institute for Human Rights was increased by NOK 500,000. The institute was upgraded to the status of a national institution by the Royal Decree of 21 September 2001. NOK 3.5 million was allocated for this purpose in the central government budget for 2001. In compliance with the intention of the Storting, the institute's budget was increased by a further NOK 1.5 million in 2002, cf. Proposition No. 1, Addendum No. 4 (2001-2002) to the Storting.

Database on censorship and freedom of expression

In ancient times, the Library of Alexandria in Egypt was a unique centre for the exchange of knowledge, thoughts and ideas. UNESCO and the Egyptian authorities have jointly undertaken responsibility for reviving the library, which is expected to become one of the world's leading centres of information and documentation in the field of human rights. The date of the library's opening has been changed several

In 2001 the Ministry of Education and Research again gave priority to courses on human rights for school-teachers and teacher training staff.

Photo: Erik M. Sundt



times, but the date of the official inauguration has now been set for 23 April 2002.

At present there is no library in the world that can offer a complete, global overview of censored books and newspapers. Documentation provided by human rights organizations on violations of freedom of expression is normally not available to the public through libraries. A comprehensive, up-to-date and generally accessible database on censorship, which includes bibliographical information on literature about freedom of expression, will therefore help to increase knowledge of and further research on human rights and freedom of expression. A knowledge base on censorship and freedom of expression will benefit Norwegian groups as a source of information that can be used in educational and information programmes and as a basis for research.

The Government therefore intends to present the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, a database on censorship and freedom of expression, as a gift at the inauguration of the Library of Alexandria in 2002. The database is a bibliographical database comprising two main sections:

- publications on censorship and freedom of expression and
- documentation of censored books and newspapers in selected countries and historical eras through the ages.

Access to the database will be secured through the Beacon for Freedom of Expression website. The Government will finance the database from the budget of the Ministry of Cultural and Church Affairs.

Partial funding has been pledged up until 2005.

Awards for journalists

In the Plan of Action, the Government proposed to establish two human rights awards, one for journalists and one for the film sector. These awards are to be presented to journalists and producers of short films that focus particular attention on current human rights issues in Norway. The awards have not yet been established, but the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs is currently drafting appropriate statutes.

The Holocaust Centre

In connection with its debate on Proposition No. 82 (1997-98) to the Storting relating to the Jewish property settlement, the Storting adopted a resolution to allocate NOK 40 million for a centre for studies of the Holocaust and belief minorities in Norway. The Holocaust Centre Foundation was established by the University of Oslo in April 2001. In autumn 2000 the Storting voted to locate this centre in Villa Grande (Vidkun Quisling's home during the German occupation of Norway in World War II) in Oslo.

A steering group consisting of representatives from the ministries concerned is currently working on finding an appropriate model for financing and organizing the centre, and on finding tenants to rent the surplus space in Villa Grande. It is a stated political objective to ensure that all the tenants who share the building with the Holocaust Centre present a common profile, their involvement in activities relating to human rights and minority issues being the common denominator. The activities in Villa Grande must primarily focus on research and education, particularly targeting children and young people. The aim is to establish the centre in the course of 2003.

The Falstad Centre

In the government budget for 2002, NOK 2.06 million has been allocated to the Falstad Centre for education in and documentation on the history of prisoners of war, international humanitarian law and human rights. The centre works closely with the University College of Nord-Trøndelag, which was granted a fellowship in 2001 for work on human rights issues.



Priority areas

Discrimination and racism

New Act on ethnic discrimination

On 3 March 2000 the King in Council appointed a legislative committee to prepare a draft Bill prohibiting ethnic discrimination. The committee is to submit its report to the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development by 15 June 2002. The committee presented a midterm memorandum on 1 September 2001, reporting on the status of its work so far. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development will, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, be responsible for presenting a draft Bill prohibiting ethnic discrimination to the Storting.

Twelve new initiatives to combat racism and discrimination

In June 2001, the Stoltenberg Government presented twelve new initiatives to combat racism and discrimination, most of which focus on childhood environments, children and young people and the state's recruitment policy. Others target discrimination in restaurants, bars, etc. and discrimination on the housing market. Several of the measures follow up input and proposals presented at a consultative meeting held by the then Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg following the racially motivated murder of a young man at Holmlia, Oslo. At the meeting the Prime Minister invited persons who had experience of working in this field to propose measures to combat racism and discrimination.

Additional allocation for efforts to combat racism and discrimination

In June 2001 the Government allocated NOK 2 million in extraordinary funding for efforts to combat racism and discrimination. The purpose of this allocation was to promote contact and dialogue between groups of young people with different backgrounds in local communities, thereby averting and helping to resolve conflicts. Almost 40 measures and projects were funded through this allocation, ranging from cultural projects (concerts, books, plays and films) and initiatives that promote participation in non-governmental organizations and sports to awareness-raising campaigns relating to school and recreational activities, meetings and conferences, and some development measures - particularly in schools.

Plan of Action to Combat Racism and Discrimination

The Plan of Action to Combat Racism and Discrimination was presented on 15 June 1998 and covers the period 1998-2001. This plan focuses on the central government administration and comprises 32 measures in the following target areas:

- the police and judicial apparatus
- the labour market
- the housing market
- primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school
- key sectors of public administration
- local communities.

Two status reports have been prepared, in 2000 and 2001, which show that most of the measures have been implemented. The plan is now being evaluated, and the final evaluation report will be submitted in September 2002.

New Plan of Action to Combat Racism and Discrimination

In July 2001 the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development hosted a national conference on racism and discrimination. A number of non-governmental organizations took part in the conference, along with representatives from employer and employee organizations, the public administration and research communities. The purpose of the conference was to mark the start of the process of preparing a new Plan of Action to combat racism, and to obtain input from participants as regards measures in the Plan of Action. Conference participants also received information on Norway's participation in and strategy in connection with the UN World Conference on Racism in South Africa.

The Government aims to present a new Plan of Action to Combat Racism and Discrimination in the course of July 2002. This plan will be based on the lessons learned from the previous Plan of Action.

Proposal to include a prohibition against discrimination in new legislation on housing cooperatives

Official Norwegian Report 2000:17 on legislation relating to housing cooperatives proposes provisions prohibiting discrimination on grounds of race, nationality, skin colour, ethnic origin, etc. The report, which was presented in June 2000, has been circulated for consultation. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development is currently drafting new legislation on housing cooperatives. This work is expected to be completed in 2002.

Work in local communities and the promotion of sound attitudes

The Directorate of Immigration is in the process of preparing its second report on the nature and extent of racism and discrimination, which is to be completed by the end of 2002. In 2001, the Directorate continued to collaborate with non-governmental organizations and trade unions on the promotion of sound attitudes.

Participation and dialogue

Increasing the participation in society of persons with an immigrant background and furthering, developing and strengthening dialogue between these members of the population and the authorities is a goal of central government.

The Directorate of Immigration provides funding for local immigrant organizations and activities run by non-governmental organizations that foster diversity, dialogue and interaction in local communities. One of the objectives is to promote tolerance between different population groups through activities run by NGOs at the local level. In 2001 NOK 11.8 million was allocated to county authorities for the further administration of the scheme. The funds are provided as grants to cover the operating costs of local immigrant organizations and for NGO activities. NOK 1.9 million of the total amount was spent on county administration of the scheme.

Grants are also provided for nation-wide organizations involved in activities for persons with immigrant backgrounds. The purpose of the funding is to support national organizations whose general aims and specific activities promote genuine equality between immigrants and Norwegians, encourage the active participation of immigrants in society and enable them to become self-sufficient. These national organizations play a pivotal role in communicating the views and needs of the immigrant population to the authorities and the general public. A total of NOK 8.9 million was provided for this purpose in 2001, divided between nine organizations.

Liaison Committee between Immigrants and the Authorities

The Liaison Committee between Immigrants and the Authorities is an advisory body to the public authorities. The Committee consists of representatives with immigrant backgrounds and representatives of the public authorities and the political parties in the Storting, who are appointed by the Government for a period of four years. The Committee convenes four times a year and the working committee has eight meetings a year. In addition to serving in an advisory capacity, the Committee is also intended to be a forum for dialogue and contact between representatives of the immigrant population, the political parties and the authorities. Members with immigrant backgrounds are nominated as candidates for the Liaison Committee by immigrant organizations, and an active organizational life is essential if the members of the Liaison Committee with immigrant backgrounds are to function as spokesmen for the interests and views of immigrants. An external evaluation of the Liaison Committee, carried out by the Norwegian Institute for

Urban and Regional Research, was completed in June 2001. The evaluation gives a positive impression of the Committee, while pointing to a number of important problem areas. The Committee's current term was extended to the end of 2002 with a view to conducting a review of the need for changes in the Committee's structure and composition. A new organizational plan for the Liaison Committee is to be prepared before a new committee is appointed for the period 2003-2006.

Appointment of a Group of State Secretaries for Children and Young People

A Group of State Secretaries was appointed in autumn 2001 to discuss challenges relating to efforts to increase the participation in society of children and young people with immigrant backgrounds. The Group has particularly discussed the situation in the day care, school, family and recreational sectors and ways of preventing crime, as well as how to better integrate children and young people with immigrant backgrounds in these sectors. The Group, which last met in February 2002, is to present a brief report and identify relevant measures in June 2002.

Development of a knowledge base

In 2001 knowledge-related measures were carried out as part of the Plan of Action to Combat Racism and Discrimination. Knowledge has been acquired about processes, work methods and the specific measures that are required in order to induce an enterprise to remove built-in barriers and utilise the potential inherent in a multi-cultural workforce. This action-oriented knowledge is only of value if it is translated into practical action and put to use in several sectors of the labour market. Emphasis is placed on disseminating knowledge and sharing lessons learned.

Research and studies were also initiated in 2001 to increase our knowledge of the barriers posed by racism and discrimination for persons with immigrant backgrounds. Several reports show that persons with immigrant backgrounds and national minorities are subject to discrimination and other forms of exclusion in society. The situation is perceived as particularly difficult on the housing and labour market. Research findings show that the lack of recognition of foreign qualifications and the attitudes of employers constitute barriers to labour market participation. In 2001 the Norwegian Institute for Studies in Research and Higher Education (NIFU) carried out a survey of the situation for young people with minority backgrounds seeking apprenticeships in working life. The report concludes that applicants with minority backgrounds are discriminated against by companies. Young men with immigrant backgrounds have greater difficulty obtaining an apprenticeship than young women with immi-

Better integration of children and young people with immigrant backgrounds in day care, school, family and recreational sectors is an essential task.

Photo: Erik Burås/ Norwegian Red Cross



grant backgrounds and young ethnic Norwegians.

Research will be initiated to focus particularly on barriers to labour market participation for women with immigrant backgrounds. There is also a need for research on barriers in other arenas of participation.

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development has initiated a project to examine what possibilities persons with an immigrant background have for exercising influence, and which factors enable them to achieve influence in central decision-making processes. The project will also examine influence and power from a gender perspective. The assignment is being carried out by the Institute for Social Research. A similar report on influence in local decision-making processes is currently being prepared by the Centre for Social Research (SEFOS) and is expected to be presented in spring 2002.

Discrimination in working life

Amendments to section 55 A of the Working Environment Act aimed at preventing discrimination against persons with disabilities in connection with employment came into force on 1 July 2001. At the same time, protection against discrimination against job-seekers on grounds of race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin, homosexual orientation or homo-

sexual cohabitation was strengthened through the introduction of rules regarding shared burden of proof and compensation.

The Government has appointed a broad-based committee to prepare a new Act on working life to replace the current Working Environment Act. Provisions to prevent discrimination in working life will be one of the areas of focus. The committee is to submit its report by 1 December 2003.

Evaluation of the Plan of Action to recruit persons with an immigrant background to the central government sector

The Plan of Action to recruit persons with an immigrant background is to be evaluated by the end of 2002.

Evaluation of grant schemes for activities run by non-governmental organizations involved in efforts to combat racism and discrimination

In 2000 the Directorate of Public Management (Statskon-sult) presented a report on the evaluation of the grant scheme for nation-wide organizations involved in activities for persons with an immigrant background. On the basis of this evaluation, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development appointed a working group that has examined the purpose and criteria of the grant scheme with a view to establishing a system of administration that best

promotes the objectives of the scheme. Among other things, the working group took a closer look at the relationship between membership-based organizations and foundation-like organizations, in order to examine the way in which the different organizations communicate and promote the views and interests of the immigrant population to the authorities and in public debate. The working group completed its work in January 2002. On the basis of the group's recommendations, new guidelines for the provision of funding will be drawn up and will contain specific requirements as regards objectives, criteria and reporting routines.

Evaluation of the Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination

The Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination has been the object of an ongoing evaluation of its activities during the period from its inception to the end of 2002. The primary goal of the project is to evaluate all aspects of the Centre's activities, including whether the objectives of improving legal aid services and better documenting the nature and extent of ethnic discrimination have been fulfilled. The evaluation is being carried out by the Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) and the Institute for Sociology of Law at the University of Oslo. The final report is to be presented at the end of 2002/beginning of 2003.

The Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination was originally established for a trial period up to the end of 2002. In the government budget for 2002, however, the Government proposed that the activities of the centre continue in their current form, until the Government presents a draft Bill on ethnic discrimination in which a final decision will be made as to how the centre is to continue operating on a permanent basis. The Storting has acceded to this proposal as recommended by the Standing Committee on Local Government. Importance will be attached to the results of the evaluation when determining how the Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination should continue to operate.

Reporting

Norway submitted its 16th report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in February 2002. This is the official report on steps taken to implement the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Under the various points in the report, up-to-date information is provided and responses are provided to the Committee's comments on previous reports. The 16th report deals with new legislative amendments and measures implemented to combat racism and discrimination in sectors such as education, employment, housing, health, culture, restaurants and bars, etc. and the judicial system. Measures largely target persons with an immigrant background, but

the report also covers the Sami people and national minorities.

Some of the challenges revealed by the report include the need to build up a system for registering incidents of racism and discrimination, strengthen legal safeguards against discrimination and improve the labour market situation for persons with an immigrant background.

Sami policy

The basis for official Norwegian policy in respect of the Sami people is set out in Section 110 a of the Constitution of Norway and in the Sami Act. Norway has also acceded to several international conventions of significance for the Sami people. At present, ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries is the only international, legally binding instrument that directly addresses the protection of indigenous peoples, but the Council of Europe's Charter on National and Regional Languages, the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are all important in relation to the Sami people. The Human Rights Act, adopted in 1999, gives the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights status as Norwegian law.

National policy and measures in respect of the Sami people

An important principle in Norwegian legislation which regulates the authorities' obligations towards the Sami population is ensuring that the Sami people play an active role in matters affecting Sami interests. This is also in accordance with the provisions of ILO Convention No. 169.

This entails the following main obligations for the authorities:

- Make provision, through legislation and measures, for the Sami people themselves to play the active role in safeguarding and developing the Sami language, culture and social life.
- Allocate sufficient funds to the Sami Parliament to enable it to determine priorities in matters concerning the Sami people.
- Establish routines for cooperation between the Government and the Sami Parliament on the formulation of Norwegian Sami policy, the budget of the Sami Parliament and the development of general policies that will affect the Sami community.

The official opening of the fourth Sami Parliament took place in its own building for the first time. Sven-Roald Nystø, President of the Sami Parliament, held a speech at the opening.

Photo: Jan-Morten Bjørnbakk/SCANPIX/POOL



Every four years, a report on the main principles of Norwegian Sami policy is presented to the Storting. The last report was presented in August 2001, and a supplementary report will be presented in May 2002.

In addition to this, a report on the activity of the Sami Parliament is submitted to the Storting each year, one chapter of which consists of the Annual Report of the Sami Parliament. The annual report is an important document in the relationship between the Sami Parliament and the Government, because the Government's report to the Storting contains responses to matters raised in the Sami Parliament's annual report.

The Sami Parliament is the Government's most important source of information and influence when defining the basic premises for Norwegian Sami policy, and emphasis is placed on ensuring that the Sami Parliament participates in the policy formulation process at the earliest possible stage. This is done, for instance, at meetings between the senior political staff of the respective ministries and the Sami Parliament. There is also contact at the administrative level between the ministries and the Sami Parliament on the follow-up of Sami issues in the various policy areas.

Sami land and water rights

In 1999 the ministries commenced work on following up

Official Norwegian Report 1997:4 relating to the natural resource base for Sami culture. The aim is to propose new legislation on the management of land and natural resources in Finnmark county in the course of the next parliamentary period (2001-2005).

A new Sami Rights Committee was appointed by the Council of State on 1 June 2001. The Ministry of Justice has formulated the terms of reference and appointed the members of the committee. The committee will now study the use and management of land and natural resources in areas used by the Sami people outside Finnmark County. This primarily means the countries of Troms, Nordland, Trøndelag and Hedmark. The Ministry of Justice has had a fruitful, meaningful dialogue with the Sami Parliament on both the formulation of the terms of reference and the composition of the committee.

Nordic cooperation in respect of the Sami people

The Nordic ministers responsible for Sami matters in Norway, Sweden and Finland have established a forum for cooperation on Sami issues within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The forum has established contact with the presidents of the Sami parliaments in the three countries, and will meet with them regularly to deal with current Sami matters of interest to all the Nordic countries.

At a joint meeting on 7 November 2001, the ministers and the presidents of the Sami parliaments decided to appoint a group of experts comprising representatives from Finland, Sweden and Norway to prepare a draft Nordic convention on the Sami people based on the report entitled "The Need and Basis for a Nordic Convention on the Sami People". The group will consist of two members from each country, one of whom is to be appointed by his respective Sami parliament.

Centre of expertise on the rights of indigenous peoples

One focus of the work of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development in 2001 was the establishment of the centre of expertise for the rights of indigenous peoples. The centre, which is to become operational in the course of 2002, is being established as a follow-up to the Plan of Action for Human Rights. The purpose of the centre is to increase knowledge and understanding of the rights of indigenous peoples and Sami rights, in part by collecting and disseminating relevant information and documentation on the rights of indigenous peoples nationally and internationally. The centre of expertise will also identify needs for research in specific fields.

The centre of expertise's activities target all persons seeking information on the rights of indigenous peoples, both nationally and internationally. The centre, which is to be located in Kautokeino, will primarily facilitate access to and communicate information to target groups in Norway.

Sami language and information

The provisions of Chapter 3 of the Sami Act are based on the fundamental principle that Sami and Norwegian are equal languages and have equal status in specified areas. The purpose is to provide favourable conditions for the further development and increased use of the Sami language. The Act also aims to secure fundamental rights for the population as regards the use of the Sami language.

Most of the provisions in the chapter of the Sami Act relating to language are limited to the Sami language administrative district, and mainly impose obligations on various public bodies. For instance, any person who makes an application to a local public body in the administrative district is entitled to a reply in Sami, and laws and regulations of particular interest to all or parts of the Sami population must be translated into Sami.

In connection with the Storting debate on Proposition No. 62 (1999-2000) to the Storting on municipal finances 2001, a majority of the members of the Standing Committee on Local Government asked the Government to examine whether the actual costs incurred in connection with bilin-

gualism by the municipalities and counties affected are covered. In January 2001, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development appointed a working group comprising representatives of the municipalities in the Sami language administrative district, the counties of Troms and Finnmark, the Sami Parliament, the National Education Office in Finnmark and the Ministry of Education and Research. The working group presented its report in May 2002. The review carried out by the working group shows that even if current expenditures are covered, this will not be sufficient to meet the requirements of the Sami Act. In future, therefore, it will be necessary to provide increased funding for efforts to strengthen and develop the use of Sami in municipal and county administrative procedures and services. To follow up the report of the working group, the Government has proposed that funding for the Sami Parliament's grant scheme for bilingualism be increased by NOK 5 million from 2003.

The provisions of the Sami Act's chapter on language are minimum requirements. This means that public bodies are urged to show consideration for Sami language speakers, also in areas not covered by the provisions of the Act. The Government will initiate information campaigns with a view to improving knowledge in public bodies of the rules relating to Sami and the equal status of Sami and Norwegian.

In October 2000, the Sami Language Council presented a report on the use of the Sami language. The report is based on a language use study conducted in 1999 and 2000 in Finnmark and selected municipalities in Troms, Nordland, both Trøndelag counties and Hedmark. The study covers the use of Sami among individuals, public institutions, Sami organizations and Sami companies. The results show that in the areas covered by the survey 17 per cent, i.e. around 25,000 people, speak Sami. Fifty-three per cent of Sami speakers speak, read and write Sami. This means that more than 10,000 Sami speakers cannot read or write Sami. The percentage of Sami speakers is 94 per cent in Karasjok and 96 per cent in Kautokeino, 75 per cent in Nesseby, 53 per cent in Tana and 35 per cent in Porsanger. According to the survey, a little over 20 per cent of the population of Finnmark speak Sami. The report shows that Sami is now taught more widely in primary and lower secondary schools, and the number of day care institutions in which Sami is spoken has increased. Nonetheless, there is a very great need to provide services for those who wish to learn to read and write Sami. The report proposes measures in this connection, including language development programmes.

The Sami Church Council to the Church of Norway was established in 1992 and is the Church of Norway General

Synod's body for Sami church activities. In 2001 work on renewing both the South Sami and North Sami High Mass liturgy was nearing completion. Work is in progress on a hymn book in Lule Sami and North Sami.

During the budget debate in autumn 2001, NOK 2.5 million was allocated for the 2002 budget year for efforts to promote Sami languages and information activities, both information provided by the Norwegian authorities in Sami and information to the general public on Sami affairs. The Government works closely with the Sami Parliament on proposals for information activities.

A study carried out by the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) reveals that there are significant differences between municipalities as regards bilingual services for the inhabitants of the Sami language administrative district, the municipalities of Karasjok, Kautokeino, Nesseby, Porsanger and Tana in Finnmark county, and Kåfjord municipality in Troms county. There are also considerable differences from one agency to another within municipalities.

In 2000 the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development carried out a survey of central government information to the Sami people and about the Sami people in the central government administration. The survey shows that there is a need to provide both better information on Sami affairs and central government information in Sami. The Ministry is following up the survey by appointing a language and information officer in 2002 and by publishing a separate newsletter. One issue of the newsletter was published in 2001.

The Nordic Sami Institute was commissioned by the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development to carry out a comprehensive study of information to and about the Sami people. The results were submitted to the Ministry in spring 2001. This study also encompassed the municipalities in the Sami language administrative district.

The University of Tromsø also conducted a study of attitudes towards the Sami people and Sami affairs in 2001. The study entailed examining the editorial content of a number of North-Norwegian newspapers and the national newspaper *Aftenposten* published between January 1996 and December 1999.

The results of these studies will form the basis for the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development's further work in connection with Sami languages and information.

The public sector has a particular responsibility for facilitating freedom of expression and democratic participation for minorities. The scheme for the provision of grants to Sami newspapers from the budget of the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs is justified by the significance of the press for freedom of expression and democracy, and aims at ensuring the necessary financial resources for the publication of Sami newspapers. In 2001 the grant amounted to NOK 10 million.

Sami culture

As from the 2002 budget year, funds for a number of Sami cultural institutions and initiatives in the cultural sphere have been transferred to the Sami Parliament. The object is to give the Sami Parliament more direct influence on the administration of funds for Sami cultural activities and institutions that work in the field of Sami art and culture. This close involvement in the decision-making process will benefit the development of Sami culture.

Funding for the following institutions and activities was transferred as from 31 December 2001:

- A Sami special library
- A mobile library service
- Sami collections
- Sami museums under the museum grant scheme
- Beavvas Sami Teahter
- Sami music festivals
- Sami artists' grants and remuneration for the grant committee
- Remuneration for Sami artists in connection with exhibitions
- Sami archives
- A project relating to Sami place names and funding for the County Governor of Finnmark for the implementation of the Sami Language Act

While central government funding for the aforementioned institutions and activities was previously provided in the form of earmarked allocations from the Ministry directly to the institution or competent agency, the funds are now allocated as a lump sum under one item of the government budget and transferred in full to the Sami Parliament. The reason for this is to give the Sami Parliament greater freedom of action and direct influence on the way the funds are distributed.

The question of the transfer of administrative responsibility for the grant scheme for Sami newspapers from the Norwegian Mass Media Authority to the Sami Parliament has been raised on several occasions. The Government will revert to the issue in its supplementary report to Report No. 55 (2000-2001) to the Storting on Sami policy.

Cultural heritage

As from 1 January 2001, the Sami Parliament was made directly responsible for the administration of Sami cultural heritage. This was to ensure that Sami bodies are responsible for administering their own cultural heritage, as part of the effort to promote the building of a Sami identity and self-understanding.

On 21 December 2001, the Ministry of the Environment received the Cultural Heritage Committee's report, Official Norwegian Report 1/02: The Past Shapes the Future. The report examines the challenges and opportunities for the management of Sami cultural heritage and holders and users of Sami rights. It also discusses the challenges relating to and possibility of safeguarding the cultural heritage associated with national minority groups, including Gypsies and Kvens. The aim is to provide these groups with a better foundation for a strong cultural identity. The report is to be circulated for consultative comment in spring 2002 and will form the basis for a new cultural heritage policy.

Plan of Action for health and social services for the Sami population in Norway

In autumn 2001 the Government presented a plan of action for health and social services for the Sami population in Norway.

Regular general practitioner for the Sami people

Under the regular general practitioner scheme, Sami-speaking patients in the Sami administrative area have priority as regards places on the list of patients of Sami-speaking physicians. Sami persons engaged in reindeer husbandry are to have priority as though they were listed patients when they consult another regular GP. The Ministry has requested the Norwegian Medical Association to include funding for Sami language tuition in connection with the grant scheme for further and continuing education in general/family medicine and community medicine.

Centre for Sami Health Research

The Centre for Sami Health Research at the University of Tromsø was established in 2001 in Karasjok. The centre will carry out research on health and social issues with a view to achieving the goal of the same quality of services for the Sami people as for the rest of the Norwegian population.

Measures targeting women in reindeer husbandry

The Ministry of Agriculture has established a permanent position as Executive Officer for Women's Affairs at the Directorate of Reindeer Husbandry in Alta. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development focused on measures targeting women in reindeer husbandry in 1999

and 2000, allocating NOK 1 million each year to strengthen the position of women in this sector. The Ministry of Agriculture has followed up these efforts in 2001 and 2002 through the Reindeer Husbandry Agreement.

National minorities

The most fundamental provision relating to the international protection of minorities is Article 27 of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which lays down that persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities have the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion and to use their own language.

Minorities with a long-standing connection to the state in which they live are regarded as national minorities and as such are specially protected by the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities. This convention was ratified by Norway on 17 March 1999. In connection with ratification, it was determined that the Sami people, the Kvens (people of Finnish descent living in northern Norway), the Romani people (Travellers), the Roma (Gypsies), the Skogfinns (people of Finnish descent living in southern Norway) and Jews satisfy the criteria to qualify as national minorities in Norway. However, the Sami Parliament has stated that the Sami people do not stand to gain from being covered by the convention, since Sami rights under ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries are broader in scope than under the Framework Convention.

Norway submitted its first report on its implementation of the Framework Convention in March 2001.

Report No. 15 (2000-2001) to the Storting on national minorities in Norway

This report was presented to the Storting by the Government in 2000 and is the first overall review of the principles that form the basis for government policy relating to Jews, Kvens, the Roma (Gypsies), the Romani people (Travellers) and the Skogfinns. The report was debated by the Storting in 2001.

The report makes it clear that there have been minorities in Norway for a long time. In the report, the Government critically reviews the policy of Norwegianization previously pursued by the authorities in relation to all national minorities. The Government strongly condemns the abuses committed against the Romani people (Travellers).

The planned exhibition of the culture of the Romani (Travellers) people at the Glomdal Museum will show not only examples of injustice and persecution, but also positive and creative aspects of this people's history.

Photo: Tom Kolstad/Scanpix



Government policy in respect of national minorities is based on the aim of ensuring that Norway is a pluralistic, tolerant society that is good to live in. Everyone, regardless of background, should have the same opportunities, rights and obligations to participate in society and utilise their resources. The Government considers it a goal to meet the needs of national minorities as far as possible within the framework of general measures and welfare schemes.

At the same time, the Government emphasizes its intention to promote a society that enables persons belonging to national minorities to express, maintain and further develop their own identity, language and culture. The Government therefore proposes a range of measures to maintain minority cultures and languages, measures for children and young people, educational measures and measures to encourage the active participation of national minorities in society. The Government has also approved the use of trilingual municipal names - in Sami, Kven/Finnish and Norwegian - as a means of underscoring the cultural pluralism of local communities. The Government has attached importance to involving national minorities in the work on the report. It is an important principle of minority policy that national minorities participate in and that their views are heard in matters of importance to them. This principle also applies at the municipal and county level. The dialogue with representatives of national minorities that was established during the preparation of Report No. 15 to the Storting has continued.

To follow up Report No. 15 to the Storting and in accordance

with the comments of the Storting's Standing Committee on Local Government, work began in 2001 on preparing a plan with a list of measures and a schedule for implementing these measures. The follow-up process also included the planning of a research conference on the need for documentation and information on the situation of national minorities. The conference will be held in 2002 in cooperation with the Research Council of Norway and with representatives of national minorities.

It is important to make minorities more visible. Doing so can help to communicate positive images of minorities, and gives municipalities and other institutions knowledge that enables them to tailor services and facilities to meet the needs of these groups. The newsletter on national minorities which the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development is publishing is part of this process.

Grants for national minorities

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development administers a grant scheme for national minorities. This purpose of this scheme is to support activities that promote active participation in society, ensure equal opportunities for all and combat discrimination against national minorities. The grant scheme is intended as a means of implementing the principles enshrined in the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities.

The Romani Department of the Glomdal Museum

A centre for documentation and presentation of the culture and history of the Romani people is to be established as a separate department of the Glomdal Museum in Elverum. The aim is to foster understanding of what a minority is, raise awareness of injustices and oppression and promote greater tolerance, in keeping with the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities. The Directorate of Public Construction and Property is to draw up a construction programme and cost estimates.

The Kvæntun Centre

A centre for Kven language and culture is to be established in the rural community of Børselv, Porsanger. The Kvens have strong roots in this area, and the centre is to help document, reconstruct and maintain Kven traditions and culture by motivating the local community to safeguard and develop its own roots and distinctive identity. Funds were allocated in

When a child seeks asylum with its parents or other persons with parental responsibility, the main rule is that the child is covered by its parents' application.

Photo: Jon Eeg/ Norwegian Red Cross



2002 from the government budget for a new administration building at the Kvæntun Centre in Porsanger.

Vadsø Museum

The Vadsø Museum/Riuja kvenmuseum is responsible for the conservation of Kven culture. The museum, which is responsible for the entire county, received a special increase in its operating budget in 2002 as part of the follow-up of the museum reform (based on the Storting debate of Report No. 22 to the Storting on sources of knowledge and experience). The funds are intended to stimulate the process of regional consolidation and national network-building, and are to be applied for the purposes defined in the above-mentioned report: meeting the multi-cultural challenge, promoting research and information on minority cultures and fostering interaction between majority and minority cultures, indigenous peoples, national minorities and new minority groups.

The same guiding principles form the basis for the equivalent budget increase that was awarded to Nord-Troms Museum.

Asylum and immigration law

The right to apply for and be granted asylum is set out in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and internationally regulated by legislation such as the UN Convention of 28 July 1951 relating to the status of refugees, with protocol. The Immigration Act must be implemented humanely and fairly in a way that ensures that Norway

assumes its share of responsibility for people fleeing from their own countries.

To obtain asylum in Norway, a person must be a refugee as defined by the UN Convention relating to the status of refugees. This means, among other things, that the person must be persecuted on grounds of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group. Persecution on grounds of gender or sexual orientation is covered by the above-mentioned convention's definition of a refugee and can serve as grounds for recognition as a refugee. Asylum may be granted regardless of who the persecutor may be, whether the authorities of the asylum-seeker's home country, groups beyond the control of the authorities or individuals. The decisive criterion for asylum is the fact that the authorities of the applicant's home country cannot or will not provide adequate protection from persecution.

Quota for resettlement refugees

Most of the refugees in the world are given protection in a country in the vicinity of their own. If the country in which they first sought refuge cannot provide them with satisfactory protection, and they cannot return to their home country, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) requests a third country to resettle the refugees. Norway's quota for the selection of resettlement refugees for 2001 was 1,500 places. In evaluating which individual refugees should be transferred to Norway, emphasis is primarily placed on their need for protection. The refugees' potential to adjust to Norwegian society is also assessed. In consultation with the

UNHCR, Norway has adopted a flexible quota system covering a period of three years. Within this period of time, places that are not used one year may be carried forward to following years. Moreover, places from the following years' quotas may be used in advance if there should be a need to do so.

Residence on humanitarian grounds

If an asylum-seeker's application for asylum is likely to be rejected, the Immigration Act requires the authorities to assess whether a residence permit should be granted pursuant to section 8, second paragraph, of the Act. The term "strong humanitarian considerations" in section 8, second paragraph, of the Immigration Act embraces a wide range of factors, both grounds relating to protection of the asylum-seeker and compassionate grounds, such as the safety of the asylum-seeker in his home country, persecution on grounds similar to those that apply to refugees, health factors, the situation of minors or the asylum-seeker's actual connection with Norway.

Legislative committee for revision of the Immigration Act

The current Immigration Act was adopted in 1988 and came into force on 1 January 1991. Since its adoption, major changes have taken place in the sphere of immigration. In the light of these changes, there is broad political consensus regarding the need for a comprehensive review of immigration legislation, including an examination of the distinction between asylum and a residence permit on humanitarian grounds. The current statute does not reflect the complex challenges facing society today, nor the need for efficient administrative procedures. New international obligations, growing cross-border mobility and the growing percentage of the population with an immigrant background are factors that make it necessary to focus attention on how immigration legislation can serve its purpose in today's society. The need to recruit labour outside the EEA area further underscores the need for new legislation. The legislative committee was appointed by the Council of State on 14 December 2001 and is headed by District Judge Bjørn Solbakken. The committee is to present its recommendation for a new Act by the end of 2003.

Act on an introductory scheme for newly arrived immigrants

A Government-appointed committee has prepared a report (Official Norwegian Report 2001:20) on and drafted a new Bill relating to an introductory scheme for newly arrived immigrants. The report proposes to enact a scheme for newly arrived immigrants which combines an introductory benefit with a programme to provide them with educational and professional qualifications. The aim is to focus efforts to provide new arrivals with an income based on active qualifi-

cation programmes rather than on passive social support. On the basis of the proposals in the report and consultative comments, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development aims to present a draft Bill before summer 2002.

Labour immigration

In 2001 several amendments were made to immigration legislation to make it easier for professionally qualified foreign nationals who come from countries outside the EEA area to obtain a work permit in Norway. Various steps were taken to rationalize administrative procedures, such as authorizing more foreign missions to make decisions on work permit applications, relaxing restrictions on applying for work permits from within Norway and introducing a quota of 5,000 work permits which are not subject to a labour market assessment in each individual case. Furthermore, the system of job seeker visas was introduced, whereby job-seeking specialists may be granted a visa to come to Norway to investigate the labour market. In 2002 the Government will continue its efforts to increase the flexibility of rules governing labour immigration.

Legislation on citizenship

The Act of 8 December 1950 No. 3 on Norwegian citizenship was amended as from 1 October 2001 to the effect that a child of a Norwegian national who is born and grows up in another country does not lose his or her Norwegian nationality upon reaching the age of 22, if the person in question should thereby become stateless. Official Norwegian Report 2000:32 on the Act relating to the acquisition and loss of Norwegian citizenship was circulated for consultative comment. The time limit for submitting comment was 1 November 2001. One of the proposals in the draft Bill entails basing future legislation on the principle of dual nationality. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development will continue to work on the draft Bill in 2002 with a view to presenting a final Bill in 2003.

The situation of children in asylum cases

When a child seeks asylum with its parents or other persons with parental responsibility for the child, the main rule is that the child is covered by its parents' application. To determine whether a child's situation justifies granting asylum, the overall life situation of accompanying children must be clarified during the asylum interview. The main rule is that the executive officer dealing with the case at the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) must interview children who seek asylum with their parents. This may be omitted if such an interview is obviously unnecessary or if the parents object to it. The importance that should be attached to the child's statements will depend on the child's age and ability to understand the situation.

Unaccompanied minor refugees and asylum-seekers

Children and young people under 18 years of age who come to Norway without their parents or other persons with parental responsibility are registered as unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers. The asylum interview must be carried out as soon as possible, and preferably within two weeks after the child's arrival. The child's legal counsel is encouraged to be present during the interview. Furthermore, an adult must be present to assist the minor, such as a guardian or provisional guardian. The Ministry of Justice has appointed a legislative committee to revise the Guardianship Act by 2003. One of the issues to be considered by the committee is whether guardians for unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers should have special status.

The objective is to resettle unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers as soon as possible, and no later than three months after they have been granted a residence permit. It is possible to resettle unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers before a decision has been made granting them a residence permit in Norway.

Project to develop models for municipal activities relating to unaccompanied minors

In 1999 the Government initiated a research and development project to develop models for municipal activities relating to unaccompanied minor refugees and asylum-seekers. The SINTEF/IFIM research institution presented its report in February 2002. The report sums up the experience of six municipalities over a period of two years, and proposes several measures at both local and central government level to improve the childhood environment of unaccompanied minors. Among other things, the researchers recommended that when an unaccompanied minor arrives in a municipality, a child welfare professional should assess the minor's needs before specific arrangements are made. They also recommend that the central government authorities give clearer signals to local governments regarding the importance of ensuring that the provisional guardian scheme functions properly. They encourage the involvement of local non-governmental organizations and private individuals to help the minor build a social network. The authorities should also intensify their efforts to contact any parents who may live in the country of origin, with a view to possible family reunification.

The Government will include the proposed measures in its ongoing efforts to improve the situation for unaccompanied minors. The Directorate of Immigration also attempts to trace the parents of or other care providers for unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers.

Report on the childhood environment and living conditions of unaccompanied minor refugees

In December 2000, Ketil Eide of the University College of Telemark published a report entitled "Children in Movement - the Childhood Environment and Living Conditions of Unaccompanied Minor Refugees". The report is the result of a research project on how unaccompanied minors who came to Norway about ten years ago have fared. It points out that the care situation for such minors must be evaluated and followed up, the system of guardianship must function properly, and measures must be established to help minors cope with school and forge social ties.

Project to survey persons who arrived in Norway as unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers

The University College of Telemark was commissioned by the Directorate of Immigration to carry out a project that follows the lives of minors who came to Norway during the period 1989-1992, and that comprises both a qualitative study of 25 unaccompanied minors, and a quantitative study that encompasses the entire group of 511 unaccompanied minors. The report was presented in February 2001. This study is important because it is the first of its kind that examines how unaccompanied minors resident in Norway have fared. It shows that experiences vary greatly, and that the needs of these children for care, supervision and guidance differ. It also shows the importance of preventive measures to improve the ability to cope and establish personal ties, assessment and follow-up of the care situation and the guardianship function.

Review of the administrative and financial consequences of the special grant to municipalities for the resettlement of unaccompanied minors

In 1999, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs commissioned the Econ Centre for Economic Analysis to carry out a study of municipal expenditure relating to the resettlement of unaccompanied minors. Econ concluded that the average annual costs per unaccompanied minor were approximately equivalent to the sum of the integration grant and the special grant for the resettlement of unaccompanied minors. The system of a special grant to municipalities for the resettlement of unaccompanied minors will be maintained.

Handbook for municipal employees

In March 2001, to upgrade the expertise of local government employees working with unaccompanied minors, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs published a handbook for municipal employees that provides guidelines for these efforts.

Assessment of the right to asylum and refugee status

On 15 December 2000, the Government presented Report No. 17 (2000-2001) to the Storting on Asylum and Refugee Policy in Norway. The report underscores the importance of the Government focusing on gender-based persecution and of ensuring that the situation of women who accompany their spouse must be clarified during the asylum interview. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development prepares proposals for amending regulations regarding rules of administrative procedure in asylum cases. The aim is to ensure that relevant information pertaining to the grounds for asylum emerges as early as possible in the asylum process. Furthermore, the Ministry has proposed that provision be made in the Immigration Act to authorize the introduction of regulations that establish the conditions for being regarded as a refugee. The Ministry will circulate regulations to this effect for consultative comment in the course of 2002.

Development of knowledge relating to asylum

In February 2002 the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development advertised a project relating to the provisions of the Immigration Act regarding protection against persecution. The purpose of the project is to examine the distinction between the criteria for being granted asylum and the criteria for being granted a residence permit on humanitarian grounds for reasons of protection.

The basis for this project is the fact that very few spontaneous asylum-seekers are granted asylum in Norway. A key issue is whether this is due to the rules in force, practice, asylum-seekers' grounds for seeking asylum in Norway or the fact that many applications are denied on grounds that the explanation is not credible. The project will be initiated this year and completed in 2003.

Reorganization of the immigration administration

In the light of the massive criticism to which the Immigration Directorate has been subject due to the length of time it takes to process cases, it was decided that an external consulting agency should carry out a review of the Directorate. In August 2001, a report on this process proposing several measures to improve efficiency was submitted to the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. On the basis of this report, various projects have been initiated to rationalize the Directorate's operations. Among other things, a project was established to deal with the backlog of old cases at the Directorate. The goal is for the Directorate to have no cases older than six months by 1 July 2002.

Remand and the time required to deal with criminal cases

In December 2000 the Ministry of Justice circulated a Proposal for Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act, etc. for consultative comment. Most of the proposals are based on proposals drawn up for the Ministry by two working groups in a project to reduce the time required to deal with criminal cases. The consultation paper includes proposals for time-limits for deciding whether or not to prosecute and for beginning the main hearing in cases against offenders under 18 years of age. In the Ministry's view, other amendments should also be made in the remand rules. A special provision is proposed regarding remand in solitary confinement and maximum limits for the period of time a remand inmate may be subjected to restrictions. The Ministry of Justice aims to present the proposition in spring 2002.

Social services and health care

General information on social insurance rights

Under Article 9 of the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, everyone has a right to social security, including social insurance. Every person living in Norway, unless specially excepted, is a member of the national insurance scheme, which is the foremost instrument for creating social security and equitable distribution in Norway. This scheme, coupled with the child benefit scheme, satisfies the requirements of Article 9 of the UN International Covenant on social insurance for all. The national insurance scheme was maintained and further developed in 2001.

Norway meets the minimum standards for social security set out in ILO Convention No. 102, as well as the more stringent requirements laid down in several other ILO conventions, such as ILO Convention No. 128 concerning Invalidity, Old Age and Survivors' Benefits and ILO Convention No. 130 concerning Medical Care and Sickness Benefits. Norway also meets the standards of the European Code of Social Security, and the requirements of several parts of the Protocol to the Code that provide better coverage.

To safeguard the social insurance rights of individuals, Norway has entered into a number of bilateral and multilateral social insurance agreements with countries within and outside Europe, thereby ensuring equal treatment and aggregation of social insurance entitlement periods for persons covered by the national insurance schemes of the signatory States.

Measures to improve the living conditions of the most disadvantaged persons

The Government's report on the equalization of living conditions (Equalization Report) was debated by the Storting in spring 2000. A unanimous Storting supported the analyses and strategies for equalizing living conditions that were presented in the report. In spring 2001 the Stoltenberg Government presented a Plan of Action for Social and Economic Security as part of its Long-Term Programme for 2002-2005. The plan of action was a direct follow-up of the Storting debate on the Equalization Report and aimed at promoting more equal distribution of wealth and improving the living conditions of the most disadvantaged persons.

Follow-up of the Equalization Report

The plan focused on an "inclusive working life", proposing measures to enable as many people as possible to support themselves through their own efforts. Housing measures for disadvantaged persons were also a key element of the plan. The plan also proposed certain targeted improvements in the provision of health services and in the social safety net for those whose needs are inadequately met by the current universal welfare system.

The following measures were followed up in the government budget for 2002:

- Increase in the supplement for children for recipients of a disability or old-age pension
- Better child care benefits for single supporters with sick/disabled children
- Compensation for travel for work or educational purposes for persons with disabilities
- Better economic security for young people who fall ill in the course of their education

Other measures in the priority area "Increased Social and Economic Security":

- The National Insurance Service and the National Insurance Court have adopted service statements at all levels in all counties. The goal is to shorten the processing time for social security cases and improve service in the National Insurance Service and Court.
- In the course of 2002 the Government intends to present proposals for a new benefit scheme for persons who have not lived in Norway long enough to be entitled to national insurance rights.
- A working group has been appointed to review the basic benefit scheme with a view to proposing improvements for those with the highest expenses and lowest incomes.
- The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs has requested the National Insurance Administration to assess problems related to access to national insurance benefits for women

To a great degree, dementia patients are helped by measures to which they consent, but to prevent injury it is sometimes necessary to take action without the consent of the patient.

Photo: Morten Brakestad



and children who are victims of violence and live under special protection programmes.

Assessment of financial social welfare benefits

The UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights affirms that everyone has a right to a satisfactory standard of living (Article 11) and social security (Article 9). In Report No. 50 (1998-99) to the Storting on the equalization of living conditions, the Government announced that it intended to introduce recommended government norms for living expenses. The guidelines for these norms were drawn up in early 2001, and the rates applied were price-adjusted in 2002. The rates for child maintenance were also increased in excess of the rise entailed by price adjustment. These guidelines provide a common basis for municipal processing of social welfare cases, thereby helping to reduce disparities in the level of benefits from one municipality to another.

The Government has announced, among other things in the Plan of Action for Human Rights, that it intends to improve guidance and training in the attachment of conditions to social benefits with a view to strengthening the legal safeguards of benefit recipients, and promote increased use of conditions aimed at encouraging more social welfare recipients to seek employment and become self-sufficient in the

long term. A new circular with comments on Chapter 5 of the Social Services Act was distributed in summer 2001. The circular contains guidelines for the attachment of conditions in accordance with the above-mentioned goals.

Plan of Action to Combat Poverty

The Government has declared poverty reduction to be a priority, and intends to present a Plan of Action to Combat Poverty. The plan will comprise targeted measures to assist individuals in need, to help as many people as possible to escape from poverty and to raise the living standards of impoverished families with children. Measures to prevent people from becoming poor, to strengthen people's ability to support themselves and find employment and to improve social welfare services will be important priority areas.

Legal safeguards for dementia patients

Dementia is a disease characterized by the gradual decline of intellectual, emotional and motor functions, with the result that the patient gradually becomes unable to take care of himself and to recognise his own need for assistance. To a great degree, dementia patients are helped by measures to which they consent, but to prevent injury it is sometimes necessary to take action without the consent of the patient and even against his or her will. This requires legal authority. Current legislation is both unclear and inadequate.

Issues related to legal safeguards for dementia patients were discussed in Report No. 28 (1999-2000) to the Storting. A majority of the members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs agreed that there was a need for clearer rules in this area, cf. Recommendation No. 99 (2000-2001) to the Storting. In spring 2002, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs intends to circulate a consultation paper on new rules for the use of coercion in respect of dementia patients.

Norway's report under the European Social Charter

Norway ratified the Revised European Social Charter on 7 May 2001.

The Revised European Social Charter, which was opened for signature and ratification in 1996, is a revision and elaboration of the European Social Charter of 1961. It contains rules and legal standards in spheres such as labour market and working environment policy, health and social policy and social insurance. The Revised Social Charter is structured so as to comprise the European Social Charter of 1961 and the Additional Protocol of 1988. It also contains seven new articles.

The Social Charter is the most important social convention in the Council of Europe. The revision process that has now been completed has, in a number of areas, taken account of the fundamental social changes and the developments that have taken place since the European Social Charter was elaborated in 1961. In the revision, the Social Charter was updated and modernized, and a number of new social issues and rights have been encompassed. Among other things, the rights of children and young people, gender equality issues and the rights of the family were strengthened. New articles in the Revised European Social Charter include provisions relating to the protection of workers in cases of termination of employment and the employer's insolvency, rights for workers with family responsibilities, protection of workers' representatives in enterprises, protection against social exclusion and the right to housing.

Certain articles and paragraphs of the Revised Social Charter necessitate the amendment of Norwegian legislation and practice. Norway has decided to accede to the Revised Social Charter by ratifying the articles and paragraphs with which Norway already complies under its current legislation and practice. There is an inherent expectation in the Charter that countries which have not ratified all its articles in full will continue their efforts so that they are able to ratify the provisions in question in the long term. Norway aims to ratify the articles and paragraphs that were not ratified this time round.

In connection with the revision of the European Social Charter, an Additional Protocol was also formulated establishing a system of collective complaints whereby workers' and employers' organizations and non-governmental organizations may lodge complaints against Contracting Parties regarding the failure to comply with ratified articles of the Social Charter. The Protocol entered into force in 1998, and was ratified by Norway in the same year.

Contracting Parties must report under the Revised Social Charter according to the same schedule as for the Social Charter of 1961. The first report is to be submitted in June 2003, until which time Norway will continue to report under the Social Charter of 1961.

In 2001 the Governmental Committee dealt with Supervision Cycle XV - 2 which covered Articles 7, 11, 14 and 17 of the Social Charter and Articles 1 and 4 of the Additional Protocol of 1988. The period reported on was 1997 and 1998. The Committee of Social Rights (the independent committee of experts) criticized Norway's practice of Article 7 (the right of children and young people to protection). This criticism was based on the fact that there were no clear rules ensur-

A user forum for disabled persons and higher education was established in 2000 as a three-year pilot project, and comprises representatives of organizations for disabled persons, student organizations, teaching institutions and several ministries.

Photo: Lise Aserud/Scanpix



ing that young people who work during their school holiday are entitled to holidays for at least half of the school holiday (Article 7, para. 3). If the interpretation of the Social Charter is applied, Norwegian school pupils with eight weeks of school holiday must have at least four weeks of summer holiday. Under Norwegian rules, young people are entitled to a total of four weeks' holiday, of which at least two weeks must be taken in the summer. Since this was the first time this criticism was expressed, Norway was asked to provide a further explanation in its next report.

Persons with disabilities

The Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities

Report No. 8 (1999-1999) to the Starting on the Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities (1998-2001), which was subsequently extended for another year, initiated a wide range of measures. A circular was prepared with an updated status report for 2001.

The rights of persons with disabilities

The Strategic Committee for the Promotion of the Rights, Full Participation and Equality of Persons with Disabilities presented its report, Official Norwegian Report 21:2001: From User to Citizen - a Strategy for Dismantling Disabling Barriers, in autumn 2001. The report describes the institutional and structural barriers encountered by persons with

disabilities in Norwegian society. The committee reports on how Norwegian legislation, its implementation in practice and Norway's compliance with international obligations take account of the situation and needs of disabled persons. The report presents various proposals for improving the right of disabled persons to participation and equal status in society.

The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs have jointly established two pilot projects to improve advisory services and information on the rights of persons with disabilities. These projects are part of Norway's implementation of the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. One project is based at the Norwegian Federation of Organizations of Disabled People, and the other at the Norwegian Association for the Disabled. The goal of both projects is to provide disabled persons with advice and guidance on their rights and to collect information.

Improving special education

In 2001 the Ministry of Education and Research prepared a guidance document for primary and secondary schools entitled "Special Education in Primary and Secondary Schools". This is a booklet containing information on rules, procedures and processes, designed to assist in the further development of cooperation between schools, the educational-psychological service and other bodies on improving the quality of special education.

Access to higher education for persons with disabilities

Report No. 8 (1998-99) to the Storting required all universities and colleges to draw up plans of action for persons with disabilities. Plans have now been drawn up by a large number of educational institutions.

A user forum for disabled persons and higher education was established in 2000 as a three-year pilot project. The user forum comprises representatives of organizations for disabled persons, student organizations, teaching institutions and several ministries, which seek to ensure that account is taken of the views of the relevant user groups. In 2001 the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs allocated NOK 2 million for projects and initiatives at teaching institutions aimed at improving study conditions for students with disabilities. The funds were disbursed in 2001.

Persons with disabilities and municipal planning

Within the framework of the Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities (1998-2001), the Ministry of the Environment has implemented the priority programme "Planning for All - Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities in Municipal Planning." A number of projects and measures were carried out and great emphasis was placed on courses and training programmes for politicians, planners and users. The Ministry will continue to pursue these efforts in cooperation with six other ministries.

User-managed personal care assistance

The Storting adopted an amendment to the Social Services Act which entered into force on 1 May 2000. Pursuant to the amendment, municipalities are required to offer user-managed personal care assistance as an alternative way of organizing practical, personal help for persons with serious disabilities who require assistance in daily life. The central government authorities allocated grants to municipalities which provided such services. This grant scheme, which runs until the end of 2002, was intended to encourage municipalities to offer this type of service. From 2003, the costs of the scheme must be covered by the ordinary income budget.

Children

Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Norway

The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in Norway. This work is

carried out in cooperation with other ministries, municipalities and non-governmental organizations. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child made a number of recommendations to the Norwegian authorities in connection with its examination of Norway's Second Report to the UN in 2000. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs has compiled comments and feedback from the ministries concerned on their follow-up of these recommendations. Among other things, the UN Committee recommended incorporating the CRC into Norwegian legislation. In spring 2001 a consultation document was presented which contained proposals for the best way of effecting such incorporation. A draft Bill is scheduled to be submitted in the course of spring 2002. The Committee also recommended strengthening municipal efforts to comply with the CRC. Training programmes to upgrade expertise and information activities are planned.

The UN Special Session on Children was to have been held in September 2001, but was postponed until May 2002 due to the terrorist attack in New York on 11 September. Preparations were underway in 2001, and the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs was responsible for Norway's part of the preparatory process. All municipalities were invited to provide input in connection with the preparations. Moreover, funds were allocated to support participation processes among children in difficult life situations: young people in the child welfare system, young people with disabilities, young people in asylum reception centres and young people contacted by outreach services have talked about their lives and hopes for the future in a book entitled "Hello - Is Anyone There?." The book has been translated into English and will be presented at the Special Session.

Children's right to be heard

It is important that the child welfare service have the expertise and ability to inspire confidence in conversations with children and young people that is necessary to build trust between child welfare professionals and children. This would enable professionals to gain greater insight into children's lives. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs has provided funds for a research project called "Children in Out-of-Home Placements - Risk and Development", in which the main focus has been on conversations with children. The lessons learned in the project are communicated to professionals in the field through articles in various journals, an article in a book on child welfare placements and oral presentations at meetings and conferences. The Ministry will assess the need to develop a special brochure/guidelines on conversations with children, based on the literature and research currently available.

The spokesperson system in child welfare cases has been evaluated by the Western Norway Centre for Child Welfare Research, and work has begun on revising the regulations pursuant to section 7-4 of the Child Welfare Act regarding the spokesperson system. The question of whether the regulations should to a greater extent ensure that the spokesperson is only the child's mouthpiece is under consideration. In connection with the implementation of the CRC in Norwegian law, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs has proposed amending section 6-3 of the Child Welfare Act to lower the age limit for children's right to state their opinion in child welfare cases from 12 to 7 years of age.

Development programme to improve the environment in which children grow up

A development programme was initiated in autumn 1998 as part of the efforts to improve the environment in which children grow up. Its aim is to strengthen and develop local childhood environments through broad-based cooperation between the public authorities and non-governmental agencies. The main focus is on improving the opportunities of children and young people to participate in and influence society and to cope successfully with the challenges they face. Efforts to combat violence, bullying, alcohol and drugs, crime and racism in childhood and youth environments will also be intensified.

The mobilization of local resources and voluntary efforts are key elements of this programme. Local ideas and initiatives are to form the basis and starting point for the work that is to be done. Ten municipalities have participated in the programme over a three-year period since autumn 1998 (Kristiansand, Tromsø, Drammen, Sandnes, Bøler urban district in Oslo, Stord, Lørenskog, Tjeldsund, Eidskog and Tana). Funds have been allocated to all the municipalities for local initiatives to improve the environment in which children grow up. The Norwegian Youth Council has also received funding for projects and programmes run by local non-governmental child and youth organizations and youth groups in all municipalities. A compilation of the lessons learned from the work in these municipalities will be published in spring 2002. Eight new municipalities (Skedsmo, Fauske, Time, Nedre Eiker, Askim, Verdal, Kautokeino and Lillesand) have been selected to participate in the programme for another three-year period (2002-2004).

By linking the efforts of the municipality and its various agencies, including schools, to those of parents, child and youth organizations and youth groups, useful experience will be acquired that can form the basis for more permanent efforts in other municipalities. The aim is to achieve a coordinated effort to improve the environment in which children

grow up in all municipalities in Norway.

Children and the media

In 2001 the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs presented a plan of measures entitled "Children, Young People and the Internet", aimed at ensuring that children and parents can use the Internet in the knowledge that such use will be a source of enjoyment and benefit. The Ministry has taken the initiative of establishing a body to coordinate measures for safer Internet use. This coordinating body will comprise representatives of the public authorities, trade organizations and organizations concerned with the Internet. The unit is to be a resource centre for various target groups and to coordinate measures and information flows. A resource centre will be established on the Internet where target groups can find relevant information and assistance in ensuring that children and young people use the Internet safely.

In connection with the debate on Report No. 57 (2000-2001) to the Storting: In the Service of Freedom of Expression. Media Policy Goals and Instruments, the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs asked the Storting to initiate research on the Internet habits of children and young people.

Children and participation

The Youth Forum for Democracy completed its work on 1 June 2001. The forum was established in December 1998 to provide input on ways in which children and young people can exercise greater influence on social development. The forum has put forward over 70 proposals that have been submitted to the Minister for Children and Family Affairs and then passed on to other relevant ministries and authorities at central and local level. Its proposals aim to increase pupil participation, increase youth representation in councils and committees, ensure that politicians are better informed, increase participation in elections and strengthen local democracy. The Youth Forum for Democracy summed up its efforts by concluding that there is a long way to go before children and young people have genuine influence in matters that concern them.

Over half of Norway's municipalities have established a body through which children and young people can exert influence (child and youth councils, youth municipal councils or the like), and a Youth County Council has been established in some counties. There are significant differences between municipalities as regards the amount of influence that children and young people have and the types of matters on which they are given an opportunity to voice an opinion. The major conference on participation arranged in spring 2001 for 500 young people and adults from Norwegian municipali-

Norway has participated in the EU project entitled *Connect: Tackling Violence in Schools*, and the Norwegian draft report was selected as one of three winning projects.

Photo: Rune Eraker



ties focused particular attention on how to achieve a fruitful dialogue between young people and the powers that be in municipalities. Old power structures, heavy, bureaucratic language and complicated administrative procedures constitute effective hindrances to input and initiatives on the part of children and young people. There is a need for more arenas for interaction and new working methods in municipalities to facilitate the participation of children and young people on their own terms.

Efforts to combat violence and crime in schools

The most important initiatives aimed at combating violence and crime in schools are incorporated in the Plan of Action to Combat Youth Crime (Report No. 17 (1999-2000) to the Storting). As proposed in the Plan of Action, a group of experts was appointed to carry out a research-based evaluation of measures and programmes currently used in Norwegian schools to prevent and tackle problem behaviour. The group concluded that there is currently only one programme that can be recommended for further use in schools without further evaluation: the Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme. Eight other programmes are described as promising in the sense that they should be further developed and evaluated in greater depth.

With funding from the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research (NOK 1 million per year from each ministry), all municipalities in Norway will be offered an opportunity in the next 4-5 years to participate in the Olweus programme, a programme of interventions to prevent bullying and anti-social behaviour administered by the HEMIL Centre at the University of Bergen. The programme focuses on what must be done to put a stop to bullying and everyday discrimination.

Two other measures may be mentioned in this connection:

- *School Mediation* is a programme aimed at tackling conflicts in schools in a constructive manner by using pupils as mediators. A project for school mediation in primary and lower secondary schools was completed in 2001. All primary and lower secondary schools in Norway have been offered the opportunity to participate in training in this programme. The project targeting upper secondary schools will be completed in 2002. The programme has made an impact on the environment at many schools that have tried it, and has helped to build experience and confidence that

conflicts can be resolved in a constructive manner.

- Norway has participated in the EU project entitled *Connect: Tackling Violence in Schools*. The Centre for Behavioural Research at the University College of Stavanger has technical responsibility for implementing the project. The Ministry has participated in a steering group. At a final conference in London in April 2002, the Norwegian draft report was selected as one of three winning projects along with those of Italy and England. The Norwegian project takes a broad approach to prevention and interventions to combat problem behaviour and physical violence in schools, and it is pointed out that this approach has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and the learning environment in general.

As a result of the Plan of Action, a centre has also been established at the University of Oslo that is to test methods for reducing problematic behaviour in schools.

Along with the Plan of Action to Combat Youth Crime, a report entitled "Evaluation of Programmes and Measures to Reduce Problem Behaviour and Develop Social Skills" will form the basis for future strategy and interventions in respect of schools. The report has been circulated for consultative comment, and in 2002 the Ministry of Justice will assess to what extent the working group's proposed legislative amendments and other measures are to be followed up.

Sexual abuse of children

In efforts to combat sexual abuse of children in 2001, priority was given to building up interdisciplinary networks in Norway's health regions and upgrading expertise in this

field. The main responsibility for this work was vested in a project (2000-2002) under the management of the Norwegian Board of Health.

On the initiative of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research, a working group headed by the Vest Agder County Governor prepared guidelines on the routines that should be followed if an employee is suspected of having sexually abused a child. This material, which primarily targets day care institutions, schools and child welfare institutions, has been submitted to the ministries concerned and been revised. The Norwegian Board of Health has the administrative responsibility for preparing a new general guidance document on efforts to prevent sexual abuse of children. Both guidance documents are expected to be published in the second half of 2002.

In 2001 the ministries concerned have continued to implement the Norwegian follow-up plan to combat sexual abuse of children. The most important new measures in 2001 were the provision of funding for a survey of child and youth prostitution in Norway, a report on trafficking in children (published by ECPAT-Norway) and an inter-agency course on minors who sell sex and child pornography.

Sexual exploitation of children means child pornography and child prostitution, possibly in connection with trafficking in children or so-called child sex tourism. In cooperation with Norwegian and Lithuanian authorities and with funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a three-day Norwegian-Lithuanian seminar was held on sexual exploitation of children. Within the framework of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Norwegian-Swedish initiative to establish an IT centre for children at risk was realized in 2001. The IT centre forms a network comprising public authorities, centres of expertise, various professional groups, organizations and others involved in work on these issues. Efforts were originally concentrated on sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, but are gradually also targeting other categories of children and young people at risk in this region.

Work on a revised recommendation by the Council of Europe on protecting children against sexual exploitation was headed by a Norwegian representative. The Council of Europe adopted the recommendation in October 2001. In addition to representatives from key professional groups and non-governmental organizations, an official Norwegian delegation headed by the Minister of Children and Family Affairs participated in the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Yokohama in

December 2001. Norway acceded to the Yokohama Global Commitment adopted at the congress.

The Norwegian plan to follow up the 1996 World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children has now been implemented.

Women

UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

As a State party to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Norway is obligated to submit reports on legal, administrative or other measures that it has adopted to implement the treaty provisions, and on the progress of this work. In March 2000 Norway submitted its Fifth Report, which covers the period 1994-1997. Norway has begun work on preparing its Sixth Report, which must be submitted by the end of May 2002. Norway will be examined on its Fifth and Sixth Report in January 2003.

In 1999 the UN General Assembly adopted an Optional Protocol to CEDAW. The Protocol gives women the right to submit complaints to the CEDAW Committee concerning alleged violations of their rights pursuant to the convention. It also authorizes the CEDAW Committee to investigate whether systematic and serious violations of the convention are being committed in a state. Proposition No. 31 (2001-2002) to the Storting on Consent to Ratification of the Optional Protocol of 6 October 1999 to the UN Convention of 18 December 1979 on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women provides further information about the protocol. Norway ratified the protocol on 15 March 2002.

The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs is in the process of considering how CEDAW can best be incorporated into Norwegian law. In 2001 the various ministries commented on this issue, including on the relationship between legislation in their respective areas and the treaty provisions, and on whether the convention can be incorporated to greater effect in current legislation. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs will prepare a consultation document which is scheduled to be circulated in 2003.

Amendments to the Gender Equality Act

Proposition No. 77 (2000-2001) to the Odelsting on amendments to the Gender Equality Act was presented to the Storting on 27 April 2001. The Storting debate on the proposition was not concluded in the spring session, and the proposition

The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs has been responsible for coordinating the efforts of a working group that has focused on developing specific measures for combating trafficking in women.

Photo: Olav Olsen/Scanpix

was therefore presented again on 5 October 2001 (Proposition No. 6 (2001-2002) to the Odelsting). It was to be debated by the Odelsting on 18 April 2002. The provision regarding equal pay is intended to clarify and specify that the requirement of equal pay for work of equal value applies notwithstanding professional and collective pay scales. Furthermore, key elements that must be considered when assessing whether work is of equal value have been incorporated into the Act. The proposition proposes to remove the limitation "when conditions are otherwise approximately equal". The possibility of positive differential treatment in connection with admission to educational programmes is placed on a par with the other rules in this area. In other words, the possibility of applying "a radical gender quota system" for women is introduced, while only a moderate quota system will remain applicable to men. The proposition also proposes that the Gender Equality Appeals Board be authorized to comment on whether a wage agreement is contrary to the Gender Equality Act, regardless of whether the issue is related to a specific case. As regards strict liability on the part of employers who infringe the gender equality provision, it proposes that compensation should not be contingent on proof of economic loss.

Proposition No. 77 (2000-2001) to the Odelsting proposes a provision requiring employers, the management of organizations and educational institutions to prevent sexual harassment from occurring within their spheres of responsibility. This provision may be enforced by the Gender Equality Ombud and the Gender Equality Appeals Board. It also proposes to introduce a prohibition to be enforced in respect of the person committing the harassment. Due process of law requires that such enforcement must be ordered by the courts. The Gender Equality Ombud may provide assistance and guidance in connection with complaints.

Alternative proposals for rules that ensure a certain minimum representation of both genders on boards of directors and executive committees in both public and private enterprises were circulated for consultative comment in summer 2001, with comments to be submitted by 1 October 2001. No final decision has been made on the proposals.

Gender equality - acquisition of knowledge

A new programme for gender research is currently being



established at the Research Council of Norway. Emphasis is on basic research, and commissioned research focuses on special issues related to current priority policy areas. Each year, Statistics Norway publishes the Gender Equality Barometer, which aims to measure the degree of equality between men and women in Norway.

Violence against and sexual abuse of women and children - the role of crisis centres

Work has been in progress on following up the Plan of Action against Violence and Abuse that Particularly Affect Women (2000-2002). This work is coordinated by the Ministry of Justice. A Forum on Violence against Women headed by the Ministry of Justice has also been established.

As part of the effort to highlight violence against women as a serious criminal problem and encourage a debate on how to reduce the extent of this violence, a committee on violence against women has also been established. This committee will primarily focus on the situation of women who are victims of violence and threats. As an important means of improving preventive efforts, it will also examine the situation of children who grow up in violent families. The committee will review children's need for help and assess how services can be improved through crisis centres and child welfare services in general.

The committee is to study how public services deal with women who have been subjected to violence and abuse, and assess the degree to which current services meet this group's overall need for assistance, as well as the needs of

particularly vulnerable groups: minority women, women with disabilities and elderly women. The survey is to culminate in an assessment of the need to strengthen practical assistance and contain proposals for changes to help the public sector improve its routines. The role of the crisis centres is to be evaluated, particularly with a view to enhancing the quality of the services provided to users, including children. The committee must consider whether, in connection with the change in the grant scheme, there is a need to give statutory status to crisis centres, and whether other problems arise in this connection that should be solved. Guidelines for monitoring the situation of children in crisis centres are being drawn up.

The committee should also examine more closely how preventive efforts can be strengthened by offering assistance to men who commit violence. Assessments are to be based on the lessons learned in the project under the Plan of Action to Combat Violence against Women, which aimed to systematize and process the knowledge that has been acquired in the various treatment facilities for violent men.

Prostitution

Norway participates in the EU project Daphne, which is part of the EU's framework strategy for combating all forms of violence against children, young people and women.

A decision to implement a campaign against trafficking in women in the Nordic and Baltic countries in 2002 was adopted at the informal meeting of Nordic-Baltic Ministers of Gender Equality in Vilnius on 15 June 2001. A decision was made at the meeting of Nordic Ministers of Justice on 16 August 2001 to take part in the campaign. The campaign aims to raise public awareness of this type of crime, provide information services to help victims and prevent other women from being involved in trafficking, and increase awareness and knowledge in institutions and organizations that provide funding for various cooperative programmes and projects of the need to provide job opportunities for women.

The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs has been responsible for coordinating the efforts of a working group that has focused on developing specific measures for combating trafficking in women.

Female genital mutilation

In December 2000, the Government presented a Plan of Action to Combat Female Genital Mutilation spanning a period of three years. The plan is now available in Norwegian, English, French and Somali. An inter-ministerial steering group has been established to be responsible for

implementing the plan. Its work will be coordinated by the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs.

In spring 2001 the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs arranged a major national conference to mark the start of the implementation of the Plan of Action. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is involved in broad international efforts in this field and provides support for a number of measures, both multilaterally and bilaterally. A workshop on the topic was also held for Norwegian non-governmental organizations in autumn 2001. The Norwegian Board of Health presented guidelines for health professionals in Norway in autumn 2000, followed by a circular to health professionals on the legal issues pertaining to female genital mutilation. The Act prohibiting female genital mutilation in Norway has been translated into seven languages and distributed in the form of a brochure. Most of the measures in the Plan of Action are to be implemented as part of a national project to combat female genital mutilation. Work on this part of the Plan of Action began in September 2001 and is being carried out in close cooperation with Oslo municipality. Measures under the project are financed by five government ministries. A national project coordinator has been appointed, a resource group has been established and staff have been employed to carry out a local project for Somalis in the Oslo area. In the local project, efforts to prevent female genital mutilation will form part of a broader campaign targeting the health of women and children in general and the needs of children and young people.

Women's health

In connection with the follow-up to Official Norwegian Report 1999:13 on women's health in Norway, a number of measures have been initiated that address human rights issues. These include:

- Measures to ensure the quality of treatment methods from a gender perspective. A report entitled "Women's Health - Treatment Methods from a Gender Perspective - a Pilot Project" was completed in 2001.
- The National Committee for Research Ethics in Norway has drawn up guidelines for clauses and criteria to ensure the inclusion of women in research projects.
- Routines have been established for reporting on the status of efforts to ensure that account is taken of gender issues and gender equality in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' spheres of responsibility. Account must be taken of gender equality and gender perspectives in routines for administrative procedures, reporting and evaluation in the Ministries' fields.
- A project has been established to integrate gender equality and the gender perspective into the sphere of rehabilitation.

The child benefit is automatically granted to the mother, but the new Act will not preclude child benefit being paid to the father if the parents so desire.

Photo: Photodisc

Survey and follow-up of the educational needs of immigrant women

In 2000 and 2001, Oslo municipality received additional funding for the completion of Norwegian language training programmes for immigrant women with special needs. These programmes targeted women who had exhausted their quota of hours of language training, in addition to requiring a childminder. The report on this project is expected to be presented in spring 2002.

The survey of the educational needs of immigrant women is part of a joint project between the National Education Office in Oslo/Akershus, Oslo municipality and the Institute for Applied Social Science, and will continue in 2002. The first part of the survey has revealed that many immigrant women drop out, and the Ministry has requested that the survey be continued in order to identify the reasons for the high drop-out rate and why many women seem to have difficulty completing the training programme. Efforts will also be made to obtain women's own assessments of their language training needs.

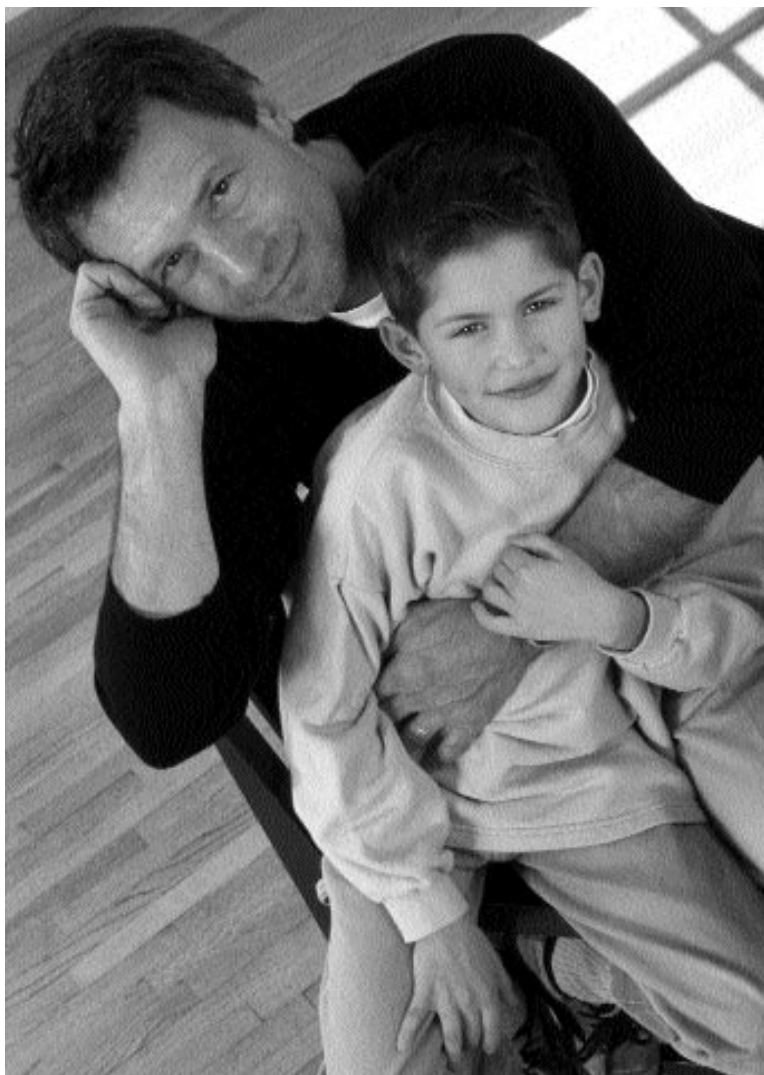
Family life

Equality between parents in relation to transfers of public funds

On 6 April 2001 the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs presented a draft of a new Child Benefit Act that was debated in the Odelsting on 7 February 2002. The new Child Benefit Act is formulated in more gender-neutral terms than the former Act, in which child benefit is largely a scheme for mothers. The child benefit is automatically granted to the mother, but the new Act will not preclude child benefit being paid to the father if the parents so desire.

Equality of cohabitants and spouses as regards paternity and parental responsibility

Official Norwegian Report 1999:25 on Cohabitants and Society proposed to amend the Children Act so as to give cohabiting parents joint parental responsibility on the basis of a declaration that the child is their common child and that they will care for him or her jointly. Under the current Act, only spouses automatically have joint parental responsibility for their common children. Moreover, only the man to whom the mother was married at the time of the child's birth is



automatically regarded as the father of the child. The Government has begun to prepare a report to the Storting on the family, in which the proposals of the Cohabitant Committee will be examined. In this connection, the question of whether it may be appropriate to establish a system of registration for cohabitants will be considered, and the question of joint parental responsibility for cohabiting parents will be discussed.

Measures to combat forced marriages

The Government's Plan of Action against Forced Marriages was presented in December 1998 and expired on 31 December 2001. Efforts in this area are long-term and will not be wound up even though the Plan of Action has come to an end. Information material has been prepared, measures have been implemented to familiarize marriage solemnizers with the Marriage Act, and information has been distributed to all secondary schools and incorporated into gender equality

guidelines. Through the Plan of Action, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs has allocated funds for a number of projects which are run by non-governmental organizations and aim at preventing forced marriages. The Institute of Applied Social Science (FAFO) has evaluated these efforts by carrying out a review of the eight largest recipients. Its report was submitted in February 2002 and is currently under consideration by the Ministry. The other measures in the Plan of Action are also being summed up by the inter-ministerial group that has continuously monitored the process. Proposals for thirty new measures were presented in April 2002. A hotline providing information on forced marriages was established in spring 2000 for a three-year period. The hotline, which is run by the Oslo Red Cross International Centre (ORKIS), will be evaluated before any decision is made regarding its further operation.

Lesbians and homosexuals

Report No. 25 (2000-2001) to the Storting on living conditions and quality of life for lesbians and homosexuals in Norway was presented to and debated by the Storting in spring 2001. The report points out that a number of social changes in the past 20-30 years have brought about a positive change in people's attitudes towards homosexuality. However, we still know too little about the current situation for homosexuals and lesbians. Further research on homosexuality should focus on both the current situation and the history of homosexuality in Norway. As regards the legal status of homosexuals, the Report to the Storting proposes that consideration be given to amending sections 232 and 292 of the General Civil Penal Code to the effect that the fact that crimes of violence and gross vandalism were motivated by a person's sexual orientation may be an aggravating circumstance in relation to the assessment of sentence, as in the case of racially motivated crimes of violence. It proposes to continue to provide information on homosexuality to young people, parents and persons involved in youth work. The Plan to Strengthen Mental Health Services aims at generally upgrading services in this field, thereby also benefiting lesbians and homosexuals. The follow-up project for suicide prevention targets particularly vulnerable groups, including lesbians and homosexuals. Specific research projects are to be formulated in cooperation with relevant groups, and knowledge of lesbians and homosexuals is to be incorporated as part of the project's communication strategy.

Report No. 25 (2000-2001) to the Storting on living conditions and quality of life for lesbians and homosexuals in Norway was debated by the Storting in spring 2001.

Photo: Photodisc



The work carried out by the National Organization for Lesbian and Gay Liberation - Norway (LLH) is very important, and the Report therefore proposes that support for this organization be increased. The increase is aimed at reinforcing the organization's position as a mouthpiece and counselling body for homosexuals and lesbians. A liaison group comprising representatives from relevant government ministries has been established to jointly follow up the proposals in the Report, which will be implemented in 2002.

Mental health

Through work on the Plan to Strengthen Mental Health Services (1999-2006), attention is focused on both preventive efforts and on improving treatment and services in various fields of mental health. In 2001, in addition to general efforts to improve treatment, housing and services, there was particular emphasis on the following areas:

Improving treatment for persons with eating disorders through the implementation of a special **Strategic Plan to Prevent Eating Disorders**. Among other things, efforts are focused on upgrading expertise in both primary and specialized health services, and on developing a specialized treatment programme at Haukeland Hospital for persons with serious eating disorders.

The user perspective was strengthened in 2001. A total of NOK 9 million was allocated to strengthen the work of user

organizations in the field of mental health, in addition to which NOK 4 million was allocated for various projects aimed at promoting increased user participation among children, young people and adults in all mental health services. Furthermore, the responsibility of the state health authorities at regional level for applying the principle of user participation in developing and implementing services was established by statute.

Ensuring that the mentally ill have the opportunity to work is an important priority. The aim is to develop work programmes that are as flexible as possible to enable the mentally ill to be employed. For most people, this is an important condition for achieving a sense of self-worth and quality of life.

The mental health of **children and young people** is an important priority area, in order both to improve the conditions in which children and young people live and grow up and to prevent suffering later in life. In 2001, in addition to developing treatment programmes, emphasis was placed on the importance of municipalities giving stronger priority to children and young people. There seems to be a positive trend in municipal priorities in this respect.

The use of coercion in mental health care

The new Mental Health Care Act entered into force on 1 January 2001. The purpose of the new rules is to achieve clearer regulation of the use of coercion in mental health care, thereby strengthening patients' legal safeguards. The Ministry is working on the preparation of more comparable statistics on the use of coercion in mental health care. The Ministry has allocated NOK 1.1 million to the so-called "breakthrough project" that has been implemented on a trial basis at mental health care institutions under the Norwegian Medical Association. The project entails changing working routines with a view to reducing the use of coercion.

Freedom of religion and belief

Evaluation of the school subject Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education

Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education was introduced as a compulsory subject in primary and lower secondary schools on 1 July 1997. A statutory right was then established to limited exemption from parts of the subject.

The introduction of the subject initially met with criticism from organizations such as the Norwegian Humanist Association and the Islamic Council of Norway. These organiza-

tions decided to institute legal proceedings against the Norwegian state to claim full exemption from the subject, but lost their case in Oslo City Court in spring 1999. The Norwegian Humanist Association appealed the judgment to the Borgarting Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court, but lost in both instances, most recently in autumn 2001.

The Storting originally asked the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs to undertake an evaluation of the subject and the right to partial exemption within three years of the introduction of the subject. The evaluation report was presented in October 2000. On the basis of two evaluation reports and comments by relevant organizations and religious and belief communities, the Ministry prepared Report No. 32 (2000-2001) to the Storting on evaluation of the Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education subject. The report was debated by the Storting in spring 2001, cf. Recommendation No. 240 (2000-2001) to the Storting.

The Storting voted to maintain the subject as a compulsory subject under the designation of Christianity and Other Religious and Ethical Education, emphasizing at the same time that teaching must take place in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner and not be confessional. The subject is intended to provide pupils with knowledge of different religions and beliefs, not instruct them in a specific faith. The right to partial exemption will be better safeguarded in practice by means of a simple notification procedure.

The Ministry has followed up the Storting debate with the following measures:

- A circular regarding the subject to schools and municipalities, etc. and an information sheet to parents with the standard notification form for partial exemption in 12 languages
- Preparation of a draft revised curriculum for Christianity and Other Religious and Ethical Education by a broad-based working group, which has included representatives from the Islamic Council of Norway, the Buddhist Association and the Norwegian Humanist Association
- Preparation of new guidelines for teachers
- A review of textbooks/teaching aids for this subject
- In-service training for teachers and school administrators - human resource development
- A new name for the subject - legislative amendment, cf.
- Proposition No. 30 (2001-2002) to the Odelsting

Review of the administration of the Act relating to religious communities and the Act relating to philosophical

communities with a view to safeguarding the rights of minorities

The report of the working group that reviewed the administration of the Act relating to religious communities and the Act relating to philosophical communities with a view to safeguarding the rights of minorities was circulated for consultative comment in 2001. On the whole, the comments were positive. The working group's report will be followed up by the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs, which took over administrative responsibility for the two Acts from 1 January 2002.

Freedom of expression

In Official Norwegian Report 1997:27 presented in September 1999, the Commission on Freedom of Expression proposed to reformulate Article 100 of the Constitution of Norway on freedom of expression. Besides proposing a new constitutional provision relating to protection of freedom of expression, the commission also recommended a number of legislative amendments. On 12 November 1999, the Ministry of Justice circulated the commission's report for consultative comment.

The time limit pursuant to Article 112 of the Constitution for submitting a proposal to amend the Constitution for debate in the next parliamentary period expired when the Storting was dissolved on 28 September 2000. On 1 September 2000, therefore, the Government presented Report No. 42 (1999-2000) to the Storting on amending Article 100 of the Constitution. The report presents the Commission on Freedom of Expression's own proposal for a new constitutional provision in Article 100, and contains a number of alternative drafts of a new constitutional provision on freedom of expression based on the study carried out by the committee. The purpose of the report was to give Storting representatives an opportunity to consider the proposals and, if appropriate, to present alternatives. The report did not express any opinion as to which draft should be chosen.

The alternative versions of Article 100 of the Constitution which are formulated in the Appendix to the Report to the Storting were presented as constitutional drafts by a group of individual Storting representatives on 28 September 2000. A proposal was also presented to introduce a section 100 a to the Constitution to enshrine the principle of transparency.

On the basis of the commission's report and Report No. 42 (1999-2000) to the Storting, the Ministry of Justice is currently preparing another Report to the Storting which will contain a more detailed analysis and evaluation of the

issues raised by the commission's study. In this report, the various proposals and alternatives presented in the previous Report to the Storting will be discussed more thoroughly, so as to give the Storting a better basis for choosing between the different alternatives. The aim is to present the report in the course of the first half of 2003.

Media policy

Through a code of ethics that applies to the entire Norwegian media industry, the media seek to protect freedom of expression and information. The authorities have a positive responsibility for facilitating freedom of expression and communication in society. One of the primary goals is to protect freedom of expression as a prerequisite for a vibrant democracy. Instruments such as regulation of ownership, press subsidies and public service broadcasting are intended to promote media diversity and diversity in media content. The goals and instruments of media policy as regards freedom of expression are described in Report No. 57 (2000-2001) to the Storting: In the Service of Freedom of Expression. On 25 April 2002 the report was debated by the Storting, which endorsed the vast majority of the proposals.

Adult education

Proposed Act on the right of adults to primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education

The Storting has adopted a resolution to the effect that adults in need of primary and lower secondary education are to have an individual right to such education. This right will enter into force as from the 2002-2003 school year. Teaching is to be tailored to individual needs. Thirty-seven municipalities have participated in a project to define the need for primary and lower secondary education and develop teaching models adapted to the needs of adults. On the basis of this survey, which was completed in autumn 2000, the municipalities have developed teaching models that are now being tested and further elaborated.

Since August 2000, adults (persons born before 1978 who are not covered by the 1994 reform of upper secondary education) also have a statutory right to upper secondary education. The amendments to the Regulations relating to the Education Act apply as from 1 February 2001. Allocations from the government budget for 2001 for the development of flexible, adult-oriented teaching models totalled NOK 10 million for primary and lower secondary education and NOK 18 million for upper secondary education.

Biotechnology

Evaluation of the Act on the medical use of biotechnology

The Ministry of Health is in the process of evaluating the Act of 5 August 1994 No. 56 on the medical use of biotechnology. The results of the evaluation were presented in a Report to the Storting in March 2002. In order to give children who were conceived by means of artificial insemination using donated sperm an opportunity to obtain information concerning their biological father, the report will contain a proposal to abolish the current system that guarantees anonymity for sperm donors.

Use of biological material from human beings

The proposal in Proposition No. 77 (1999-2000) to the Odelsting on amendments to the Act of 9 February 1973 No. 6 on transplantation, hospital autopsies and the donation of bodies, etc. relating to the prohibition of the commercial use of biological material from human beings, including cells and tissue from aborted fetuses, was adopted by the Storting and entered into force on 1 July 2001. The same applies to the proposal in the same proposition concerning a temporary prohibition, until 1 January 2003, against the transfer of living biological material from animals to human beings (xenotransplantation).

The collection, storage and use of biological material from human beings (biobanks)

On 28 January 2000 the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs appointed a committee to evaluate various issues related to the collection, storage and use of biological material from human beings. The committee presented its recommendation on 20 June 2001 (Official Norwegian Report 2001:19) with a proposal for an Act on biobanks. The purpose of the Act is to ensure that biobank activities are carried out in a way that promotes the interests of the individual and society and that ensures respect for the human dignity of the individual, while safeguarding and protecting human diversity and personal integrity.

The recommendation was circulated for consultative comment, and the Ministry of Health presented a proposal



for an Act on biobanks to the Storting in March 2002 (Proposition No. 56 (2001-2002) to the Odelsting).

Unsolicited genetic counselling

In 2001 the Ministry of Health continued its work on drafting regulations defining the diseases that qualify for unsolicited genetic counselling. In January 2002 draft regulations were circulated for consultative comments, which were to be submitted by April 2002.

Use of genetic health data

Official Norwegian Report 2000:23 on the collection, storage and use of genetic data by insurance companies will, as regards use of genetic data, be followed up in connection with the evaluation of the Biotechnology Act. The proposal of the committee that prepared the report on the use of genetic data will be assessed as part of this evaluation.

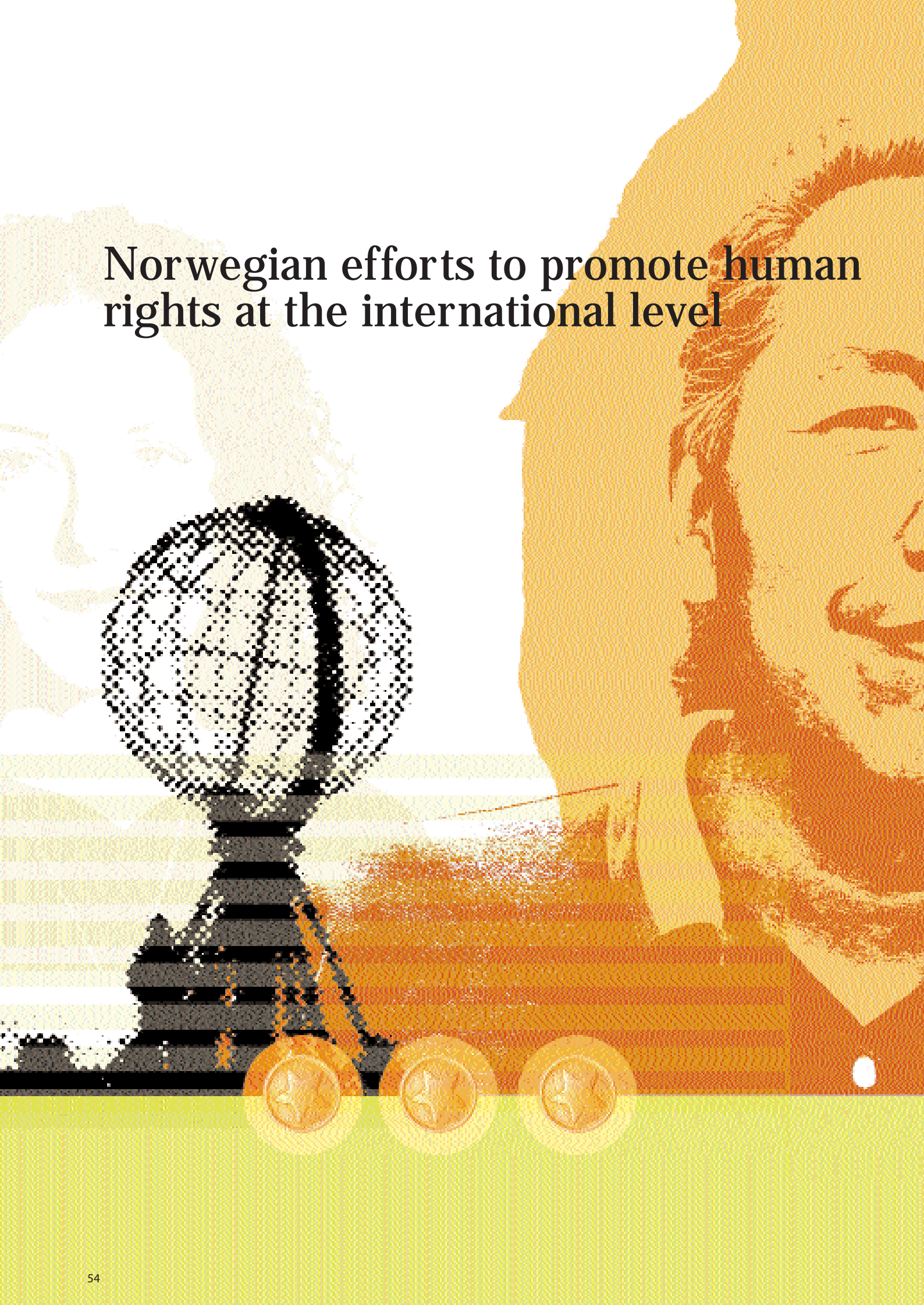
The right to environmental information

The right to information on matters of significance for health and the environment and to participate in decision-making processes concerning such matters has been emphasized in many UN forums. Article 110 b of the Constitution of Norway states that citizens are "entitled to be informed of the state of the natural environment and of the effects of any encroachments on nature that are planned or commenced." It is evident from the provision that further rules are to be laid down to implement this principle. Partly on this basis, a broad-based committee was appointed to examine the current legal position and assess the need for legislative amendments. The committee submitted its recommendation in January 2001 (NOU 2001:2 The Right to Environmental Information). On the basis of the committee's recommendation, the Ministry of the Environment is preparing a proposal for a new Act which is to be presented to the Storting in spring 2002.

The new Act is also part of the process of Norway's ratification of the European Aarhus Convention of 1998 on access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision-making. However, the committee has proposed rules that in several areas exceed the requirements pursuant to the convention.

Norway gives priority to international activities that contribute to the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in letter and spirit, particularly in Eastern and Central European countries where there is a considerable need for human resource development and capacity building in these fields.

Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level





Introduction

The international section of this Annual Report deals with Norway's efforts to promote human rights at the international level. Although human rights are primarily the obligations of governments towards their own citizens, they also entail a universal responsibility.

Human rights play an increasingly important role in Norway's international activities. International efforts to promote greater respect for human rights take place at many levels. Norway participates in various multilateral forums, in which the UN plays a particularly important role as a standard-setter and provider of assistance in the field of human rights. Human rights are promoted in the UN General Assembly's Third Committee, the UN Commission on Human Rights, the UN Commission on the Status of Women and in the different negotiating processes which take place under the auspices of the UN and which are aimed at strengthening the protection of human rights. Norway has also made contributions to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Moreover, Norway participates actively in the human rights efforts carried out within the framework of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The promotion of human rights has traditionally been regarded as being separate from development cooperation. Today, it is clear that development cooperation is largely a question of providing assistance to realize human rights. This applies to all groups of rights, both civil and political rights and social, economic and cultural rights.

This review of Norway's international commitment to human rights is structured in the same way as the Plan of Action for Human Rights, but also includes a special section on Norwegian efforts in individual countries.

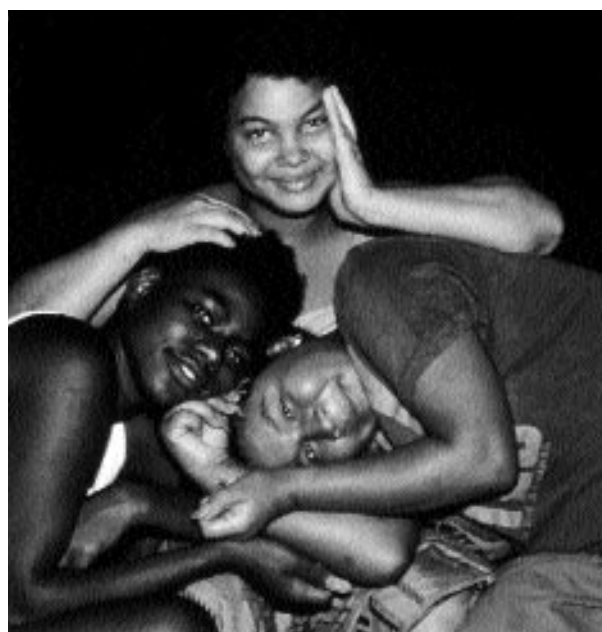
Cooperation with like-minded countries

In international human rights efforts, cooperation with like-minded countries is necessary to obtain the requisite support for desired measures. Such cooperation is often informal, having sprung from a common understanding of human dignity and human rights. Partners in dialogues and alliances vary depending on the type of human rights concerned. In this connection, there has been particularly extensive cooperation between the Nordic countries. Other European countries, particularly the Netherlands, Germany and the UK have also been close partners in many connections. Mention should also be made here of the Lysøen Human Security Network. This network, in which thirteen

countries participate, originated as a bilateral partnership between Norway and Canada in 1998. The network is an informal, flexible mechanism designed to identify specific areas for potential collective action within the concept of "human security" (freedom from fear). The network wishes to focus international attention on current and future humanitarian issues. The members of the network are Norway, Canada, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Ireland, Greece, Austria, Slovenia, Chile, Mali, Jordan, Thailand and South Africa (observer). Since its inception, the Network has held four ministerial meetings.

The Plan of Action covers a multitude of measures designed to enhance international human rights efforts.

Photo: Håkon Lislerud/Norwegian Church Aid



Negotiation processes

Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Work on elaborating an Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture began in 1994. The aim is to establish a sub-committee to the UN Committee against Torture, with more extensive investigative powers than those of the Committee itself. The intention is that the sub-committee shall have authority to visit member states and inspect prisons and other institutions in which persons are deprived of their liberty in order to ascertain whether torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is taking place. This system is intended as a supplement to the work done today by the Committee against Torture.

The negotiations on the Optional Protocol have been difficult. The fact that certain restrictive states have wished to require the sub-committee to obtain the consent of the recipient state before carrying out visits and to enable the recipient state to exercise extensive control of the implementation of the visit has been particularly problematic.

The working group held its Ninth Session in February 2001. Little progress was made in the negotiations. Various alternative draft texts were presented, but no consensus was reached. However, the draft of an Optional Protocol was adopted at the 58th Commission on Human Rights in 2002. Norway supported the adoption of the Protocol, as was mentioned by the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs in his main intervention at the Commission. The draft will be put to a vote at the UN General Assembly in autumn 2002.

ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Worst Forms of Child Labour

In 2001 Norway ratified the ILO convention concerning the worst forms of child labour. The convention requires ratifying countries to take immediate and effective measures to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour, such as slavery and other forms of forced labour, commercial sexual exploitation and work that exposes children to the risk of accident or health hazards. As of 1 March 2002, 156 of the ILO member countries had ratified this convention. From June 2002 Norway will be a member of the ILO Board and will thus have greater opportunity to exercise influence in the organization.

Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child relating to the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

In 2001 Norway was one of the first countries to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) relating to the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The Optional Protocol serves to strengthen the CRC, particularly because it requires States Parties to adopt legislation that will make a large number of

acts related to the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography criminal offences. The protocol defines the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The need for international cooperation, such as in the form of mutual legal assistance, is emphasized. States Parties must report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on their efforts to comply with their obligations pursuant to the protocol. The protocol entered into force after being ratified by ten countries. As of 10 May 2002, 27 states had ratified the protocol.

Protocol No. 13 to the European Convention on Human Rights concerning the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances

Norway has participated in negotiations on the elaboration of Protocol No. 13 to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which requires states to abolish the death penalty in all circumstances, including in time of war.

Protocol No. 13 goes further than Protocol No. 6 to the ECHR, which was adopted on 28 April 1983. Protocol No. 6 is based on abolishment of the death penalty. However, article 2 of this protocol allows states to impose the death penalty for acts carried out in time of war or of imminent threat of war. Under the new Protocol No. 13, states will also be prohibited from imposing the death penalty for acts committed in time of war or imminent threat of war. Support for this protocol will once again be an important political signal that the death penalty is considered to be an unacceptable form of punishment. The protocol was signed by Norway and 32 other countries on 3 May 2002. At the same time three countries also ratified the protocol, which will not enter into force until it is ratified by ten states.

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Work on elaborating a UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was begun in the Commission on Human Rights in 1995. The Commission has established a special working group charged with preparing a draft declaration based on the text proposed by the sub-commission.

The negotiations on the declaration have been and still are difficult. It has proved particularly difficult to achieve agreement on issues relating to the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination, land rights and collective rights. The General Assembly's stated goal is that a declaration of this nature should be adopted by the end of the International Decade of Indigenous Peoples (2004). In view of the slow progress being made in the negotiations, it is uncertain whether it will be possible to finalize the declaration before the end of the decade. The working group was to have held its 7th session in autumn 2001, but the session was postponed until January 2002 for practical reasons.

Norway participates actively in this process with a view to ensuring that the goal of the General Assembly is achieved.

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

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Multilateral mechanisms and monitoring arrangements

The UN Commission on Human Rights

The 57th Session of the Commission on Human Rights was the scene of strong political differences, which were expressed in the plenary debate, in negotiations on resolutions and during the voting. There were far more votes and procedural debates at the 57th Session than usual. Many resolutions that had previously been adopted by consensus were the object of lengthy debates resulting in votes that did not necessarily culminate in any significant amendments in relation to previously accepted wordings. The threshold for requesting a vote was lower than before. Greater use was made of separate votes to indicate reservations in cases where an explanation of vote would previously have been natural. The "North-South" politicization was relatively evident, and was reinforced by a number of resolutions on macro-economic conditions with little human rights content.

However, the growing attention focused on human rights must be seen as positive, as is the fact that this attention seems to be spreading to increasingly larger areas of the world. Never before have so many political leaders participated, including the UN Secretary General, five heads of state and a great many foreign ministers. More than 3600 delegates attended the session and more than 250 non-governmental organizations were represented.

Norway was particularly satisfied with the debate on the resolution on human rights defenders, which was tabled by Norway. The report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights defenders was well received and the resolution, which clearly supports and consolidates the mandate and activities of the Special Representative, was adopted by consensus. The fact that a consensus on the resolution on internally displaced persons was re-established, after the harrowing debate in the ECOSOC in summer 2000, is also encouraging.

Country debates and country resolutions

As usual, considerable attention was devoted to the debate on the human rights situation in individual countries. Thorny negotiations were anticipated on several situations, particularly in the Middle East, Chechnya and Iran. The submission of the resolutions on China and Cuba aroused great interest.

In a new development this year, the African Group was well-coordinated and active in presenting its "own" country resolutions, with the result that the texts were generally weakened. It also resulted in the loss of the Special Rapporteur on Rwanda, following a vote on the issue.

Of a total of 16 country resolutions under agenda item 9, eight were adopted by consensus, seven were adopted by vote and one was dismissed. Under agenda item 5, the two Middle East resolutions were adopted by vote. In addition, the chairman's text on the situation in Colombia was adopted under agenda item 3 and the resolutions relating to Haiti, Cambodia and Somalia were adopted under agenda item 19 (advisory services and technical assistance in the human rights area).

The debate on the Middle East resolutions reflected the current situation in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as the unsuccessful outcome of the Special Session on Palestine in autumn 2000. The EU Chairmanship put considerable effort into achieving texts on the human rights situation in the occupied territories that would make it possible for most Western countries to abstain from voting. This strategy succeeded, with the result that, as usual, only the USA, among the Western countries, voted against these resolutions. Somewhat surprisingly, it was joined by Guatemala.

As usual, China submitted a no-action motion with regard to the resolution presented by the USA on the human rights situation in China, and won the vote on this issue. China was very active prior to the debate on the resolution and was well assisted by its numerous allies among the developing countries. Norway voted against the no-action motion for reasons of principle.

As has been its practice in earlier years, Cuba was very active in efforts to prevent the adoption of the Czech resolution on the human rights situation in Cuba. Attempts were made, without success, to include a text criticizing the embargo. Norway voted in favour of the resolution, but was not a co-sponsor.

The EU negotiated up to the very last minute with Russia to reach agreement on a chairman's text on the human rights situation in Chechnya. Other players felt that they were relegated to the sidelines. The USA chose not to support the agreement that was reached between the EU and Russia. The resolution that was presented in the event the negotiations on a chairman's text should break down was therefore put to a vote and adopted.

In the light of the fact that the resolution on Iran was adopted by a narrow margin in 2000, there was some uncertainty, given the Commission's new composition, as to whether there would be a majority of votes in favour of the resolution. The outcome was better than expected. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur was extended by one year.

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

The resolution on Sudan was put to a vote, despite the fact that both the main sponsor, the EU, and Sudan had requested that the resolution be adopted by consensus. The USA asked for a vote, claiming that the reference to slavery was too weak. As a result, there were a large number of abstentions.

The traditional omnibus resolution on the Balkans was amended to a resolution on South-Eastern Europe. The Commission was urged to appoint a Special Representative for one year to investigate the human rights situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Yugoslavia, and to give him a special mandate to examine the situation in Kosovo. The resolution, which no longer includes Croatia, was adopted by vote.

The resolution on Rwanda, which the African Group itself took charge of without entering into real negotiations with outsiders, was adopted after a lengthy debate on procedures and subsequent vote. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur has been terminated. Norway supported a Canadian proposal which included extending the mandate, but this proposal was not put to a vote.

As usual, the resolution on Iraq was adopted by a large majority. The other resolutions and chairman's texts under the agenda item for country situations were adopted by consensus.

Debates on thematic issues and resolutions

The thematic resolutions were far more difficult than in earlier years. This was partly due to the contentious political mood that was apparent prior to the start of the session, partly to the submission of the resolutions on China and Cuba, and partly to less flexible US positions including a refusal to include references to rights excerpted from the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The result was that the most influential developing countries adopted a far more restrictive, aggressive attitude to traditional consensus resolutions on civil and political rights. The threshold for demanding a vote on the thematic resolutions was lowered significantly. There was also a tendency to demand a vote when an explanation of vote might have been sufficient to indicate reservations.

The resolution on human rights defenders that was tabled by Norway was adopted by consensus. There were a total of 71 co-sponsors for the resolution. With this consensus decision, the goal of consolidating the Special Representative's mandate and activities was achieved. The report of the Special Representative was welcomed in the resolution. Furthermore, an important operative paragraph was

included urging states to implement effective measures to protect human rights defenders. This was an important addition in relation to the resolution that was adopted at the 55th Session of the General Assembly.

As expected, the discussions on the right to development were difficult. South Africa made an energetic, but fruitless attempt to obtain a consensus. Based on a draft prepared by the Non-Allied Group, many rounds of negotiations were held without reaching a result that was acceptable to the Group of Western Countries. At the last minute the Non-Allied Group made certain amendments to the text, making it possible for most EU countries and Norway to vote in favour of the resolution, which was adopted. However, there was a separate vote on the most controversial paragraphs, in which Norway and several other countries chose to abstain in order to indicate their disassociation with the direction that the discussion on the right to development was taking. The resolution renewed the mandate of the independent expert for three years and staked out a further course that mainly leads towards a debate on "the international dimension" of the right to development.

The Commission also debated other resolutions which mainly concerned trade between states, development assistance and macro-economic conditions and in which the responsibility of the states was forgotten. Pakistan tabled a resolution on globalization that was adopted by vote. The resolution, which was not negotiated, adversely affected the mood in the negotiations on the right to development.

One of Cuba's new initiatives was a resolution on international solidarity, emphasizing commitments as regards development assistance and the relationship between international solidarity and the possibility of fully observing human rights obligations. This resolution was also adopted by a vote that, not unexpectedly, followed a purely North-South dividing line.

During the negotiations on the resolution on economic and social and cultural rights, focus was primarily on the issue of further work on an Optional Protocol to the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In this respect, the Group of Latin American Countries, certain African countries and Finland attached particular importance to making swift progress, advocating the establishment of a working group. Many countries believed this to be somewhat premature. As a compromise, it was proposed that an independent expert be appointed to evaluate the issue and work on the committee's draft with a view to the possible establishment of a working group for the next session. This was acceptable to all countries except the USA. Instead of

indicating its reservation by means of an explanation of vote, the USA requested a separate vote to put its view on record.

Negotiations on the rights of women have become increasingly difficult. This seems to be connected to a clearer demarcation of cultural and religious divisions, and is considered to be a negative trend. Only after very long and arduous negotiations was a consensus finally reached on the resolution on the elimination of violence against women. The resolution on women's right to land, property and adequate housing was adopted after a vote.

The clearly most difficult resolution under the agenda item concerning civil and political rights was, not unexpectedly, the resolution on torture. Traditionally, this is a resolution that is adopted by consensus. This time, however, the resolution was subjected to systematic, coordinated attacks, the main target of which was the reference to the Special Rapporteur and his report. One of the main reasons for the criticism was the Special Rapporteur's failure to comply with the resolution adopted at the Commission's Special Session in autumn 2000 requiring him to visit the occupied Palestinian territories. After lengthy negotiations and numerous postponements, a vote was taken on several paragraphs of the resolution. All the proposals were defeated and in the end the resolution as a whole was adopted by consensus. The criticism of the Special Rapporteur's working methods, which was expressed by Cuba in particular, was deplored by several member states, which pointed out that this type of criticism of the Special Rapporteur has the effect of undermining the mechanisms of the Commission.

The resolution on freedom of expression, another resolution that is traditionally adopted by consensus, was also challenged. While the objections to the resolution on torture arose from the Middle East controversy, the criticism of the resolution on freedom of expression was based in part on the racism debate (prohibition against racist organizations). The resolution was also contested on the basis of the apparent general desire of some countries to weaken or change the focus of the content of the thematic resolutions. Cuba and Pakistan succeeded in obtaining an amendment to one of the paragraphs which, strictly speaking, can be interpreted as an obligation to prohibit racist organizations. This resulted in Australia and the USA withdrawing as co-sponsors. Furthermore, there were demands for votes on a large number of paragraphs, all of which achieved a solid majority. The resolution as a whole was adopted.

In the light of the negotiations at the 55th Session of the UN General Assembly, it was feared that the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on summary and arbitrary executions

would not be extended. This assumption proved incorrect, and the mandate was extended for another three years. The negotiations on resolutions were difficult and time-consuming. The Organization of Islamic Countries had trouble accepting the reference to executions of persons on grounds of sexual orientation, and this reference was deleted in order to achieve consensus.

The negotiations on the resolution on enforced or involuntary disappearances were also difficult. The problems were related to the proposal to appoint an independent expert to study a draft convention in this area and the establishment of a working group for subsequent negotiations on the convention. The USA requested a vote on this last point, on the ground that the independent expert should be free to make recommendations. The USA's proposal was defeated. After first expressing doubt about the need for a new legal instrument in this area, Norway co-sponsored the resolution. The Group of Latin American Countries regarded the adoption of the resolution as an important victory.

A new development in 2001 was a Brazilian resolution on access to medication in the context of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS. The EU attempted to combine this resolution with the Polish resolution on HIV/AIDS, since it was widely held that the issue of access to medication should be viewed in a broader context. The question was also raised as to whether the text of the resolution might to some extent be at variance with trade policy treaties. The Brazilian delegation demonstrated great flexibility during the negotiations, with the result that the text was adopted with a large margin of support. Norway was a co-sponsor and made an intervention in connection with the vote. The intervention was received with great interest by the Secretariat, Brazil and several other countries.

The resolution on defamation of religion, which was adopted by consensus in 2000, was submitted to a vote in 2001 after very difficult negotiations. It was hoped that the resolution would not be tabled, but due to the controversy at the 55th Session of the UN General Assembly on honour killings, the Islamic countries chose to do so. The resolution was adopted. Norway and all like-minded countries opposed the resolution, and Norway and Canada jointly presented an explanation of vote.

The proposal of Mexico and Guatemala to appoint a Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples encountered considerable opposition from countries such as Canada, Australia, USA, New Zealand and the Asian Group of Countries. Resistance gradually diminished and the resolution was eventually adopted by consensus. The mandate could be of great signif-

Norway submitted a total of five draft resolutions and decisions. The Norwegian delegation was particularly pleased about the resolution on human rights defenders that was adopted by consensus.

■ NORWAY. Photo: Amnesty International



...ance for indigenous peoples and could also lead to the Sub-Commission's Working Group for Indigenous Peoples being dismantled after a review of the mechanisms in this area.

The Canadian resolution on impunity was submitted to a vote by China. Norway won no support for its sceptical view of wordings in the resolution that suggest that individuals and non-governmental groups may violate human rights, and the fact that no violation of human rights is a crime per se.

Norway's goals and results

Norway sought to make respect for human rights a broader concern within and outside the UN and to promote respect for human rights, particularly in countries where serious and systematic violations of such rights occur. Due to the general North-South polarization, the positive trend from the 56th Session was not sustained as far as had been hoped. The traditional dividing lines, between Western countries which are particularly concerned to protect civil and political rights and countries in the South which give greater priority to economic, social and cultural rights, were again highly visible.

Norway tabled a total of five draft resolutions and decisions, the most important of which were the resolution on human rights defenders and a draft decision on fundamental standards of humanity. Furthermore, on behalf of the Western

Group of Countries, Norway presented three draft decisions relating to the work of the Sub-Commission, one on the establishment of a Social Forum, one on a study of the right to drinking water and one on a Working Group on Administration of Justice. All of the proposals tabled by Norway were adopted by consensus.

Norway also sought to ensure more precise, correct use of international legal terms in a number of negotiations on resolutions. The aim was to avoid wordings whereby it may appear that parties other than states may violate human rights, among other things to prevent misunderstandings in relation to the system of international administration of justice that is now being developed through the establishment of the International Criminal Court and country tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. On the whole, Norway received only limited support for these efforts, partly because negotiations on resolutions often have to do with established wordings based on political compromises, where reopening the question of the wording raises more problems than it solves, and because countries that share Norway's views on the International Criminal Court and the international administration of justice do not see the same dangers as Norway in the Commission on Human Rights' use of language.

Norway made 10 interventions in the plenary session,

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including the main intervention held by then Minister of Foreign Affairs Thorbjørn Jagland. Norway also made an intervention on behalf of the Nordic countries, and participated in a similar Nordic intervention that was made by Denmark. Norway also took part in a joint intervention held by New Zealand on behalf of Australia, Canada, Chile, New Zealand and Norway. Norway participated actively in many negotiations on resolutions and held 10 explanations of votes and interventions in connection with votes, five of them jointly with Canada.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has traditionally primarily served as secretariat for the UN Commission on Human Rights and its mechanisms, and for the treaty-based monitoring committees. In the past few years, the Office has also established a presence in a number of countries where it performs both advisory and monitoring functions. Through the Secretary-General's reform of the UN system in 1997, the Office of the High Commissioner was given a greater role in integrating human rights into the UN system. The Office has therefore increased its efforts to provide technical assistance and advisory services in the field of human rights to both governments and the UN system.

The current High Commissioner, former Irish President Mary Robinson, has implemented a number of reforms and changes in the Office's policy and administration, resulting in a gradual increase in the office's efficiency and general activities.

However, the increased level of activity of the Office has not been accompanied by an equivalent increase in allocations from the regular UN budget. Over half of the Office's funding in 2001 came from voluntary contributions. In 2001, Norway contributed approximately USD 2.8 million (NOK 25 million), making it the fourth largest contributor.

Monitoring agencies

The UN Human Rights Committee ruled against Norway in two cases involving complaints by individuals in 1999. No new cases were submitted for decision in 2000 or 2001.

The Council of Europe

Every year the European Court of Human Rights

pronounces a number of judgments against member countries that have not observed human rights as they are enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). With its 41 permanent judges, the court has increased its capacity to deal with the rapid growth in the number of complaints. However, the large backlog of cases pending judgment will pose a considerable challenge in the years ahead. The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers discussed the Court's precarious situation as regards resources at its meeting in November 2001. The discussion was based on an evaluation report prepared for the Court by an evaluation group. Norway pointed to the Court's role as the cornerstone of the Council of Europe, to the importance of reforms and to the fact that member countries must be willing to give the Court more resources in order to meet the tremendous challenges it faces. Norway underscored the importance of striking a balance between efficiency and quality in the work of the Court, emphasizing that it is primarily the member countries' responsibility to protect human rights, and that the Court is a subsidiary instrument for cases where member countries do not observe their commitments.

In recent years the Court has been supplemented by several new control mechanisms. The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) has unlimited access to psychiatric clinics and to prisons and other places of detention in all member countries. Other important instruments are the European Committee against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the European Committee of Social Rights and the Advisory Committee for the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

The Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, Alvaro Gil-Robles, supplements the work of the organization in the field of human rights and serves as their official spokesman. Through his efforts in connection with the Chechnya conflict, he has proved to be a valuable addition. The Commissioner for Human Rights visited Norway in April 2001, at which time he had talks with representatives of the public authorities and non-governmental organizations involved in efforts in the field of human rights. Following this visit, the Commissioner issued a report on Norway, which concluded that human rights are generally well protected in Norway. Nonetheless, there are areas in which the rights of certain groups should be better safeguarded. This applies particularly to groups like remand prisoners, juvenile criminals and foreign nationals, especially asylum-seekers.

In the aftermath of the terrorist acts in the USA on 11

September, the Council of Europe's Secretary General took the initiative of launching a plan of action aimed at initiating "multi-cultural and inter-religious" dialogue to promote tolerance and understanding between different social groups. A working group has been appointed in the Council of Europe to propose specific projects as part of the plan. The Council of Europe will mainly be able to contribute in areas in which it has the greatest expertise and experience, such as democratization and development of the rule of law. There is broad consensus that this work must take place in close collaboration with other organizations, such as the EU, the OSCE and the UN, in order to achieve concrete results and avoid duplication of effort.

The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers has established a special political mechanism to monitor member countries' compliance with their commitments as regards democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Each year the Committee selects topics on which special attention is focused and examines the legislation of individual member countries in these fields. The topics for the monitoring mechanism in 2001 were freedom of expression and the quality of the legal system in member countries.

In 2001 Norway again made a number of voluntary contributions to measures under the auspices of the Council of Europe to promote human rights. These contributions included support for the Council's projects in South-Eastern Europe to combat corruption and crime, strengthen local democracy, build up the media and develop institutions for the protection of human rights. Funding was also provided for educational, cultural and social projects.

In 2001, the European Court of Human Rights pronounced judgment in only one case in which a complaint had been lodged against Norway, and the judgment was in Norway's favour. The complainant alleged that Norway had violated Article 6.1 of the ECHR because it had taken over seven years to complete the processing of his case in the Norwegian legal system. The Court found that there was no violation of Article 6.1, in part because the investigation of the case was very complex and time-consuming. The Court also attached importance to the fact that account had been taken of the length of the process when the sentence was assessed.

Norway was also one of the states accused in the Bankovic case, which concerned the NATO countries' bombing of the Serbian radio and television station in Belgrade in April 1999. Relatives of the deceased and a person who had himself been injured made a complaint against all of the NATO countries that are also members of the Council of

Europe, alleging several violations of the ECHR, including Article 2 (the right to life) and Article 10 (freedom of expression). The case was dismissed by the Court in a unanimous decision. The grounds for dismissing the case were that the complainants were not under the jurisdiction of the states against which the complaint was made.

The judgment may be found on the website of the European Court of Human Rights (www.echr.coe.int).

The OSCE

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

In 2001, Romania took over the annual OSCE chairmanship from Austria. The conflict in Macedonia in spring and summer 2001, and the follow-up in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks against the USA on 11 September, were given high priority by the Chairmanship. After 11 September, the Chairmanship headed the process of drawing up the OSCE's plan of action to combat international terrorism, which was adopted at the ministerial conference in Bucharest in December 2001. The plan of action underscores the importance of focusing more strongly on the causes of conflict, including economic and social isolation, and calls for intensified efforts through the promotion and strengthening of human rights, tolerance and multi-cultural societies. This is a key element of the human dimension of the OSCE's work and involves all the various OSCE institutions.

The human dimension has continued to play a pivotal role in the OSCE's work in 2001, and Norway has maintained its active efforts in this area after its term as chairman and participation in the Chairmanship Troika. Active efforts to strengthen the commitments of participating states to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, establish democratic institutions and develop the rule of law have been a fundamental focus of the human dimension. One of the fundamental principles is that commitments within the human dimension are not to be regarded as part of member countries' domestic affairs. The OSCE assists states that formerly had totalitarian regimes to adjust to the OSCE's common values.

The interaction between OSCE missions and the OSCE institutions, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM) and the Representative for Free Media (RFM) is important in identifying violations of and promoting human rights. The situation in the OSCE countries is

Among other things, Norway supported a regional mobile project in the Balkans, "mobile.culture.container". Sixteen containers comprising a library, an Internet café, a videolaboratory, etc. provided a mobile meeting place for young people and made it possible to arrange seminars and working groups.

Photo: mobile.culture.container

monitored particularly closely through the OSCE missions. Member countries' dialogue on the human dimension takes place at the weekly meetings of the OSCE Permanent Council and in other OSCE forums.

In October 2001, the annual Implementation Meeting on the Human Dimension, at which member countries and non-governmental organizations in the OSCE area discuss human rights commitments, was held in Warsaw as usual. A special conference on Roma/Sinti topics was arranged in Bucharest prior to the Implementation Meeting to address various problems relating to Roma issues in the OSCE region. Three supplementary meetings were also held in 2001 on current topics within the human dimension such as freedom of expression, tolerance and non-discrimination and the protection of human rights. Norway was actively involved in the follow-up to the annual Implementation Meeting.

The various OSCE institutions focus actively on topics within the human dimension. Great emphasis is placed on protection of minorities. The High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM) plays an active role within the OSCE area in promoting and strengthening the rights of national minorities. One of the HCNM's main functions is to provide early warning of potential internal conflicts. In 2001, Norway again provided personnel for the staff of the HCNM.

In 2001, Norway maintained its annual funding of NOK 2.5 million for the ODIHR and its project-related activities, which primarily targeted member countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus region. Norway also provided personnel for the ODIHR. The ODIHR is strongly involved in efforts to promote the rights of the Roma people, address gender equality issues, combat trafficking in persons and monitor elections in the OSCE area. Norwegian observers took part in most of the elections monitored by the ODIHR in 2001. Seconding election observers to the ODIHR is an important practical contribution towards ensuring that countries observe their member commitments. Active participation in election observation adds valuable experience of the OSCE's work and knowledge of conditions in member countries to the Norwegian resource base.

In 2001, the OSCE's Representative for Free Media (RFM) concentrated on structural censorship and hateful/racist speech, "insult" laws and their influence on free media, and protection of journalists in conflict-torn areas. Norway provided financial assistance for projects run by the RFM. Among other things, Norway supported a regional mobile project in the Balkans, "mobile.culture.container". Sixteen containers comprising a library, an Internet café, a videolab-



oratory, etc. provided a mobile meeting place for young people and made it possible to arrange seminars and working groups.

Norway focused particular attention in 2001 on trafficking in persons, in addition to following up its efforts to promote gender equality. Through the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, where the OSCE plays a key role in implementing projects, Norway provided NOK 2 million for efforts to combat trafficking in persons, and just under NOK 3 million for gender equality projects.

The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee and local Helsinki committees in the OSCE area seek to promote and strengthen human rights. Norway attaches great importance to these efforts, and continued to provide funding for this work, contributing around NOK 5.5 million in 2001. Of the work carried out by local Helsinki committees in the Balkans, Norway supported local human rights schools for young people.

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) was established in 1992 and its members comprise Russia, the Baltic States, Poland, Germany and all the Nordic countries. While cooperation in the CBSS covers a wide range of topics and issues, efforts throughout the past decade have focused primarily on democratic development.

The post of Commissioner of the CBSS on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, including the rights of ethnic minorities, was established in 1994. The Commissioner is based in Copenhagen. Over the years, the Commissioner on Human Rights has presented a number of reports on democratic development and human rights issues in CBSS member states.

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Norway chaired the CBSS's Working Group for Democratic Institutions in 2001-2002. Under the Norwegian chairmanship, particular importance was attached to the situation of children, gender equality and racism and xenophobia.

In the light of the significant changes that took place in the region in the 1990s, the Council adopted a new mandate for the Commissioner according to which the Commissioner is "an instrument for promoting and strengthening democratic development in member states based on respect for human rights". The Commissioner is guided by the objectives, principles and provisions of the UN Charter and the standards of the Council of Europe, the OSCE and other international organizations.

At the same time as the mandate was amended to focus more strongly on democracy-building, a new Commissioner was appointed. Ole Jespersen, the lawyer who had held the position since it was established, was succeeded by Helle Degn from Denmark. Helle Degn, who was formerly a politician, has extensive national and international experience, among other things as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Commissioner Degn stresses the importance of building a democratic culture and aims to contribute towards sound legislative practice in member states. The fight against organized crime, trafficking in persons and corruption are also priority areas, because these problems pose a threat to the development of stable democracies and legitimate forms of government.

The Barents Cooperation

The Barents Cooperation was established in 1993 as a binding political framework of cooperation between the Nordic countries and Russia, with the support of the EU Commission. This cooperation is based partly at governmental level in the Euro-Arctic Barents Council, and partly at regional level in the Barents Regional Council, the membership of which now comprises 13 northern counties or their equivalents in Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway. Thus the Barents region stretches from Nordland in the west to the Urals in the east, an area five times larger than Norway, populated by about six million inhabitants. A primary goal of cooperation is to promote sustainable development in the Barents region, which also entails strengthening democracy, the rule of law and good governance in the Russian part of the region. The goals are translated into practical action through cooperation on a broad range of projects. People-to-people cooperation and direct regional interaction that are

unparalleled in similar types of international cooperation form the cornerstone of these efforts.

Unlike the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Barents Cooperation comprises no working group or the like to promote democratic development and human rights. Instead, efforts are made at all levels to achieve these goals within the framework of regular cooperation, and particularly through individual projects.

The projects within the Barents Cooperation and the increased opportunities for contact that it offers have given many Russian population groups insight into the way a democratic society is organized and functions. There is emphasis on freedom of information, transparency in public administration and decision-making processes, the involvement of underprivileged groups, and transfers of expertise in many fields. Youth work is a key area. The aim is to spur the emergence of a new generation that is better equipped to take part in reforming and developing the country.

The Barents Cooperation also represents an important platform for cooperation between indigenous peoples in the region, the Sami people, the Nenets and the Vepsians. Besides protecting and strengthening the cultural identity of indigenous peoples and improving health services and other standards of living, the focus is on promoting the rights of indigenous peoples in relation to the rest of society. This applies, for instance, to information on laws affecting indigenous peoples in the four countries. There is particular focus in the cooperation on the rights of indigenous peoples in relation to the goals of Chapter 26 of Agenda 21.



Participants in international human rights efforts

NORDEM

The Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights (NORDEM) is a programme at the Institute for Human Rights, University of Oslo, the main purpose of which is to actively promote the realization of international human rights. NORDEM primarily works with multilateral organizations such as the UN and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The operational mandate of the programme is mainly focused on efforts to recruit and send qualified Norwegian personnel on international assignments that promote democracy and respect for human rights. The programme also plays a role in arranging courses prior to assignments, reporting after assignments have been completed, and carrying out research and studies on relevant areas of activity. Both the courses and the other activities have generated new international project activities. Most of NORDEM's assignments are channelled through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

NORDEM distinguishes between the Stand-by Force and the Resource Base. The Stand-by Force is run in cooperation with the Norwegian Refugee Council and provides the categories of personnel that are most in demand, i.e. human rights observers, election observers, investigators of serious human rights violations and personnel for democratization or institution-building activities in sectors such as civil administration, judicial systems and media development, and advice in connection with the implementation of elections. The vast majority of activities are carried out within the framework of the Stand-by Force. The Resource Base is run by the Institute alone and consists of individuals and groups with special expertise in democracy-related areas, who are asked to serve on a more ad hoc basis when it is not essential to deploy personnel immediately.

Activities in 2001 were focused on the central areas of recruitment, training, development of contacts with international partners and the processing of ongoing requests for personnel assistance. In 2001, NORDEM received 37 requests. Of these, more than half came from the OSCE, eight came from the UN system and the remainder came from the Organization of American States (OAS) or through bilateral channels. All these requests were channelled through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Institute for Human Rights initiated two projects on an independent basis. All requests were replied to and 27 projects led to the assignment of 55 individuals for a total of 190 man-months. In the case of a small number of projects, 22 candidates were proposed for positions in areas to which other organizations and bodies were responsible for assigning personnel.

The projects included election observation, election workers and training of election workers in Montenegro, Ethiopia, Moldova, Peru, Uganda, Croatia, Kosovo, Albania, Bangladesh, White Russia, Zambia and Slovakia. Personnel were also assigned to various OSCE operations.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned an external evaluation of NORDEM, which is currently being studied in the Ministry and at NORDEM. NORDEM also devoted considerable effort to revising the NORDEM Manual on Human Rights Reporting, which contains the most important educational material for training NORDEM personnel. NORDEM also arranged a number of courses and educational projects, both internal and external.

The Norwegian Human Rights Fund

The Norwegian Human Rights Fund provides assistance for projects run by local, regional or national non-governmental organizations in developing countries. Such assistance is usually provided for projects and organizations that do not fall within the scope of other Norwegian support schemes, and often for projects with a high element of risk.

The Norwegian Human Rights Fund is owned by Norwegian Church Aid, Norwegian People's Aid, the Institute for Human Rights, the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations, the Norwegian Red Cross, Save the Children Norway, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions and Amnesty International Norway. In 2001 the latter organization became a full member of the Board, where it had formerly had observer status.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs normally contributes two thirds of the Fund's resources and participates as an observer at the Fund's meetings. In 2001 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contributed NOK 3,360,000, while contributions from the owner organizations totalled NOK 1,515,000. The Fund also received a transfer of NOK 1,080,000 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that was especially earmarked for human rights projects in Nigeria. Of the Fund's ordinary resources, just over 22 per cent was channelled to Latin America, 35 per cent to Africa, 37 per cent to Asia and 6 per cent to the Middle East. The Fund's resources supplement the work of the owner organizations.

The Fund was evaluated in 2001 by the Danish Institute for Human Rights and the conclusions were generally positive as regards the work and priorities of the Fund. Measures to further improve the Fund's operations have been initiated in the light of the evaluation. They include concentrating its

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Opening of the Human Rights House in Sarajevo, 1998. President of the board and State Secretary Janne Haaland Matlary.

■ SERBIA. Photo: The Human Rights House Foundation



resource development. Approximately fifty leading human rights organizations are currently associated with the network, which may be found on <http://www.humanrightshouse.org>.

The Foundation receives financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and from private individuals in Norway for the establishment of new Human Rights Houses abroad.

activities on 8-10 priority countries. A plan to restructure the work of the Board was also adopted in 2001, with a view to achieving stronger focus on strategic development of the Fund's activities.

The Human Rights House Foundation

The purpose of the Human Rights House Foundation (HRH) is to contribute towards increasing respect for human rights in Norway and internationally. The Foundation's most important instrument is its strategy of gathering strong, reputable, local human rights organizations under one roof in order to establish a new, permanent institution, which will then be able to strengthen civil society and provide a base for national human rights activities. Experience from the Human Rights Houses shows that cooperation between the organizations is enhanced, security is strengthened, costs are reduced and the victims of abuse can more easily obtain assistance from a community of this nature.

Today there are Human Rights Houses in Bergen, Moscow, Oslo, Sarajevo and Warsaw, as well as a Human Rights Centre in Tirana. Work is in progress on the establishment of new Human Rights Houses in Kenya, Croatia, Turkey and Belarus. The Human Rights House Foundation is the initiator, midwife and adviser during the start-up phase. The Foundation is also developing an international network between the Human Rights Houses, the main purpose of which is to promote the exchange of information and human

Support for non-governmental organizations

Many Norwegian organizations have partners or sister organizations in countries where human rights are violated. As far as possible, the Norwegian authorities provide assistance for foreign organizations through Norwegian NGOs in order to encourage cooperation and strengthen the transfer of knowledge and experience. Assistance for local organizations is also provided through local Norwegian embassies. Norway provides assistance for international organizations working in certain countries and regions or on specific topics, such as children's rights, freedom of expression, etc. The many organizations that received assistance for human rights efforts in 2001 included the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Norwegian PEN, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions, Save the Children Norway, the Norwegian Bar Association, the Rain Forest Foundation, the World View International Foundation, the Norwegian Labour League of Youth, Norwegian Church Aid and Caritas Norway.

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Human rights dialogues

In the Plan of Action, human rights dialogues are described as cooperation on human rights with countries where there are human rights problems, but where there is also potential for improvement through dialogue and contact.

The purpose of human rights dialogues is to establish contacts between players at different levels. Political contacts are a central element of the dialogue. Equally important is the network-building that takes place between civil servants, the judiciary, academics and non-governmental organizations. Through these networks, it is possible to exchange information, concerns and criticisms by means of contacts that are based on trust.

Mutual trust is a precondition for dialogue: we must not force our own social system onto our partner countries. We must listen and learn from our partners about what they believe to be the most pressing human rights problems, which measures they believe will be most effective and how they believe human rights projects should be implemented. Conversations, discussions and critical questions about the human rights situation lead to reflection and, perhaps, ideas for solutions.

The Plan of Action refers to China, Turkey and Cuba as countries with which Norway is engaged in human rights dialogue and suggests that dialogue be established with Vietnam and Indonesia. Norway is currently engaged in human rights dialogue with China, is in the process of strengthening human rights dialogue with Indonesia, is engaged in far-reaching cooperation on human rights with Turkey, and is considering initiating human rights dialogue with Vietnam. Human rights dialogue with Cuba was suspended by the Cubans after the Norwegian vote at the UN Commission on Human Rights in spring 2000. Since then, Cuba has not wished to resume the dialogue.

China

Norway and China have been engaged in dialogue on the human rights situation in China for several years. Human rights dialogue continued to play a prominent role in bilateral cooperation in 2001.

The underlying, long-term trend in the human rights situation in China is positive. China is continuing its efforts to develop the rule of law. Comprehensive work on legislation has been completed, although it has not yet been satisfactorily

implemented.

The Chinese authorities are demonstrating willingness to discuss human rights with other countries, and cooperation with the UN is moving in a positive direction. Another positive sign is that China ratified the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2001, although it had de facto reservations about the universal right to establish and choose a trade union (Article 8 (1) A).

A new, two-year "hit hard" campaign against crime was initiated in April 2001, which has led to a sharp rise in the number of death sentences and executions.

In Xinjiang, the "hit hard" campaign also targets "separatist forces" and "religious extremists". Since the terrorist attacks against the USA on 11 September 2001, the Chinese authorities have sought to explain their control measures in Xinjiang, and partly also in Tibet, by referring to the need to combat terrorism. There is reason to guard against this trend being used to legitimize human rights abuses in matters relating to freedom of speech, belief and organization in China.

The past twenty years have seen a dramatic improvement in the situation for religious faiths and a strong rise in the number of believers. According to the Chinese Constitution, there is religious freedom in China. However, the authorities are trying to limit religious expression to officially approved organizations and registered locations, and to control the growth and activities of religious groups.

The campaign against the Falun Gong was intensified in 2001 and has become more violent, as a result of which the movement has almost been eliminated on the Chinese mainland.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of Chinese enjoy more freedom today than they have ever done before. They are free to apply for jobs independently, they can buy any house they like if they can afford it, they can organize their lives as they wish and discuss whatever they like in private. Intellectual freedom among research communities has increased significantly, and the press is far more critical than before (in the areas defined by the authorities as those where criticism is permitted).

Freedom of expression and press freedom are limited by the demand for acceptance of the Communist Party's "leading role" in society. The Government and the Party control the media by censorship and by the media's self-censorship, and they use the press to promote official policy. Given the

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explosive development of the newspaper and media market in China, however, it is more or less impossible to implement these guidelines.

Since 1997, Norway's human rights dialogue with China has been focused on the annual Roundtable Conference on the Rule of Law and Human Rights, bilateral political discussions and financial assistance for relevant projects. Human rights dialogue neither limits nor replaces Norway's possibilities for bringing up the human rights situation in China in multi-lateral forums. Norway's submissions on human rights at the UN Commission on Human Rights in spring 2001 and at the UN General Assembly in autumn 2001 contained criticism of many aspects of the human rights situation in China.

The fifth Roundtable Conference took place in Oslo in June 2001. The main topics were police training, the fundamental rights of prisoners, reporting under the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, and effective global implementation of economic, social and cultural rights. There was an open, interesting debate on the human rights situation in China, both in the group meetings and the plenary session.

In parallel with this, bilateral political consultations took place in connection with the Roundtable Conference, headed by State Secretary Raymond Johansen and Deputy Foreign Minister Wang Guangya, in which matters relating to the principles of the rule of law and human rights-related issues were addressed. The situation in Tibet is also a matter of particular concern in bilateral political discussions. Norway has for many years been requesting the Beijing authorities to initiate a dialogue with the Dalai Lama and has emphasized the importance of religious freedom and the conservation of cultural traditions. Individual cases are raised on a regular basis. Possible cooperative projects in the human rights area were discussed. Norwegian-Chinese cooperation in connection with Norway's membership of the UN Security Council was also addressed.

Human rights issues were discussed in connection with exchange visits at both political and senior government levels. Human rights were one of the topics during the official visit to China of the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs in June 2001. Carsten Smith, Chief Justice of the Norwegian Supreme Court, headed a delegation to China in October 2001, where the natural focus was on the role of courts of law and principles of the rule of law. A Chinese delegation comprising representatives of religious communities and Chinese authorities came on a comprehensive visit to Norway in September 2001.

Human rights dialogue with China is strengthened by the

assistance provided for a number of related projects. The China Programme at the Institute for Human Rights, which began in 1996, is particularly important in this respect. The programme, which currently includes a number of cooperative projects, was strengthened in 2001. The primary and long-term goals of the programme are to strengthen human rights in China, develop Norwegian expertise, strengthen ties between Norwegian contributors to human rights dialogue, and work on relevant issues. In 2001, the educational projects were particularly related to cooperation with Chinese universities on the development of curricula and courses for international human rights studies.

Since 1993, a large proportion of Norwegian assistance has been provided for projects in Tibet and matters arising from the situation there. In addition to projects under the auspices of organizations such as the Red Cross and Médecins sans Frontières, in 1994 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported a five-year agreement on extensive cooperation between the University of Tibet and four Norwegian universities. This agreement was renewed for a further five-year period in autumn 1999. A number of projects are being implemented under the Tibet-Norway Network for University Cooperation, with particular emphasis on strengthening Tibetan culture. This agreement has also made it possible to bring a relatively large number of Tibetans to Norway to pursue their education and take part in research projects. In 2001, project support was also provided for the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions, Save the Children Norway, the universities of Tromsø, Bergen and Oslo, and the Worldview International Foundation. A comprehensive project on living standards surveys was initiated by the FAFO Institute for Applied Social Science in cooperation with a Chinese research institution.

Norway, Canada and China planned the arrangements for the fourth Plurilateral Symposium on Human Rights, but it had to be postponed until 2002, mainly due to the international situation after 11 September 2001. The symposium was held in Indonesia in April 2002.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs formulated a Strategy for China in autumn 2001 in which human rights – and human rights dialogue with China – have a prominent place. One of the goals of this strategy is to integrate human rights activities with other bilateral contacts between Norway and China. The planning of Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik's visit to China in January 2002 was influenced by this approach to human rights, and the issue of human rights was established as an independent item on the agenda.

Turkey

Norway's involvement in efforts to promote human rights in Turkey is an important part of a broad-based dialogue. Norway raises the issue of the human rights situation in Turkey in bilateral contacts at both political and senior government level. Norway also addresses the human rights situation in Turkey in relevant international forums, such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE. In addition to this, Norway provides assistance for cooperation between non-governmental organizations.

Turkey acquired the status of candidate to the EU in December 1999 and a national programme of action for Turkey's adaptation to the EU was presented in March 2001. Turkey adopted several significant constitutional changes in October 2001, including partial abolition of the death penalty and the introduction of the right to broadcast in languages other than Turkish. Norway will closely follow the translation of the reforms into practical legislation and enforcement. The human rights situation was also addressed in the EU's annual progress report on Turkey (published on 13 November 2001). The report took a positive view of the constitutional changes, but was still critical to matters such as the death penalty, and is awaiting the implementation of the constitutional reforms.

Involvement in human rights requires network-building at several levels. The main emphasis has been on exchanges of visits at the political level and cooperation between non-governmental organizations.

Human rights dialogue at senior government level was established after State Secretary Bjerke's visit to Turkey in 1997. The content of this dialogue was defined at the political level during the discussions in Oslo between the Minister of Foreign Affairs and former Deputy Prime Minister Ecevit in autumn 1997 and at subsequent meetings between Norwegian and Turkish cabinet members. Foreign Minister Jagland raised human rights issues in his bilateral discussions with Prime Minister Ecevit and Foreign Minister Cem in February 2001. The Human Rights Commission of the Turkish parliament visited Norway in April 2001.

In its cooperation with the Turkish authorities and non-governmental organizations in Turkey and Norway, Norway is particularly concerned to improve the situation for human rights defenders, and to improve the situation in areas such as torture and disappearances, freedom of expression and legal safeguards. Gender equality issues have increasingly become an element of cooperation.

Norway regards the situation of the Kurds as a priority issue and has emphasized the importance of legal safeguards for and respect for the cultural rights of the Kurds as a minority group. The Turkish authorities do not consider the situation of the Kurds to be a human rights issue, since they do not recognize the Kurds as a minority.

Vietnam

Human rights dialogue with Vietnam is still at the initial stage. A Vietnamese human rights delegation at senior government level visited Norway in November 2001 to study the rule of law in Norway. They had meetings with judges, Norwegian non-governmental organizations, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions, the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry, the Norwegian Bar Association, the County Governor in Oslo and Akershus, the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Police Academy, the Institute for Human Rights and representatives of the media, as well as meetings at the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They also met with Norwegian members of parliament in the Storting. This may mark the beginning of constructive cooperation on human rights with Vietnam.

Indonesia

The Indonesian authorities wish to enter into human rights dialogue with Norway, but the unstable political situation has made progress difficult. Among other things, a broad-based Indonesian-Norwegian seminar that was planned to take place in Jakarta in June 2001 had to be cancelled. However, Norway was an important contributor to an international seminar on crimes against humanity that was arranged in Jakarta in June 2001. The Ministry also supported a seminar held in Jakarta in January 2002 for non-governmental organizations working to promote democracy in Indonesia.



Human rights and development

Rights-based development

Development cooperation and the promotion of human rights are no longer two separate priority areas. Today we can see clear connections between development and the human rights situation. The realization of civil and political rights may liberate forces in society that help to promote development. There is little doubt that the realization of economic, social and cultural rights improves people's quality of life and their ability to contribute towards the development of society. In other words, development cooperation largely has to do with providing assistance to realize the rights laid down in international human rights conventions.

The UN General Assembly adopted a Declaration on the Right to Development in 1986, which establishes important guiding principles for the way in which nations should promote human rights. The Declaration states that every person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political development that makes it possible to realize fundamental freedoms and basic human rights. Efforts to implement the declaration are part of the operationalization of a rights-based development policy.

Activities in the areas of peace, human rights and democracy take place in all countries with which Norway is engaged in development cooperation. The resources devoted to these areas are increasing in step with the growing recognition that peace, democracy and human rights are prerequisites for poverty reduction. A substantial proportion of these efforts take the form of specific projects in the areas of peace, democracy and human rights. However, the focus on human rights in development cooperation is also illustrated by the fact that consideration for these priorities is increasingly incorporated into development cooperation in other areas.

Guidelines

The guidelines for development cooperation that were formulated in 1999 emphasize the importance of using positive instruments in efforts to promote human rights through development cooperation. The guidelines were presented in the Plan of Action for Human Rights. Priority is given to countries and organizations that demonstrate their willingness to prepare plans and set concrete objectives in the human rights sphere.

The Government's Report to the Storting on Foreign Policy in 2000 emphasized that human rights are the foundation for

all development processes. Consequently, in its development policy, Norway will impose conditions on its partner countries with respect to the human rights situation and matters relating to good governance. If these conditions are not met, there may no longer be a basis for effective cooperation on poverty reduction.

The guidelines place particular emphasis on the importance of human rights efforts being poverty-oriented. There is special focus on consideration for women, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of human rights-related measures.

Development cooperation is intended to help strengthen the ability of partner countries to meet their international human rights obligations. In this connection, the guidelines underline the importance of long-term institutional development.

Rights-based development cooperation

Development cooperation must, to a greater extent, be rights-based. Rights-based development is in accordance with the poverty orientation of Norwegian development cooperation because it entails a holistic approach that is intended to contribute towards realizing the fundamental human rights of poor people. The follow-up to international conferences and reporting obligations pursuant to international conventions must be used actively to create a common frame of reference for the promotion of human rights. The human rights aspect will then become an integral dimension of all development cooperation. All relevant measures must be assessed on the basis of a human rights perspective and there are plans for more systematic assistance for human rights-related projects.

Through development cooperation, Norway wishes to conduct a systematic dialogue with its partner countries on the international human rights conventions to which they have acceded, and help them to report on and clarify their own situation. Norway thus helps to strengthen partner countries' knowledge and expertise in the field of international human rights efforts and helps to raise awareness of how international human rights instruments may be applied in their own country. Assistance in the development of expertise and capacity to deal with national challenges in the human rights sphere and the ability to meet international obligations are core elements of this effort.

Stronger emphasis on a rights-based approach to development cooperation is also a central element of the work Norway does through the multilateral development and

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

1: financing institutions. The UN system plays a key role in promoting human rights through its standard-setting activities.

2: In order to strengthen the UN's efforts to develop frameworks for sustainable development for all, since 1999 Norway has been supporting the Human Rights Strengthening (HURIST) programme, which is a joint programme under the auspices of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Through HURIST, Norway aims to strengthen the UNDP's ability to deal with human rights-related issues and test new methods for improving national capacity in this area.

The World Bank and the regional development banks are increasingly stressing the connection between human rights and economic and social development. In order to achieve a more holistic approach to development issues, Norway and the other Nordic countries are making active efforts to influence the agendas and work of the development banks by participating on their executive boards, at meetings with their managements and staff, and by jointly financing projects.

The World Bank's World Development Report for 2000, which was devoted solely to poverty reduction, strongly emphasized the importance of giving poor people better opportunities to be heard and taken into account in the development process. This is particularly important in connection with the development of sustainable poverty reduction strategies, and is also extremely important in connection with rights-based development cooperation. The regional development banks are also active in areas directly or indirectly related to human rights issues.

Norway has supported the involvement of the development banks in peace processes, the modernization of judicial systems, anti-corruption measures, measures to prevent violence, and cooperation with civil society. In all the development banks, good governance has become an important development policy perspective that is pursued at board meetings and in negotiations on capital replenishment. The development banks have also introduced regulations and compensation arrangements linked to the rights of indigenous peoples and other minority groups in connection with the implementation of projects that are financed by loans and credits from these banks.

Certain priority areas and examples of measures

The Plan of Action for Human Rights specifies nine areas to

which particular importance is to be attached, and some of these areas have been the subject of particular focus in Norwegian development cooperation for some time.

Good governance and strengthening the rule of law

In accordance with the fundamental principles of the rule of law, society must be governed according to a set of democratically adopted laws that are enforced by competent, independent judicial authorities. The rule of law lays the foundations for settling conflicts and for stability and predictability, and thereby also for social and economic development. A strong state that is subject to the rule of law, with courts of law and a police force that operate in accordance with internationally recognized standards, is an important prerequisite for respect for human rights.

Reform of judicial systems and other measures to strengthen legal safeguards are becoming increasingly important in development cooperation. So far, Norway has not been a central participant in the field of judicial reform, but Norway supports such measures in cooperation with other donors in several partner countries, including Guatemala, Angola, Ethiopia, Uganda, Bangladesh, Nepal and Indonesia. Assistance is normally channelled through multilateral organizations or bilateral donors and is provided for constitutional reform, legislation with associated regulations and procedural rules, enhancing the expertise of the prosecuting authority, judges, lawyers and prison officers, and strengthening infrastructure and processing systems.

Supporting the rule of law through civil society is also a relevant strategy in several partner countries. By strengthening the human rights expertise and influence of civil society, Norway seeks to contribute towards the establishment and strengthening of government institutions and government practice with respect to the protection and promotion of human rights. In Pakistan, Guatemala and the Palestinian Area, assistance was provided in 2001 for groups of non-governmental organizations that work particularly in the field of human rights and legal safeguards. Improving people's access to the legal system is an important focus of these efforts. In Bangladesh and Mozambique, assistance is therefore provided for legal aid schemes which give marginalized population groups advice and guidance on legal matters. These legal aid schemes also assist clients in cases that come before the courts.

Democracy and human rights are closely connected with good governance. Expertise and infrastructure are often deficient in public administration. In development cooperation throughout 2001 there was increasing emphasis on promoting efficient, just administrative practice. The Govern-

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The right to education and the issue of universal access to basic education for all girls and boys are important elements of Norway's development cooperation.

ETHIOPIA. Photo: Per Kr. Lunden/Majorityworld

ment's efforts have, among other things, been focused on the preparation and follow-up of anti-corruption strategies. These efforts are important because corruption hinders development. In countries where the administration is efficient, transparent and just, international aid will also lead to the best results in the fight against poverty.

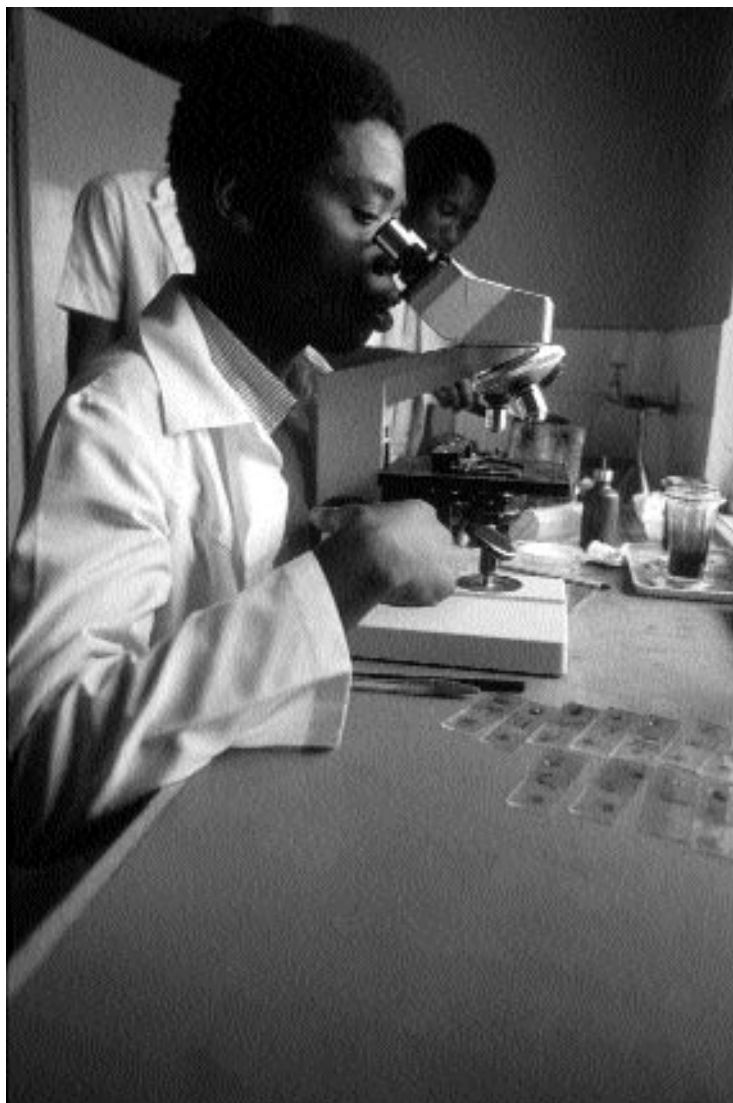
Education and research

In 2001, Norway continued to actively support the realization of the UN Declaration on the Right to Education. As a result of the ten-year review of the declaration, which took place in Dakar in 2000, education is now higher on the development policy agenda. The right to education and the issue of universal access to basic education for all girls and boys are important elements of Norway's development cooperation, and education is gaining higher priority as one of the main focuses of development assistance.

Knowledge of human rights will improve nations' ability to protect, respect and promote rights. Expertise is a prerequisite for effective protection of human rights at the national level. Through the programme for cooperation on research between universities in Norway and universities and research institutions in the South (the NUFU Programme), in 2001 Norway continued its efforts to strengthen research expertise in developing countries and give researchers in the South the opportunity to forge international ties and develop critical sociological research. The last agreement between NORAD and the Norwegian Council of Universities and Colleges expired in 2000 and the programme was evaluated. The evaluation was generally extremely positive and a decision was made to continue this cooperation. A new five-year agreement on NUFU cooperation was signed in 2001.

The building of local expertise is the theme of cooperation with the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIDH) in Costa Rica. In this connection, in 2001 Norway supported a regional programme aimed at strengthening the capacity of government agencies and non-governmental organizations involved in human rights education and training. Active efforts have been made to develop the project into a regional programme. Norwegian assistance for the IIDH is part of a coherent effort to promote human rights in this region, which until recently has been the scene of armed conflicts.

Cooperation between Pakistan and Norway on human rights



education continued in 2001. It comprises a media campaign on human rights issues and measures to introduce human rights as a subject in schools.

In South Africa, one of the primary goals of development cooperation is to strengthen human rights and democracy. The Institute for Human Rights in Oslo administers a coherent programme to develop institutional cooperation on human rights issues. In 2001 a review was carried out of the lessons learned in the first phase of the South Africa Programme administered by the Institute for Human Rights. It concluded that the programme was well adapted to a rights-based approach and the programme will continue. In South Africa, assistance was provided for the production of a television series on human rights which sheds light and comments on the human rights-related problems most people face in their everyday lives.

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

Norwegian international human rights efforts focus on women and children.

THAILAND. Photo: Håkon Lislerud/Norwegian Church Aid

Freedom of expression and differentiated media

In 2001, the largest media project in bilateral development cooperation was still the Zambia Programme, which comprises four institutions: the Evelyn Hone College, the Zambia Institute of Mass Communication, the Media Trust Fund and the Zambia Independent Media Association. Norwegian assistance helps to strengthen Zambia's own capacity for training journalists and technicians and developing media companies. Norway also cooperates closely with international organizations.

In Mozambique Norway is contributing to a programme to support the independent media. The programme includes training for journalists at the Nordic SADC Centre for Journalism, the establishment of local radio stations and support for a foundation that provides paper for local newspapers. This assistance is channelled through UNESCO.

In 2001 Norway continued to provide substantial assistance for Worldview International. At the regional level, assistance was also provided for the Media Institute of Southern Africa, whose activities include monitoring media coverage of sensitive issues.

Women's rights

In 2000, the UN arranged a special session to follow up the World Conference on Women in Beijing entitled Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century. The final document from the special session comprises measures to strengthen the implementation of the Plan of Action from Beijing and strengthen the rights perspective in comparison with the five-year-old plan. This was in accordance with Norway's interventions during the preparations for the special session. Honour killing was mentioned for the first time in a negotiated UN document. Honour killing is condemned as a violation of human rights.

Measures to support partner countries' efforts to meet their obligations in connection with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the World Conference on Women in Beijing continued.



In 2001 Norway supported the formulation of national action plans in several countries, including Zambia, Malawi, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Assistance was also provided for women's organizations that have actively promoted a change in attitudes and highlighted the responsibility of government authorities.

In 2000 the Government adopted a plan of action against female genital mutilation. In 2001 Norway followed up the international part of the plan, which comprises measures to intensify bilateral cooperation with countries in Africa to combat genital mutilation. NORAD is working on a special action plan to follow up these efforts in bilateral development cooperation. There is emphasis on dialogue on the issue of genital mutilation with the authorities of partner countries and direct support for organizations working in this field. In 2001 assistance was provided through Norwegian Church Aid and FOKUS/The Women's Front of Norway for their partners in the South. NORAD has also initiated the establishment of a network for organizations and expert groups in Norway working in the area of genital mutilation.

In 2001 efforts to improve expertise in the field of women's rights continued. There is special emphasis on the effect legislation has on women's opportunities to participate in processes that affect social and economic development. The Department of Women's Law at the University of Oslo

continued to cooperate with the University of Peshawar, Pakistan, on the establishment of a Department of Women's Law, and also cooperated with the Human Rights Study Centre at the University of Peshawar on human resource development in the area of women's rights and Islam. An initiative was launched for a regional network in Southern Asia on women's law that will include Pakistan, Nepal, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The Department of Women's Law in Oslo has been working with the University of Harare, Zimbabwe, on a regional programme on women's rights for many years.

Projects for indigenous peoples in Guatemala are another area where there has been focus on women's rights in relation to a rights-based approach to development. Direct assistance for institutions that provide legal aid for women seeking to uphold their rights is an important measure in countries such as Bangladesh and Nicaragua.

Children's rights

Measures for children in Norwegian development cooperation are based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Plan of Action from the World Summit on Children (1990) and the Norwegian Strategy for Development Assistance for Children (1992). In connection with the process prior to the UN Special Session on Children in 2002, Norway emphasized that children's rights must provide the fundamental framework for the Plan of Action from the Special Session.

The Strategy for Children was evaluated in 1998, and in 1999 a working group was established to review it. In 2000 the group prepared a guidance document on Norwegian assistance for children as a basis for Norwegian efforts in this area in the years ahead. The document emphasizes that assistance for children must be based on a holistic approach to rights. The document builds on the priority areas for Norwegian assistance for children described in the Strategy for Children, but incorporates certain new priority areas. In the years ahead, the important priority areas will be education, health and nutrition, care and early stimulation of children, registration of births, HIV/AIDS, child labour, the sale of children, sexual exploitation of children, and children affected by war and conflict.

In 2001 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to finance the Norwegian-based Childwatch International Research Network. Childwatch identifies current research needs and develops relevant research projects, including those relating to children's rights, environment and health, the impact of political and economic changes, and the importance of modern information technology for children. A review of

Childwatch was carried out in 2000. The evaluation was generally positive about the work that is being done and in 2001 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to continue to support Childwatch in the period 2001-2003.

Indigenous peoples

At the UN Commission on Human Rights, Norway continued to participate actively in 2001 in the preparation of a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. The UN Commission on Human Rights has also recommended that ECOSOC establish a Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues, cf. the section on the Commission on Human Rights. In cooperation with the Sami Parliament, Norway has supported the work of the WHO relating to the health of indigenous peoples.

Issues relating to indigenous peoples also have an important place in the Barents Cooperation. Three indigenous populations live in the Barents region: the Sami, the Nenets and the Vepsians. Representatives of indigenous peoples participate in all areas of the Barents Cooperation.

The full involvement and active participation of representatives of indigenous peoples are also a central feature of the Arctic Cooperation. Indigenous peoples' organizations in the Arctic region may be granted the status of permanent members of the Arctic Council. The Sami Council is one of the organizations that has been granted such status.

After an evaluation of the Norwegian Programme for Indigenous Peoples, in 1999 a follow-up plan was prepared for activities targeting indigenous peoples in development cooperation. The follow-up plan states that Norway, through its participation in the governing bodies of UN development agencies and development banks, will contribute to sound policy and practice in matters relating to indigenous peoples. In development cooperation with priority countries, the situation of indigenous peoples will be taken into account in poverty reduction strategies and in connection with efforts to improve human rights. In order to strengthen the work of the aid administration with regard to indigenous peoples, in 2000 the Norwegian Programme for Indigenous Peoples was transferred back to NORAD, which in 2001 also prepared new guidelines for assistance for indigenous peoples.

Persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities are often among the poorest in developing countries. There will therefore be focus on the situation of persons with disabilities in efforts to fight poverty. The aid administration's efforts in this field are based on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Plan for the Inclu-

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

sion of Persons with Disabilities in Development. The primary goal of this plan is the social integration of persons with disabilities. Efforts to include persons with disabilities in development aid apply both to Norway's bilateral development cooperation and to its work in multilateral organizations.

In following up the plan, in 2000 NORAD formulated a working document on persons with disabilities in bilateral development cooperation. This effort continued in 2001. NORAD cooperates with the Atlas Alliance to improve the situation of persons with disabilities in developing countries. Strengthening persons with disabilities' awareness of their rights and help for self-help are important elements of the programme.

Employment and labour standards

In recent years the International Labour Organization (ILO) has been undergoing a reform process. This process continued to have priority in 2001. A great deal of progress has been made in defining priority tasks for individual member states. With its Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the ILO has intensified its efforts to ensure that member states respect, promote and implement the principles laid down in the ILO's basic human rights conventions. Measures to ensure the legal and practical implementation of these conventions continued.

It is an increasingly important challenge for the ILO to improve working conditions in the informal sector, where the majority of the world's poor are employed. In 2001 a great deal of attention continued to be focused on efforts to combat child labour and the role of women in working life. In December 2000, Norway ratified ILO Convention No. 182 concerning Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Norway supports the efforts of employers' organizations and trade unions to combat child labour. Efforts are also made to eliminate child labour by supporting education and training.

In development cooperation, the right to work is viewed in close conjunction with the focus on private sector development in the South. In 2001 considerable efforts were made to operationalize the Strategy for Private Sector Development in Developing Countries and to make the industrial and commercial financing facilities simpler and more effective. Work on issues relating to the role of business and industry in the promotion of democracy and rights in working life continued. Within the business community, there is growing interest in dialogue with the aid authorities on measures to strengthen the social involvement of private companies in connection with investment and trade with developing countries.

The right to food

The right to food and freedom from hunger is laid down in Article 11 of the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In the Plan of Action adopted at the 1996 World Food Summit, states committed themselves to the task of securing their populations' right to food and halving the number of undernourished persons in the world by 2015. In 2001 Norway worked actively in international forums to promote the right to food. Norway has also pointed out that the right to food and food security are extremely important in efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. Norwegian experts have made important contributions in the field of human rights and nutrition. In 2001 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued its cooperation with the Institute for Human Rights and the Institute for Nutritional Research at the University of Oslo on research, policy formulation and information on the right to food as a human right.

Norway has emphasized the importance of supporting private sector development in the South, including in the primary industries. The Survey of Development Cooperation Targeting the Agricultural Sector, which was published in 2000, reviews assistance for agriculture-related measures in development cooperation. Norway continued to contribute to the international agricultural research institutes (the CGIAR centres) in 2001. The allocation was somewhat higher than in 2000 and approximately 50 per cent higher than in 1997. An arrangement enabling Norwegian researchers to work at CGIAR centres has also been established.

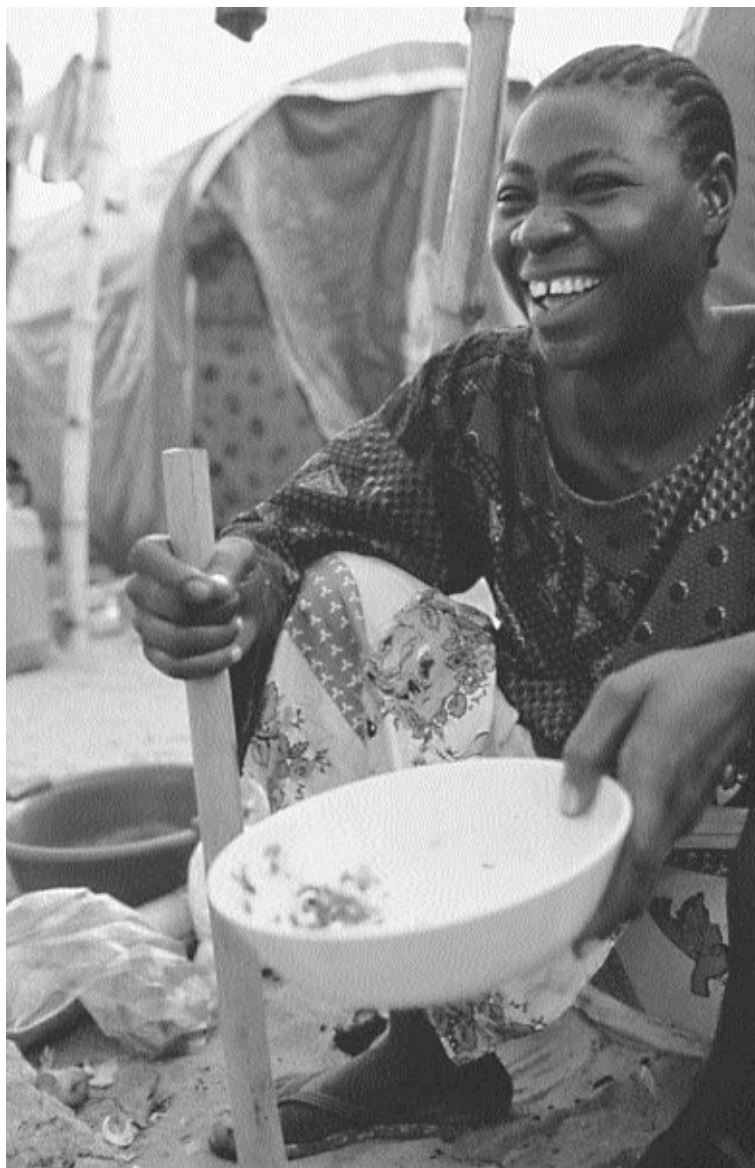
In 2001 Norway also contributed to the "Right to School Meals" project in Brazil.

The Ministry of Agriculture is currently developing a national food and agriculture policy in accordance with the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESC). This is reflected in Report No. 19 to the Storting (1999-2000) on Norwegian food and agricultural policy and Proposition No. 1 to the Storting (2001-2002), which refers to Article 11 of the Covenant concerning the right to food. In General Comment (GC) 12: The right to adequate food, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has further defined the meaning of the right to food. According to this document, "the right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement... an adequate diet that meets their nutritional needs and preferences and provides a basis for an active, healthy life. This is the meaning of the term food security."

A Plan of Action for Consumer Orientation of Food and Agri-

The right to food and freedom from hunger is laid down in Article 11 of the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Photo: Christopher Black, IFRC/ Red Cross



cultural Policy has been prepared which is based on respect for the rights of consumers, such the freedom to choose a diet on the basis of nutritional and health preferences. One of the main goals of the Plan of Action is the right to food as laid down in Article 11 of the Covenant. In accordance with the Plan of Action, work has been initiated on the establishment of a Consumer Panel, which will have an advisory function in relation to food policy. The Consumer Panel is due to become operational in 2002.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights arranged the Third Expert Consultation on the Right to Food in Bonn on 12-14 March 2001. The topic of the meeting was national implementation of the right to food pursuant to ESC Article 11 and GC 12. Several states made interventions on the

implementation of Article 11, including Norway, whose representative referred to how the consumer-orientation of food policy in Norway is based on the right to food. Further seminars on the right to food, including one in Norway, are currently being planned and will take place in 2002.

Norway's efforts to promote the establishment of a Biosafety Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity are one of several examples of Norwegian activities in the area of food safety. The same applies to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Plant Treaty), which was adopted at the FAO General Conference on 3 November 2001. The purpose of this treaty is to ensure conservation and continued free access to plant genetic resources that are important for the world's food supply. The treaty is regarded as being an important contribution to efforts to promote sustainable agriculture and global food security.

Norway was an active participant in efforts to include the right to food in the declaration from the World Food Summit that took place in 1996. The declaration contains a commitment to explain and clarify the concept of the right to food as a human right. In June 2002 a follow-up conference will be arranged in Rome, five years after the summit (WFS + 5). The right to food as a human right is one of the main priorities in preparatory work for the conference. In this context, Norway's experience of using a rights-based approach to the formulation of policy will be important. At the FAO conference in Rome on 2-13 November 2001, Norway strongly stressed the necessity of further defining the right to food.

Norway unreservedly supported the FAO and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, which have initiated a process to prepare a Code of Conduct on the Right to Adequate Food. Norway will make efforts to ensure that this Code of Conduct is linked to the right to food as laid down in Article 11 of the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and further defined in General Comment 12: The right to adequate food.

Expertise

If Norway is to play an active role in promoting human

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rights through development cooperation, it is essential to continuously strengthen research expertise in the field of human rights and development. Through the Research Council of Norway, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is financing a major research programme on globalization and marginalization in which human rights research is one of the topics. Under this programme, funds were earmarked in 2001 for research into areas related to human rights. Work was also done on integrating the human rights perspective into other research programmes administered by the Research Council of Norway and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Millennium Edition of the Human Rights in Development Yearbook was published in 2001. The yearbook is a cooperative project between institutes and research programmes working on human rights and development issues in Norway (the Christian Michelsen Institute and the Institute for Human Rights), Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Canada, Austria, the Netherlands and Sweden. The Christian Michelsen Institute was responsible for editing the yearbook for a three-year period that ended with the Millennium Edition.

In 2001 NORAD produced a publication entitled Handbook in Human Rights Assessment – State Obligations, Awareness and Empowerment. The purpose of the handbook is to strengthen human rights expertise in the aid administration and raise awareness of human rights aspects in all priority areas. In 2001 four courses on the new handbook were arranged at Norwegian embassies in countries where Norway is engaged in comprehensive development cooperation. At two of these embassies, agreements were entered into on systematic use of the handbook in connection with selected projects.

Human rights education is an integral part of the training programme at the Norwegian Foreign Service Institute. In cooperation with the Institute for Human Rights, a programme for human resource development in the field of human rights and democratization was prepared in 2000. The programme includes rights-based development, evaluation of the impact of aid projects on the human rights situation in developing countries, and human rights and the multilateral system. In 2001 the programme was also made available as an Internet course.

Independent, national human rights institutions have been established in several of Norway's partner countries. They are normally entitled Ombudsman for Human Rights or Commission for Human Rights and are often modelled on the Nordic ombudsman function. Their mandate is to monitor the human rights situation, report on human rights violations and recommend follow-up measures. The establishment of such institutions is important in the development of national expertise on rights issues. Moreover, in fragile democracies or in states with poorly developed judicial systems it is vitally important for the human rights situation that there be correctives to government authority that possess a certain status and position. Norway supports Ombudsmen for Human Rights in several countries, including Honduras, Guatemala, India, Indonesia and Nepal.

Rights-based humanitarian aid



Improving the UN organization's coordination of humanitarian aid is a continuous process and remained a timely topic in 2001. Consequently, Norway always raises this issue in relevant forums and in the governing bodies of the specialized agencies.

Efforts to ensure good coordination of projects run by Norwegian non-governmental organizations and the international Red Cross system are just as important as improving the coordination of humanitarian aid through UN agencies. In order to achieve this, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs increasingly attaches political conditions to budget funds that are allocated to non-governmental organizations. They include requirements for improved coordination and closer cooperation with the agency appointed by the UN to have the main responsibility for humanitarian aid in the area in question. There is focus on vulnerable groups, such as women, children and persons with disabilities, when funds are allocated for various projects.

It is important to ensure that humanitarian aid is properly coordinated, through Norwegian non-governmental organizations and the international Red Cross system.

■ RWANDA. Photo: Howard J. Davies, IFRC/ Red Cross

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level



Human rights and the private sector

A great deal of work is being done at the international level to establish voluntary standards and give companies advice and guidance as to how they can ensure that their operations are socially responsible. Many companies have formulated their own ethical guidelines. Most Norwegian companies have taken this challenge seriously. Work is in progress on this issue both in the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry (NHO) and in certain large companies. The authorities wish to contribute towards raising awareness in business and industry and will facilitate practical cooperation and the development of mechanisms that will help companies to run their businesses in a socially responsible manner.

The UN Global Compact

Norway is an important contributor to the UN Global Compact, a forum for dialogue and learning about the social responsibility of business and industry that was established on the initiative of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in 1999. Several Norwegian companies have adopted the nine principles upon which the Global Compact is based. These principles cover three main areas: human rights, standards in working life, and the environment.

KOMPakt

A Consultative Body for Human Rights and Norwegian Economic Involvement Abroad (KOMPakt) has been established which, under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is a forum for representatives of business and industry, the trade union movement, human rights organizations, research communities and the authorities. It is a forum for raising awareness of and exchanging opinions on the ethical responsibilities of the private sector when investing or engaging in other economic activities abroad.

Economic forces in war and conflict

How to deal with economic forces in situations of war and conflict is a difficult problem to which all members of the world community must relate, including the private sector. In cooperation with the British Foreign Ministry and the UN Global Compact, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs arranged a comprehensive seminar on Business Leadership in Development and Conflict Management in March 2001. The responsibility of the private sector in war and conflict zones was also the theme of KOMPakt's meeting in November 2001.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also supports several research projects relating to the role of the private sector in situations of war and conflict.

The causes of civil war, terrorism and violence are the basis for a comprehensive research project under the auspices of the World Bank in which the Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) has a central coordinating function. The International Peace Academy (IPA) in New York has also received Norwegian assistance for a project on economic agendas in civil war, which is a fairly small project based on a more practical, political approach. A third project is headed by the FAFO Institute for Applied Social Science, the purpose of which is to define alternative courses of political action against economic activities that may be a threat to international peace and security.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to put economic agendas in armed conflict on the international agenda. Economic forces behind war and conflict are the topic of a seminar in New York in connection with Norway's chairmanship of the UN Security Council. The lawful and unlawful roles of private players in conflicts will be addressed during the seminar, which is being arranged by the FAFO Institute for Applied Social Science in cooperation with the International Peace Academy.

In June 2001 the Ministry arranged a seminar on child labour and the social responsibility of the private sector in cooperation with the FAFO Institute for Applied Social Science at which Norwegian and Scandinavian businesses were invited to contribute their experiences in connection with child labour. The report from the seminar addresses issues such as what is expected of business and industry by public opinion, consumers and authorities with respect to child labour, how companies can take practical steps to establish standards and control routines, and how other players can support companies' efforts to incorporate social responsibility in this area.

The Action Plan for Human Rights proposes carrying out a pilot project to encourage the development of mechanisms for voluntary reporting, monitoring and verification of companies' practice with respect to fulfilling their social responsibilities. The ECON Centre for Economic Analysis and the Institute for Human Rights have each received funding for their parts of the project. ECON has been working on the development of voluntary mechanisms in close contact with business and industry. This project, which expected to be completed in March 2002, has resulted in a "list of contents" of standards for social responsibility and a report on the effectiveness and impact of various standards. Easily

The fight against child labour is one of the main focuses of the ILO's work on labour standards.

PERU. Photo: Rune Eraker



Experience has shown that the multilateral trading system cannot be viewed in isolation from broader economic and social processes in the world. Consequently, in recent years Norway has sought to initiate a dialogue on labour standards in the WTO. The purpose has been to gain acceptance of the view that the trade regimes of member states must not only aim at promoting increased economic prosperity but also take more account of social conditions.

Although labour standards are primarily an ILO concern, Norway has sought to place this issue on the WTO agenda. The Declaration adopted at the ministerial conference in Singapore in 1996 established that WTO members undertake to respect fundamental labour standards, but also that labour standards are the responsibility of the ILO.

The developing countries have been unanimously opposed to discussing labour standards in the WTO. They fear that by linking trade and labour standards the industrialized countries will limit developing countries' access to markets in the industrialized countries and hamper their social and economic development.

At the WTO ministerial conference in Doha in November 2001, Norway and the EU proposed that fundamental labour

standards be referred to in the final declaration and that closer cooperation between the ILO and other relevant multilateral organizations, including the WTO, be encouraged.

The discussions in Doha confirmed that the developing countries are still unanimously opposed to including labour standards in the WTO's work programme. However, the declaration confirms the message of the Singapore Declaration and refers to the work being done in the ILO on the social dimension of globalization.

Given the central role of the ILO and the organization's efforts to put labour standards into a broader framework, Norway will seek to encourage the WTO and other relevant multilateral organizations to make an active contribution to the work being done in the ILO in this field.

The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises

The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises comprise recommendations from the governments of the OECD countries concerning how companies that have established operations in other countries should conduct them-

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

selves in relation to legislation and other conditions in those countries. The guidelines are voluntary recommendations that cover various areas of company activities. They are part of the OECD Declaration on International Investments and Multinational Enterprises adopted in 1976.

The guidelines were revised in spring 2000 and adopted at the OECD Council of Ministers meeting in June 2000 by the thirty OECD countries and the observer countries Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Negotiations on the revision took place in dialogue with representatives of business and industry, employees and non-governmental organizations and these three groups have given their support to the revised guidelines. Estonia, Lithuania and Slovenia have subsequently adopted the OECD Declaration on International Investments.

According to the guidelines, companies should

- General: Respect human rights and contribute to sustainable development.
- Information: Provide regular information about their activities, structure, financial situation and presentations.
- Employee relations: Respect the trade union rights of employees, cooperate with employees' representatives and combat child labour and forced labour.
- Environment: Show appropriate consideration for the need to protect the environment and human health and safety.
- Corruption: Not engage in bribery, promote transparency and raise employees' awareness of company policy against bribery.
- Consumer interests: Provide information for consumers about products and establish routines for resolving consumer disputes.
- Science and technology: Contribute towards transferring technology and know-how to the host country.
- Competition: Avoid entering into or implementing agreements that limit competition between competitors
- Taxation: Pay taxes when they are due.

The institutional framework for the guidelines consists of two bodies, the National Contact Points and the OECD Committee for International Investments and Multinational Enterprises (CIME).

The task of the National Contact Points is to engage in information activities, deal with enquiries and discuss with interested parties all matters covered by the guidelines so that they can contribute towards solving any problems that may arise. The Norwegian Contact Point is located in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is a cooperative body comprising representatives of several ministries, employees

(LO) and business and industry (NHO).

The task of the CIME is to organize exchanges of opinion, regularly or at the request of an associated country, on matters covered by the guidelines and on lessons learned from their implementation. The Committee must regularly invite the OECD Business Industry Advisory Committee and the OECD Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) and other non-governmental organizations to express their opinions on matters covered by the guidelines.

The OECD Anti-corruption Guidelines

Work in the OECD to develop common guidelines for export financing that may reduce the extent of corruption continued in 2001.

The Norwegian Guarantee Institute for Export Credits (GIEK)

In the course of 2002, the Norwegian Guarantee Institute for Export Credits (GIEK) will introduce anti-corruption guidelines for all types of guarantees. In cooperation with the other Nordic guarantee institutes, GIEK sought to formulate common terms and declarations for the various types of guarantees. They did not manage to agree on identical texts, but the differences are not regarded as being so great that they will cause difficulties for Norwegian companies and banks in connection with joint projects. GIEK conforms to Norwegian policy in the human rights area and, in its credit assessments, emphasizes the political, social and legal situation, both in the purchasing country and in relation to the individual debtor. This is also expressed in GIEK's environmental guidelines.

The petroleum sector

Norway has a comprehensive, well-functioning petroleum sector. There is therefore considerable interest in how we have organized and developed these activities. The Ministry of Petroleum and Energy (MPE) is currently engaged in fruitful dialogue and close relations at both the political and industrial level with a number of countries. For example, Norway has entered into cooperation agreements with Azerbaijan, Nigeria and Venezuela. There is a growing demand for Norwegian expertise, technology and administrative experience in the petroleum sector. These bilateral relations give the MPE the opportunity to raise matters relating to the social responsibility of the industry.

The MPE is in continuous dialogue with Statoil and Norsk Hydro concerning their specific activities to safeguard human rights and demonstrate social responsibility in the

countries in which they are involved.

In 2001 the MPE initiated an arrangement for providing project funds for private sector development and resource management. These are projects that have an additional dimension, i.e. they cover overarching issues relating to the management of the energy sector with implications for the social responsibility of the sector. There are plans to investigate the social effects of direct Norwegian investments in certain provinces in petroleum-producing countries which have weak public administrations.

Many host countries for petroleum investments have weak democratic institutions and limited insight into how to manage petroleum revenues and establish a local supply industry. In cooperation with the Norwegian petroleum industry, the MPE helps to ensure that issues relating to human rights, including health, safety and environmental issues, are put on the agenda. Through INTSOK (Norwegian Oil and Gas Partners) and PETRAD (a body in the Norwegian development cooperation system concerned with management and human resource development in the petroleum sector in developing countries and more industrialized countries), a project was carried out with Nigeria to provide training for local workers and resource persons.

Transferring expertise is one way of stimulating the petroleum industry in the host country. In this area, the MPE has made efforts to strengthen coordination between the Norwegian authorities, educational institutions and the oil and gas industry. The MPE has, in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, arranged training programmes on macro-economic management in Angola and Azerbaijan.

The Petroleum Directorate (PD) contributes to institutional cooperation through its cooperation with NORAD. The PD cooperates actively with similar institutions in important petroleum-producing developing countries in order to establish more effective framework conditions in areas such as resource management and health, safety and the environment. The PD has initiated a study to define educational and training needs in the petroleum sector in Angola. The Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate is also providing assistance for the development of appropriate legislation and an administrative apparatus to establish a functioning electricity sector and water resource management in several developing countries in Asia and Africa.

On several occasions in the course of 2001, INTSOK focused on the social responsibility of the Norwegian oil and gas sector when it invests abroad. At the International Oil & Gas Business Days, INTSOK focused on Angola, Azerbaijan, Iran

and Nigeria, and social responsibility was a central topic at INTSOK's annual conference.

The MPE is also a member of the Consultative Body for Human Rights and Norwegian Economic Involvement Abroad (KOMpakt). The MPE is represented in the working group that is concentrating on the business aspects.

Exclusion of investments from the Norwegian Government Petroleum Fund

On 28 September 2001, the Ministry of Finance amended the regulations for the management of the Norwegian Government Petroleum Fund so that the Ministry of Finance can exclude financial instruments issued by specified issuers from the Fund if investment in such instruments may be in contravention of Norway's obligations under international law.

On 30 November 2001, the Ministry of Finance appointed an advisory board which, at the Ministry's request, will provide an evaluation of whether the Fund's potential investments in financial instruments issued by specified issuers may be in contravention of Norway's obligations under international law. The advisory board consists of three members who are highly qualified in the field of international law.

The Ministry has asked the advisory board to consider whether an investment through the Petroleum Fund may be in contravention of Norway's obligations under international human rights law. It has also asked the advisory board to consider whether investments in Singapore Technologies Engineering may entail a contravention of Norway's obligations under international law. The Fund does not own shares in this company, but the Ministry of Finance has not yet decided whether the company should be removed from the list of the Fund's potential investments pending the advisory board's evaluation.

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Special Priority Areas

Children

ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Worst Forms of Child Labour

In 2001 Norway ratified ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. The Convention requires countries that ratify it to prohibit the worst forms of child labour, such as slave labour and other forms of forced labour, commercial sexual exploitation and work that exposes children to risk of accident or health hazard. As of 1 March 2002, 156 of the ILO member states had ratified this convention.

Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

In 2001 Norway was one of the first countries to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The Optional Protocol strengthens the Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly because it requires states to make a large number of actions relating to the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography criminal offences in their legislation. The Protocol defines the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The need for international cooperation, including mutual legal assistance, is stressed. The states parties must report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the implementation of their obligations under the Protocol. The Protocol entered into force after it had been ratified by ten countries. As of 10 May 2002, 27 states had ratified the Protocol.

The Norwegian Strategy for Development Assistance for Children

The Norwegian Strategy for Development Assistance for Children, which was published in 1992 and provides guidelines for Norwegian development assistance, was evaluated in 1997-98. The evaluation concluded that the strategy does not focus sufficiently on rights. A guideline document on children in development cooperation was prepared as a result of this evaluation.

Follow-up to the World Summit for Children

As a follow-up to the World Summit for Children, which took place in 1990, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to arrange a Special Session on Children in May 2002. It was originally to have been held in September 2001 but was postponed due to the terrorist attacks in New York. The purpose of the special session is to evaluate what was achieved in the 1990s and agree on future priorities relating

to children. Norway participated actively in the preparations for the special session.

Child labour

In the period 1998-2001, Norway contributed NOK 50 million to UNICEF's global programme to combat child labour. A large part of these funds was spent on the main component, Education as a Preventive Strategy against Child Labour. The purpose of the programme is to ensure that an educational programme of satisfactory quality that is relevant and inexpensive is available so that education can be a genuine alternative to child labour. Funding was also provided through UNICEF for projects to combat child labour in Nicaragua. Furthermore, NOK 66 million was allocated to the ILO over a four-year period to support the Integrated Programme for Building Partnership and Capacity against Child Labour (PPC). This programme is fully financed by Norway and involves the ILO's own department for combating child labour and the ILO employers' and workers' departments. The purpose of the programme is to increase awareness of child labour by means of information, education and the development of statistics. NOK 12.5 million was also allocated to combat child labour through the World Bank. Education is an important strategy in efforts to combat child labour, and in addition to contributing to child labour programmes, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has allocated NOK 369 million to the UNICEF educational programme for girls in Africa, which in 2001 was expanded to cover 34 countries (from 18 countries in the first phase). The programme has made good progress and there are many indications that it has influenced other, similar initiatives. At the request of the UN Secretary General, UNICEF is heading a ten-year joint UN initiative for education for girls.

In 2001, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs focused on child labour and the social responsibility of the private sector. Among other things, a brainstorming seminar was arranged with private sector organizations concerning their role and contribution towards combating child labour.

Cooperation

Cooperation between the ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank with a view to improving the collection of data, analysis, research and expertise relating to child labour, which began in 1999, is now bearing fruit. These organizations emphasize that cooperation prevents overlapping and leads to more efficient utilization of knowledge and resources. Donors take a positive view of cooperation between the UN agencies and the World Bank.

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

The Government is opposed to all forms of capital punishment and regularly states its opposition to the use of such punishment.

Photo: Simen Kjellin/Amnesty International



Capital punishment

All Norwegian legal provisions relating to the death penalty were abolished in 1979.

Capital punishment is not prohibited under the European Convention on Human Rights or the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, but a prohibition against the death penalty is laid down in separate optional protocols which are binding on the countries that have acceded to them. Norway is a party to both protocols.

The Government is opposed to all forms of capital punishment and regularly states its opposition to the use of such punishment. The Norwegian authorities raise the issue of the death penalty on a bilateral basis with states that apply the death penalty and in multilateral forums such as the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. In 2001 Norway protested twice to the US authorities about planned executions of persons who were minors at the time the crime was committed.

At the 57th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, Norway co-sponsored a resolution on capital punishment which requests states that still use the death penalty to

establish a moratorium on executions with a view to total elimination of the death penalty at a later date. Norway has also supported several EU declarations on capital punishment.

Financial support has been provided for projects that focus on capital punishment

Protocol No. 13 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms concerning the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances Norway has participated in negotiations on the preparation of Protocol No. 13 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which requires states to abolish the death penalty in all circumstances, including in times of war.

Protocol No. 13 goes further than Protocol No. 6 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms that was adopted on 28 April 1983. The basis for Protocol No. 6 is that the death penalty must be abolished. However, Article 2 of this protocol permits states to impose a death penalty for actions that take place in times of war or under threat of war. According to the new Protocol No. 13, it will no longer be permitted to

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

sentence a person to death for acts committed in times of war or under threat of war. The adoption of the protocol will give an important new political signal that the death penalty is regarded as being an unacceptable form of punishment. The protocol was signed by Norway and 32 other countries on 3 May 2002. At the same time, three countries ratified the protocol, which must be ratified by ten states before it can enter into force.

Women

International efforts to promote the rights of women continued in 2001. At the UN General Assembly, the UN Commission on the Status of Women and the UN Commission on Human Rights, Norway stressed the importance of the human rights of women in interventions and work on resolutions and other binding documents. The importance of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in strengthening human rights was emphasized in interventions at the UN General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is another arena where gender equality and the rights perspective are emphasized. At the annual meeting on the OSCE Human Dimension in Warsaw in September, Norway stressed the importance of working to promote gender equality and combating violence against women and in this connection expressed its support for the OSCE Stability Pact Task Force for Gender Equality. Efforts to combat trafficking in women are also a central topic in the OSCE context.

In development cooperation, the rights perspective in general and women's rights in particular have priority. Education for girls and the fight against HIV and AIDS are areas where the rights perspective is emphasized.

Cooperation with the Institute of Women's Law at the University of Oslo continued. The purpose of this cooperation is to build, confirm and further develop expertise in the field of women's law and human rights at universities and educational institutions in developing countries. In autumn 2001, the Institute accepted two women researchers from the University of Peshawar, Pakistan, for a fairly short course of study. Women academics from Pakistan and Zimbabwe working in the field of women's rights also taught at the Institute.

The Government's Plan of Action against Genital Mutilation includes international measures. At the multilateral level

Norway made substantial contributions to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). Through NORAD, assistance is also provided for international, Norwegian and local organizations working to prevent genital mutilation in several countries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs participates in the inter-departmental steering committee that is heading the work of implementing the Plan of Action.

Reproductive health now has even higher priority in the UNFPA since the appointment of a new head of the organization. Norway supported efforts to promote reproductive rights.

Assistance was provided for the World Bank and the regional development banks in their efforts to promote gender equality and the human rights of women.

In 2001, the UN Security Council confirmed the obligations defined in Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security in a presidential statement. Women's human rights in general and their rights in situations of conflict were emphasized in this connection. As a member of the Security Council, Norway also helped ensure that the protection of civilians in armed conflicts was given an important place on the Security Council agenda in 2001. Protection of women and girls is an important element of protection of civilians in armed conflicts.

In November 2001 Norway was represented by a delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research at the International Consultative Conference on School Education in Relation with Freedom of Religion and Belief, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination in Madrid. The conference was arranged by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief, UNESCO and the Spanish authorities. In the Norwegian intervention, Norway emphasized that religious freedom must never be used as an argument for weakening the position of girls and women in society in general and their equal right to education in particular. Norway underlined that the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of gender is a principle that must be also fundamental in efforts to promote freedom of religion and belief. In the work on the final document from the conference, Norway made a strong contribution towards ensuring the inclusion of a separate paragraph on gender equality in schools, freedom from discrimination on the grounds of gender in general, and on women's equal right to freedom of religion and belief.

In December 2001 an International Conference on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children was held in Yokohama.

The Norwegian delegation was headed by Laila Dávøy, Minister of Children and Family Affairs, and consisted of representatives of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice, as well as a representative from Save the Children Norway's hotline against child pornography and a youth representative from PRESS. Norway had a high profile during the conference and worked actively to strengthen the final document that was adopted at the end of the conference, entitled the Yokohama Global Commitment 2001 against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

Trafficking in women

A decision to implement a campaign against trafficking in women in the Nordic and Baltic states in 2002 was adopted at the informal Nordic-Baltic meeting of gender equality ministers in Vilnius on 15 June 2001. At their meeting on 16 August 2001, the Nordic Ministers of Justice decided to participate in the campaign. The campaign will include raising awareness among the general public about this type of crime, information activities to help victims and prevent more women from becoming involved in trafficking, and increasing awareness and knowledge of the need to provide employment opportunities for women among institutions and organizations that finance various cooperative programmes and projects.

Racism

The UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Durban, South Africa 31 August – 7 September 2001.

The world conference was a unique opportunity for the countries of the world to unite in the fight against racism and racial discrimination. Due to the text of the conference documents on the Middle East conflict and compensation for the slave trade and the colonial era, it seemed for a long time that the conference would end in fiasco. The conference on racism reached a dramatic climax and there was imminent danger of a walk-out, but agreement was ultimately reached on a final document (a Declaration and a Plan of Action). This document is the result of eighteen months of work.

The Norwegian delegation to the conference on racism consisted of representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs. Other participants included representatives of the Directorate of Immigration, the Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination, Anti-racist Centre, the Confederation of Norwegian Business and

Industry, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions and the Contact Committee for Immigrants and the Authorities. The delegation included two youth representatives, who also participated in the Youth Summit that was arranged prior to the conference on racism.

Minister of International Development Anne Kristin Sydnes held the main Norwegian intervention at the World Conference against Racism. She emphasized the importance of education and national legislation in the fight against racism. She underlined that poverty reduction is a vital element of this effort and reminded listeners that many people suffer from several types of discrimination at the same time and therefore need extra attention and special measures.

Negotiations during the conference were extremely difficult. The most difficult topics were the statement on the misdeeds of the past (colonial rule, slavery and the slave trade) and the situation in the Middle East. Satisfactory solutions were found in both areas.

The misdeeds of the past were recognized and apologized for and moral responsibility was allotted. States, and particularly the states concerned, were requested to assist those who have been particularly affected by the misdeeds of the past by developing programmes for social and economic development (poverty reduction, debt relief, market access, development assistance, technology transfer, etc.).

In the statement on the Middle East, the parties were requested to cease using violence, resume negotiations and respect human rights.

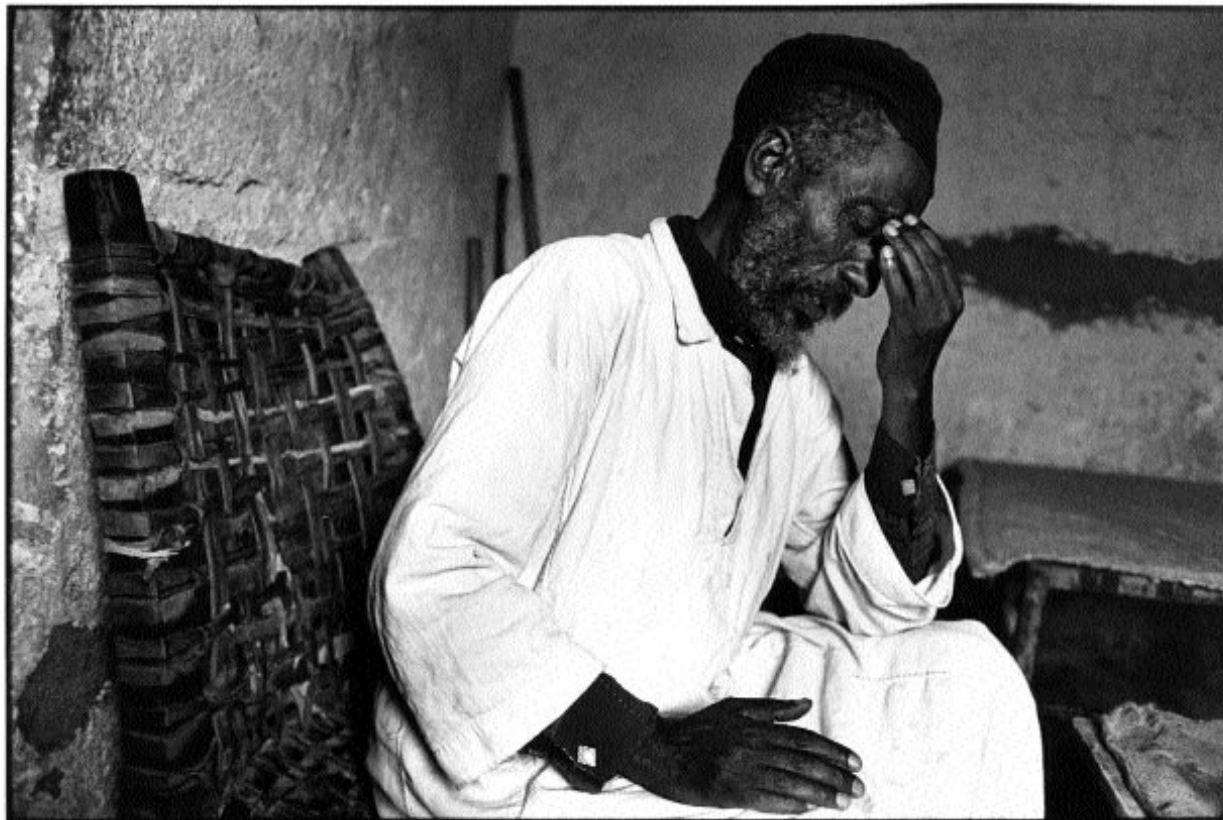
The final document covers a number of other important topics. Norway is particularly satisfied with the agreement that has been reached on refugees, indigenous peoples, immigrants and minorities.

In comparison with the limited expectations people had of the World Conference, there is reason to be satisfied with the result. The final document is characterized by compromise, but contains comprehensive, action-oriented formulations that may be extremely important in efforts to combat racism.

The question is whether all states will be equally conscientious in following up the many requirements for practical action that are contained in the final document. The non-governmental organizations and the international network of which they are a part will be important players in these efforts. It is also essential that the Commission on Human Rights take the necessary initiatives. The UN General

Norway has on many occasions expressed its support for the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief.

EGYPT. Photo: Rune Eraker



Assembly has debated a draft resolution on the World Conference and in February 2002 adopted by a large majority a resolution on the implementation and follow up of the World Conference in which states are requested to adopt and implement national policies and action plans to combat racism, racial discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia. In addition to this resolution, the General Assembly adopted three resolutions by consensus on the third decade of combating racism, measures to combat racism, xenophobia and intolerance, and measures against political doctrines and activities based on racist ideologies or ethnic exclusivity and xenophobia, including neo-Nazism.

The World Conference, the NGO Forum and the Youth Summit were, in sum, a gigantic arrangement. The fact that the conference took place in South Africa was of great symbolic significance and was one of the reasons why many states made great efforts to ensure that the outcome would be successful.

Norway participated actively in the preparations for the conference and during the conference. The Norwegian delegation played a central role in the work that was done on the Middle East issue and presented a proposal for a statement on this subject at an early stage. The main elements of this proposal are reflected in the final document. All in all,

Norway gained acceptance for many of the views it wished to be reflected in the final document. There was emphasis on being "part of the solution and not part of the problem". Norway therefore sought to play an active, constructive role, both in the formal negotiations and in more informal consultations and contexts.

The Government is working on the follow up to the final document from the World Conference through continuous, focused and long-term efforts. Work on the Plan of Action Against Racism and Discrimination is an important element of this process. The work currently in progress on the Plan of Action is based on the Plan of Action Against Racism and Discrimination (1998-2001) presented by the Centre Coalition Government in 1998.

Freedom of religion and belief

The Government gives high priority to efforts to promote freedom of religion and belief. Norway was co-sponsor of a resolution in the UN Commission on Human Rights and the UN General Assembly that condemns all forms of discrimination and intolerance based on religion or belief. Norway has also, on many occasions, expressed its support for the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief.

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

The UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues will hold its first session in May 2002.

INDONESIA. Photo: Rune Eraker



In November 2001 Norway participated in a large international conference on freedom of religion and belief in education. The Norwegian delegation, which consisted of representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research, participated actively in the negotiations on a final document from the conference in order to contribute towards it being as satisfactory as possible. In this connection, Norway gave priority to the human rights perspective and focused on the right of girls to education and freedom of religion and belief.

The Government has provided financial support for the Oslo Coalition for Freedom of Religion and Belief, including funding for work on the book "Facilitating Freedom of Religion", and for the project activities of other non-governmental organizations.

Indigenous peoples

Norway has participated actively in the Commission on Human Rights' working group that is preparing a UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This work has been in progress under the auspices of the Commission on Human Rights since 1995. The declared goal of the UN

General Assembly is for the UN to adopt a Declaration by the end of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples (2004). However, the negotiations have proved to be extremely difficult and progress has been very slow. Through its active involvement, Norway is seeking to help ensure that a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is adopted in accordance with the goal of the General Assembly.

In April 2001 the UN Commission on Human Rights appointed a Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples. Rudolfo Stavenhagen (Mexico) was appointed Special Rapporteur for a period of three years. Norway supported the proposal to appoint a Special Rapporteur for Indigenous Peoples.

Norway has also worked actively to promote the establishment of a UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues. The Forum has now been established and will hold its first session in May 2002 in New York. The Forum is an advisory body for the UN Economic and Social Council on matters relating to indigenous peoples. The Forum may, among other things, deal with matters relating to human rights, environment, education, health, culture and development.

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

The Forum consists of 16 expert members, half of whom were nominated by indigenous peoples. The former president of the Sami Parliament, Professor Ole Henrik Magga, who was appointed as the indigenous member from Europe and the Arctic Region, was elected to be the Forum's first chairman.

The Sub-Commission's Working Group on Indigenous Populations was established in 1982. Since its establishment, Norway has participated actively in discussions in the Working Group. It is anticipated that the Working Group will be less important in future and may also cease to exist as a result of the establishment of the Permanent Forum.

In 2001, Norway provided NOK 1 million as a voluntary contribution to the UN's two voluntary funds for indigenous peoples. Half of this amount was donated to the fund for travel grants for indigenous representatives which enable them to participate in the various UN processes that are highly relevant for indigenous peoples. The other half was donated to the fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, to which indigenous peoples may apply for assistance for projects that contribute towards promoting the rights and living conditions of indigenous peoples. The purpose of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples (1995-2004) is to promote international cooperation in an effort to solve some of the problems indigenous peoples are facing in areas such as health, human rights, development, language and culture. Norway also provided assistance for a number of international and regional projects aimed at promoting the rights of indigenous peoples.

Torture

The Norwegian authorities have followed up the recommendations of the committees on torture by introducing a number of legislative amendments, cf. the reference to work being done on the preparation of an Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment on page 57.

Lesbians and homosexuals

The Plan of Action states that the rights of lesbians and homosexuals are one of Norway's special priority areas in efforts to promote human rights internationally. In many countries, sexual minorities are persecuted, and in especially serious cases Norway has raised this matter with the authorities of the country concerned.

In her intervention at the World Conference on Racism in Durban in autumn 2001, the Minister of International Development pointed to the particularly vulnerable situation in which sexual minorities find themselves, since they are subjected to "multiple discrimination", for example discrimination on the grounds of both race and sexual orientation. One of the delegations at the conference proposed that discrimination on the grounds of sexual preference should be explicitly mentioned in the final document from the conference. Norway supported this proposal, but it was not included due to opposition from a large number of countries.



Norway's efforts to promote human rights in individual countries

Europe

In 2001 the human rights situation in **South-Eastern Europe** was somewhat better than in the previous year, particularly in Serbia, mainly as the result of a change of regime in Belgrade in October 2000. In Croatia, too, the trend in the general human rights situation was slightly positive, among other things due to the return of minority refugees. In 2001 there was strong international focus on the violent conflict between Albanians and Macedonians in Macedonia. In the course of the year, this conflict was brought under relative control after a peace agreement was signed in Ohrid in August, although the human rights situation remained fragile and unstable for the rest of the year. The human rights situation in Kosovo continues to give cause for concern, particularly as regards the ethnic minorities. In Albania, there is still widespread lawlessness, which is having a significant impact on the human rights situation. Trafficking in women has developed into a serious problem in the region, particularly in Kosovo and Albania. In 2001 Norway continued to contribute to democratization efforts in these countries, primarily through measures to strengthen public institutions and civil society. As in 2000, there was emphasis on supporting reform of the judicial systems and police forces in the region. Much still remains to be done in these areas, particularly in Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, southern Serbia and Albania, and the Norwegian authorities continue to give high priority to projects in this sector. Respect for human rights is dependent upon settling past differences and being willing to bring war crime suspects to justice. In the course of 2001 some progress was made as regards cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, particularly as regards the handing over of Slobodan Milosevic to the Haag in June. Cooperation with the ICTY is a highly controversial political issue in the countries concerned and much remains to be done before their cooperation is fully satisfactory. Due to the importance of the reconciliation processes for the democratization of post-conflict areas, in 2001 Norway continued to support various projects that promote dialogue and reconciliation between the various population groups in the western Balkan region.

As in 2000, Norway's involvement in **Albania** in 2001 continued to focus on institutional development through cooperation in the judicial and police sector. Despite a number of positive reforms and greater stability, there is still widespread lawlessness in Albania and the judicial sector is suffering from deficient training and poor pay for the police, judges and other employees. This is exacerbating the deterioration of the general human rights situation in the country, and women and children are particularly vulnerable. In 2001,

Norway provided assistance for projects to help women victims of violence and a project for children, partly focused on the education sector. Norway is also trying to identify good projects to combat the growing problem of people trafficking. In order to support the judicial and police sector, Norway also continued to cooperate with the office of the Director General of Public Prosecutions in Albania with a view to modernizing and strengthening the prosecuting authority.

Respect for human rights in **Bosnia** is still unsatisfactory, although some progress is being made. It takes time to build institutions and a civil society that are capable of safeguarding the human rights of the population. Norway makes an active contribution towards supporting institutional development in the public sector, both at the national level and in the two entities (the Federation and Republika Srpska). Norway continued to provide assistance for reform of the judicial system and the police force in **Bosnia-Herzegovina** in 2001. In this connection, Norwegian police personnel were seconded to the UN International Police Task Force (IPTF) and Norway made an active contribution to reform efforts under the auspices of the OSCE mission to Bosnia and the Office of the High Representative (OHR) (including support for the human rights institutions and the Ombudsman scheme). Assistance was also provided for the newly established International Judicial Commission, which is to undertake comprehensive reforms of the courts of law. Norway supported the involvement of Bosnian civil society in dialogue and reconciliation efforts through the Nansen Dialogue Centres in Mostar, Sarajevo and Banja Luka. Funding was also provided for the work of the Helsinki Committee in 2001. Norway supported the repatriation of refugees, in the form of both assistance for reconstruction and legal aid, particularly for minority refugees.

The election of a democratic coalition government in January 2000 and a new democratic president in February of that year marked a turning point in **Croatia's** willingness to respect internationally recognized human rights. The coalition government is committed to cooperating with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. However this cooperation is still extremely controversial among many groups of the Croatian population. Despite reasonably good progress in the repatriation of refugees, there is still, in some cases, strong local resistance in certain municipalities. Norway supported projects to promote the return of minorities to Croatia in 2001. Norway also contributed towards the provision of legal advice for refugees, the secondment of police personnel to the OSCE Police Force in East Slavonia, and the establishment of an administrative Nansen Dialogue Centre in Osijek. Norway

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

also continued to support the Croatian Helsinki Committee.

Developments in **Macedonia** in 2001 were affected by fighting between the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army and the Macedonian army/security forces. The unrest resulted in a large number of refugees fleeing to Kosovo and a substantial number of internally displaced persons. The situation in 2001 led to strong international focus on the lack of human and minority rights in the country, exemplified by the peace treaty between Macedonian and Albanian politicians in Ohrid on 13 August 2001. In 2001 Norway contributed to human rights projects through the Nansen Dialogue Centre in Skopje and through the Helsinki Committee's efforts to map the human rights situation in the country. Norway also supported an institutional development project between the Norwegian and Macedonian Ombudsmen for Children. As part of the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement, through the OSCE delegation in Macedonia, Norway is supporting the establishment of a multi-ethnic police academy in order to increase the proportion of ethnic Albanians in the police force. Norway also provided a significant amount of assistance for the establishment of an Albanian-language university in Tetovo. Funds were also channelled to emergency measures for refugees and internally displaced persons.

The change of political regime in the **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia** in autumn 2000 has led to a significantly improved human rights situation. In the period since the peaceful upheavals, the new authorities at both federal level and in the Republic of Serbia have demonstrated a clear willingness to conform to international human rights standards. A series of measures and legislative changes were carried out in 2000, including the repeal of the controversial laws on information and universities. Cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has been controversial and the subject of international criticism. Norway continued various measures to support the independent media and civil society, including assistance for the Serbian Helsinki Committee and the Nansen Dialogue Centre in Belgrade. Norway's contributions to free legal aid for refugees continued in 2001.

The human rights situation in **Kosovo** continued to be extremely difficult in 2001, primarily for minority groups. Despite the fact that the murder and violence statistics have declined since 2000, Kosovo Serbs and other ethnic minorities are still exposed to harassment and abuse. Murder still occurs, despite the efforts of KFOR and UNMIK, and ethnic minorities, primarily Serbs and Romas, lack fundamental security and freedom of movement. The human rights situation for Kosovo Albanians in general also gives cause for

concern, as indicated by the assassination of moderate politicians and "collaborators" and the widespread self-censorship of the province's journalists. Some progress was made in the field of institutional development in 2001. The provincial elections in November 2001, in which the Serbian minority also took part, opened the way for implementing Kosovo's interim government and local administration. Norway continued to support the development of functioning, local police structures, among other things by supporting the OSCE-run Kosovo Police Service School in the province and seconding Norwegian police personnel. Norway also supported various human rights measures through Norwegian NGOs and contributed to the construction of a remand prison under the auspices of UNMIK. Norway also continued to support the Nansen Centre in Pristina and its extension to a dialogue project in Mitrovica.

In **Montenegro** (the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), the human rights situation was satisfactory in 2001. Norway continued to support the Montenegrin Helsinki Committee and the Nansen Dialogue Centre in Podgorica. Measures were implemented to support independent media and democratization efforts in the republic. Until November 2001, Norway had one person on secondment to the OSCE/ODIHR office in Podgorica, who also focused on the human rights situation.

The situation in **Chechnya** continued to give cause for concern in 2001. The attacks on the civilian population have not ceased. Like the rest of the international community, Norway is closely monitoring events. This issue has been raised on a bilateral basis with the Russian authorities on several occasions. Norway has also participated in the debate on this issue in international forums, such as the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. At the 57th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, Norway was co-sponsor of the resolution on Chechnya.

Norway provided NOK 17 million for Chechnya-related measures in 2001, primarily emergency relief through Norwegian and foreign non-governmental organizations, the UN and the Red Cross. Many of these programmes also included human rights elements. Parts of this assistance were devoted to facilitating the return of internally displaced persons and documenting the human rights situation. The work being carried out by experts from the Council of Europe at the office of the Russian President's Special Representative for Human Rights in Chechnya is partially financed by Norway.

Since its acceptance into the Council of Europe, Armenia has made progress in its efforts to improve the situation with respect to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

ARMENIA. Photo: Rune Eraker.



"political prisoners" by the country's human rights organizations. Although the Azerbaijani authorities have released a large number of prisoners, updated lists of "political prisoners" from Council of Europe experts show that this problem has not been solved.

Since its acceptance into the Council of Europe, Armenia has made progress in its efforts to improve the situation with respect to human rights and fundamental freedoms. Progress has been made in the field of legislation, but much remains to be done, particularly in connection with implementation and enforcement of the law.

In 2001, Norway provided approximately NOK 43 million for various measures in the region, primarily humanitarian aid. Human rights projects were largely integrated into humanitarian aid. Funds were mainly channelled through the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Red Cross and international forums, such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE. One important project in the region has been the Norwegian Refugee Council's work on introducing and strengthening the focus on human rights in the educational system, including human rights training for teachers. There is also direct contact with the national authorities to integrate human rights education into school curricula. Under the auspices of the Red Cross, efforts have been made to incorporate international human rights into national legislation and spread awareness of human rights in general.

Caucasus

Although there are a number of positive trends in **Armenia**, **Georgia** and **Azerbaijan** with respect to the development of democratic institutions, human rights violations still occur. The general human rights situation in Georgia continues to give cause for concern. Human rights violations take place in the areas of political, civil and social rights, as well as fundamental freedom of religion and expression. The lack of legal safeguards is particularly apparent. Internally displaced persons from the provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and religious groups are particularly at risk. Human rights violations must be viewed in the light of the lack of legal safeguards, deficient enforcement of legislation and the absence of knowledge and awareness of human rights. Azerbaijan and Armenia were accepted as members of the Council of Europe in January 2001. One of the conditions for accepting Azerbaijan as a member of the Council of Europe was the release or re-trial of prisoners regarded as being

Central Asia

The human rights situation in the five former Soviet republics in Central Asia gives cause for concern. Human rights are being systematically violated, although to varying degrees. The situation in **Turkmenistan** and **Uzbekistan** is particularly worrying. After 11 September, all five countries quickly supported the international coalition against terrorism, but the fight against terrorism has also been used internally to legitimize violations against religious and secular opponents of the regime. The growing international focus on the region has also led to more attention being paid to human rights issues, which may make it easier to enter into dialogue with the authorities on this topic. In the longer term, the positive momentum from reconstruction activities in Afghanistan may have favourable ripple-effects in the Central Asian region. All five republics are members of the OSCE. Norway has repeatedly raised the issue of human rights and individual cases, both in this forum and bilaterally

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

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with representatives of the authorities. In 2001 Norway provided NOK 22 million for various humanitarian and human rights projects in the region, mainly channelled through the UN system and the Red Cross. The Norwegian Helsinki Committee and the ODIHR have received financial support for human rights projects, and funds were provided for the OSCE to partially finance the conference on terrorism in Bishkek in mid-December.

Asia and Oceania

The situation for fundamental human rights in **Afghanistan** has been extremely serious for several years, particularly as regards women's access to education, health services and employment outside the home. 2001 was a very dramatic year for Afghanistan and the upheavals towards the end of the year also changed the human rights situation. Throughout the year, there were reports of child soldiers and massacres of the civilian population in connection with the fighting.

The abuses perpetrated by the Taliban became increasingly serious towards autumn 2001. The edicts of the Taliban leader, Mulla Omar, imposed increasingly strict restrictions on the population. Several aid workers from a Christian organization were arrested and accused of missionary activities, and they were not released until some time after the beginning of the American military attacks. Many Afghan employees of the same organization were also arrested and their fate is uncertain.

The military campaign in Afghanistan began in October 2001 and that autumn the Taliban movement had to give up after more than five years in power. Smaller groups from this group of students, who propound an extreme interpretation and practice of Islam, are still active in the country, but as a power factor the Taliban was defeated by military force in autumn 2001. Despite the fall of the Taliban and the transition to an interim administration in Afghanistan, the human rights situation remains serious, although the framework conditions have improved.

Since the appointment of the interim administration on 22 December 2001, the nature of human rights issues has changed. Girls and women will now officially be ensured education, access to social services and the right to work, and there is greater individual freedom in general. Nevertheless, there are reports of harassment of particular ethnic groups, especially the Pashtuns, who provided the main recruitment base for the Taliban. In practice, this harassment consists of plundering, physical violence, sexual

violence and extortion. One of the indirect results of this harassment is that Pashtuns consistently lose out when humanitarian aid is distributed. There are reports that large areas of northern Afghanistan, where the villages were formerly inhabited by Pashtuns, are empty because the people have fled from persecution. Among the considerable number of Afghans who are still fleeing to Pakistan, there are a significant number of Pashtuns who maintain that ethnic violence is the main reason for their flight. Moreover, it is assumed that a considerably larger number of Pashtuns are moving to less exposed areas of Afghanistan, thereby contributing to a rise in the number of internally displaced persons. The interim administration has appointed an independent commission to investigate the numerous cases of ethnic violence.

The Northern Alliance has also been criticized for its treatment of prisoners of war, particularly foreigners, including Pakistanis, Arabs and Chechens. There have also been reports of harassment, violence and rape of women in all parts of the country. Several of the parties in the current interim administration have a dubious reputation of violating human rights in the past, but there may be hope that the current political process, which appears to be on the right track, and the increased international presence and pressure will help to create a basis for an improved human rights situation.

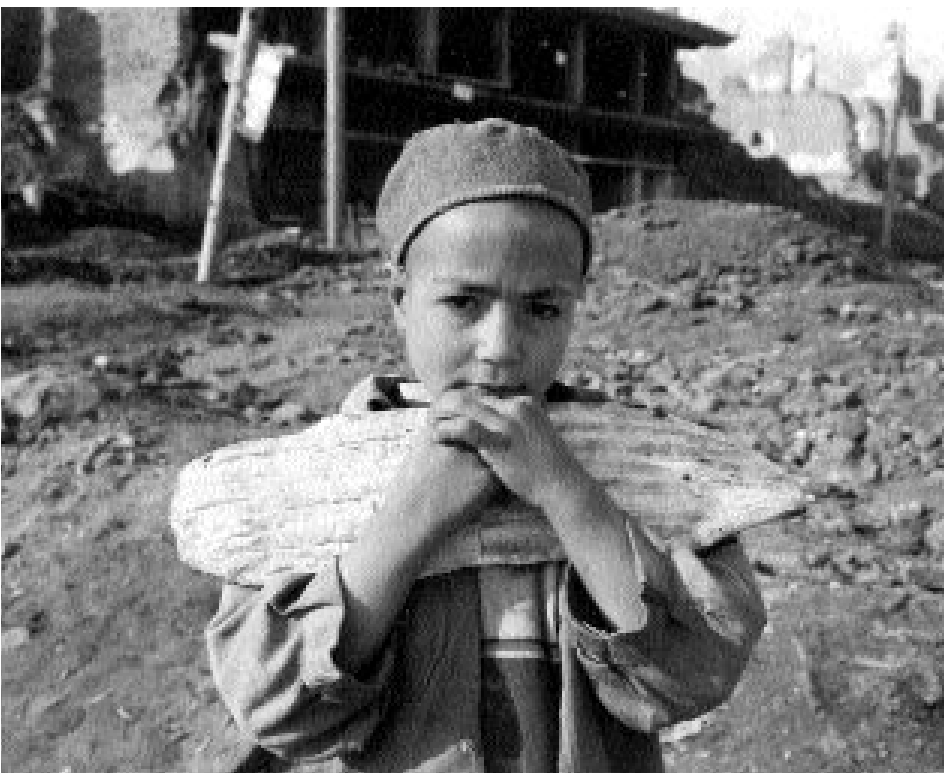
The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has emphasized the importance of establishing a special human rights component as part of the plan for the UN's further work in Afghanistan. Now that the military campaign is partially over, the situation in Afghanistan offers an opportunity to get the UN system's efforts to function better and more coherently.

The High Commissioner has also taken part in discussions on the establishment of a national Human Rights Commission, obligations as regards respect for human rights, monitoring and the need for an adequate legal process to deal with the serious crimes that have been committed. A delegation has been to Afghanistan to consider how to ensure that people are brought to justice for their criminal acts, and a new team will carry out an evaluation of the various needs in the phase that is currently beginning, not least in connection with the development of functioning institutions, a police force and a judicial system.

Norway is financing the post of a Human Rights Adviser through the UNDP to gather information about the situation in Afghanistan. Human rights and the situation of women are among the main topics of dialogue between the Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan presents a formidable challenge to the Norwegian humanitarian assistance sector and to efforts to promote human rights.

■ AFGHANISTAN. Photo: Håkon Lislerud/Norwegian Church Aid



Support Group (ASG) and the parties to the conflict. In 2001, Norway was a member of the Afghanistan Support Group troika whose work focuses on human rights. Through Norway's chairmanship of the Afghanistan Support Group in 2002, Norway has a role to play in ensuring that the human rights aspect is taken into account in international aid efforts. One of the main goals of the Norwegian ASG chairmanship's platform is to promote improvements in the human rights situation, particularly with respect to women's rights. Measures to promote the active participation of Afghan women in the peace, reconciliation and reconstruction process, and to integrate consideration for women into aid projects and programmes are important elements of this effort. Norway also supports other human rights-related measures through the UN system and Norwegian non-governmental organizations.

Assistance for human rights and democratic development is one of three priority areas in Norway's development cooperation with Bangladesh. In 2001, work began on revising the guidelines for cooperation with Bangladesh. It is expected that the new guidelines will be approved and a new framework agreement for cooperation will be signed in 2002.

Due to the difficult situation for women in Bangladesh, Norwegian assistance has been concentrated on the women's and gender equality perspective in development

cooperation.

Initiatives and projects for which assistance was provided 2001 included the following:

- A number of non-governmental organizations which are engaged in educational projects for women in the human rights area and which promote and protect women's rights. The main focus is on trafficking in women and children, sexual abuse and violence against women. Several of these organizations also offer free legal aid.
- Measures to promote land rights.
- Measures to promote the rights of persons with disabilities.
- The general information activities of non-governmental organizations in the field of democracy and human rights.

In its ongoing dialogue with the authorities, Norway has expressed its concern about the human rights situation, particularly the exercise of violence in connection with growing political differences and attacks against minorities.

Norway has also expressed concern about the situation as regards child labour and trafficking in women and children. At donor meetings and elsewhere, Norway has deplored the rise in corruption and the absence of law and order and has pointed to the apparent lack of political willingness to implement political reforms.

Norway provided election observers for the elections to the national assembly in autumn 2001.

In autumn 2000 Norway sent an invitation to a group of parliamentarians from **Bhutan**. The delegation came to Norway in March 2001. The purpose of the visit was to show them how democracy functions in Norway at both the national and the local level.

Burma has had forty years of continuous military rule, which has suppressed political opposition and ethnic minorities. The parties lack traditions for conflict resolution, dialogue and reconciliation. Relations between the authorities and ethnic groups, which account for 40 per cent of the population, are extremely difficult. The military regime regards itself as a guarantor against dissolution and Balkanization. Systematic human rights violations continue to occur. Burma finds itself in a state of growing economic, social and humanitarian crisis.

Reports of serious human rights violations in Burma contin-

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

Aung San Suu Kyi speaking at a meeting

The situation in Burma is being closely followed by the Norwegian public, and a number of non-governmental organizations and an active exile community are focusing on the situation in Burma.

BURMA. Photo: Ronny Hansen



ued in 2001, despite contacts between the military regime and the opposition, which gave grounds for some hope that political dialogue would be established. The contacts began in October 2000, in the form of discussions between the opposition, represented by Aung San Suu Kyi and the regime in the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). Aung San Suu Kyi, is taking part in these discussions alone on behalf of the National League for Democracy (NLD). In connection with the discussions, the regime implemented certain confidence-building measures, including the release of approximately 200 political prisoners, the relaxation of restrictions and harassment, permission for the NLD to reopen its party offices in Rangoon, and the cessation of most of the negative propaganda against the opposition.

There also appears to have been a slight improvement in the regime's willingness to engage in dialogue with the international community, primarily represented by the UN Special Envoy, the Commission on Human Rights' Special Rapporteur

for Burma and the ILO. However, neither contacts with the opposition nor dialogue with the international community gave rise to significant changes in the political or human rights situation. At the end of the year, Aung San Suu Kyi was still under house arrest and more than 1000 political prisoners were in prison. The ILO reported that forced labour was still widespread, although certain limited measures had been implemented by the regime to meet the ILO's recommendations. Reports indicated that the military regime's brutal treatment of ethnic minorities in the border regions was continuing, including forced labour, forced transportation, extortion, summary executions, rape, torture and other abuses. The public administration and the judicial system were functioning extremely poorly and elementary principles of the rule of law were not being upheld. Political rights, such as freedom of the press and freedom of organization were practically non-existent, and the same largely applied to social rights in the field of health and education. Several ethnic groups were also discriminated against and their freedom of movement was severely restricted.

The situation in Burma is closely followed by the Norwegian public, and a number of non-governmental organizations and an active exile community focus on the situation in Burma. Norwegian parliamentarians also seek to intensify political pressure on the military regime by participating

in the international network PD Burma. Former Nobel prizewinners expressed their support for Aung San Suu Kyi in December in connection with a celebration to mark the centenary of the Nobel Prize.

While Norway continued to criticize violations, it requested the regime to continue to pursue confidence-building measures with a view to establishing political dialogue with the opposition and the ethnic minorities, and ensure a rapid, peaceful transition to democracy and the rule of law. Norway was a co-sponsor of the resolution on Burma at the UN General Assembly and the UN Commission on Human Rights, and Norway supported the EU's joint approach to Burma. Norway supported the UN's Special Representative, the Special Rapporteur for Burma and the ILO in their respective efforts to establish political dialogue, improve the human rights situation and abolish forced labour, and assistance was provided for specific projects in Burma aimed at reconciliation, dialogue and human rights. Humanitarian assistance for Burmese refugees in Thailand continued, and

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in the course of the year the Norwegian authorities maintained close dialogue with the Burmese democracy movement in Burma and in exile. The situation in Burma was also discussed with the authorities of many countries, both in ASEAN and in other relevant forums, particularly with a view to persuading neighbouring countries to exert more influence to persuade the regime to move constructively in the direction of reconciliation, dialogue and democracy.

Human rights were a focal point of discussions hosted by Norway in 2001 between the government of the **Philippines** and the country's communist movement, the National Democratic Front. Important progress was made in the negotiating process when the parties signed a special human rights agreement which committed them to establishing a joint commission to deal with reported human rights violations. The war between the communist guerrillas and the armed forces has been going on for more than thirty years and has entailed significant social and economic costs. The peace process is complicated and has suffered several setbacks. The parties appear to be very far apart and do not share the same views regarding what the form and content of the negotiations should be.

Norway has also supported a regional project to establish a human rights mechanism in the ASEAN countries. Funds have been channelled through a project management linked to the highly respected Ateneo University in Manila. One of the purposes of the project is to establish mechanisms for a systematic exchange of experience related to the promotion of human rights and to establish an independent human rights commission for the ASEAN countries.

Although there is religious freedom in the Philippines, the country's Muslim minority (which comprises less than 5 per cent of the population and mainly lives on Mindanao) has been discriminated against for many years. The Muslims have lagged behind, both economically and socially, in comparison with the country's Christian majority (90 per cent of the population) and has generally had little influence in national political forums. Since Ms Arroyo took over as president of the Philippines in January 2001, the authorities have initiated several attempts to correct the inequalities between Muslims and Christians. Norway has provided financial support through a major UNDP programme for measures on Mindanao to promote civil and political rights, including peace and reconciliation, and for economic development in this conflict-ridden area. The key to solving the conflict lies in promoting economic and social development.

Some of Norway's assistance for the Philippines has been spent on human rights education and has mainly been chan-

nelled through non-governmental organizations. Several projects target women and children. The Norwegian Human Rights Fund has been providing support for Philippine NGOs for many years. The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions, which has its own representative office in Manila, provides assistance for trade unions in the Philippines with a view to strengthening trade union rights.

Norway has provided support for projects to combat child labour in **India**. Efforts are concentrated on five educational projects under the auspices of local NGOs and the UNDP. The Norwegian Embassy has prepared a strategic document on child labour, which focuses on awareness-raising, network-building, research and documentation. The Norwegian Human Rights Fund provided assistance for several NGOs in India in 2001.

In 2000, Norway relaxed the limitations on development cooperation that were introduced after India carried out nuclear tests in 1998. The foundation has now been laid for a resumption of government-to-government cooperation with India.

After more than thirty years of authoritarian rule under former president Suharto, Indonesia is now establishing itself as the third largest democracy in the world. However, the transition from dictatorship to democratic governance is a slow, difficult process fraught with many challenges. The country is characterized by widespread social unrest due to poverty, ethnic tensions and religious conflicts. Although many Indonesians now feel that their civil and political rights are respected, the human rights situation in the conflict-torn areas of the Moluccas, Aceh and West Papua gives cause for concern. In the Moluccas, the conflict is based on religion and several thousand people have been killed in recent years in clashes between Christian and Muslim groups. However, this conflict may be approaching a solution after the parties agreed on a peace treaty in February. In Aceh and West Papua, revolutionary movements are working actively for independence from Indonesia and violent confrontations between the revolutionaries and the military forces occur frequently. In all these conflicts it is usually the civilian population that suffers most.

The stated objective of the new government, headed by President Megawati Soekarnoputri, is to continue the reform and democratization process, strengthen the rule of law and fight corruption. Human rights are high on the political agenda, although the weak judicial system and the power of the military forces are obstacles to an active human rights policy on the part of the authorities.

One of the important features of the government's efforts to promote human rights is the establishment of ad hoc tribunals to investigate human rights violations, for example relating to the riots in connection with the referendum on East Timor's independence in 1999. Although many people question the credibility of the tribunals as regards both their mandate and their methods, it is hoped that this process may be a step towards a fairer legal process. Now that judges have been appointed and the tribunal appears to be able to begin its work, the question of international assistance for the legal process has gained new relevance.

Human rights are a high priority area in cooperation between Norway and Indonesia. In the Plan of Action for Human Rights, Indonesia is identified as one of the countries with which Norway wishes to enter into human rights dialogue. Such dialogue will be based on mutual respect and equality and was formally initiated in 2002. Both the Norwegian and the Indonesian authorities wish to contribute towards developing this dialogue into long-term cooperation with a view to strengthening the rule of law, promoting democratic development and strengthening respect for human rights in general.

The Indonesian authorities have shown great interest in cooperating with Norway to build national human rights expertise and regulations, and to strengthen the judicial system, the prosecuting authority, NGOs and expert groups so that the country is able to meet its national and international obligations in this area.

In recent years, Norway has contributed NOK 6 million to the UNDP/World Bank Partnership Programme for Democratic Development in Indonesia and has contributed NOK 4 million in support for the UNDP humanitarian programme in Aceh. Norway has also supported the work of international NGOs in areas of conflict, such as Aceh and the Moluccas. In 2001, NOK 41 million was disbursed to Indonesia for long-term development assistance, humanitarian aid and human rights activities. Assistance is expected to remain at a similar level in 2001.

In development cooperation with **Cambodia**, Norway has particularly emphasized promoting democracy, human rights, good governance, demining and mine-related measures in order to facilitate economic and social development. Norwegian funds are provided for UN agencies, Norwegian humanitarian organizations and non-governmental human rights organizations in Cambodia. Norway also supported national information campaigns relating to the planned trial of the Red Khmer.

Non-governmental organizations and multilateral institutions have been the main channels for Norwegian assistance.

In 2001, the international community placed great emphasis on Cambodia, as soon as possible and in cooperation with the UN, preparing for a fair trial of the leaders of the Red Khmer regime. Norway has expressed its willingness to support a legal process of this nature, both to the Cambodian authorities and in international contexts.

In 2001, there was also strong emphasis on the importance of the local elections in February 2002 being carried out in a democratic manner. Norway emphasized that local elections are an important step towards consolidating democracy in Cambodia, with an eye to the national elections in 2003.

In 2001 Norway was co-sponsor of a resolution on Cambodia at the UN Commission on Human Rights and at the UN General Assembly.

In **Laos**, Norway has been supporting measures to develop administrative capacity, both in central government and at the provincial level, for several years. Norway has supported a project to improve the capacity and working conditions of the Laotian national assembly. This project contains important elements relating to democratic development and institution-building. Norway also supports measures in the tax, customs and environmental administrations, the purpose of which is to contribute towards the development of good governance. Through its support for the Laotian Women's Union, Norway has helped to ensure that differences between women and men are now documented in official statistics for the first time, and that courses are now being arranged for decision-makers at all levels on the integration of the women's perspective into development planning. This project is regarded as being an important contribution towards improving women's rights in Laos.

Norway has requested the **Malaysian** authorities to adopt the two UN international covenants on political and civil rights and economic, social and cultural rights, respectively. Malaysia decided to accede to the ILO Convention on Child Labour in 2000.

In August 2000 Norway supported the statement of the French EU Chairmanship concerning the conviction of former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim for sodomy. Political developments, particularly matters such as freedom of religion, freedom of expression and the position of women, are closely monitored.

The growing violent conflict in **Nepal**, caused by the Maoist

The right to education is one of the main priorities in Norway's cooperation with Nepal. Norway has provided financial support for the national programme to increase the number and quality of primary schools in the country.

■ NEPAL. Photo: Håkon Listerud/Norwegian Church Aid



revolutionary movement, has led to a rise in human rights violations in the past year. A state of emergency was declared in November 2001 and the army was sent in. The increase in defence costs has serious consequences for the state budget and Nepal's financing of development activities. In this situation, Norway has participated actively in a local Peace Support Group under the leadership of the UNDP. On this basis, a fund has been established, administered by the UNDP, that offers financing for various conflict-reducing initiatives run by local non-governmental and governmental organizations. Norway has also made efforts to ensure that the conflict and its consequences for development are on the agenda in donors' dialogue with the authorities.

The right to education is one of the main priorities in Norway's cooperation with Nepal. Norway has provided financial support for the national programme to increase the

number and quality of primary schools in the country. Norway has also provided support for projects that focus on the rights of children. Two local organizations have also received support for the preparation of a human rights year-book and for legal advice for women.

Norway supported the establishment of a national Human Rights Commission, which was established in June 2000.

In the past year, Norway provided substantial humanitarian aid for North Korea. In the light of the systematic and widespread human rights violations in **North Korea**, Norway has, in this connection, expressly pointed out that it expects this aid to be used in accordance with internationally recognized principles. Norway has pointed out to the North Korean authorities the necessity of introducing reforms, including democratization, openness and respect for human rights.

Democracy and human rights are a priority area in Norwegian assistance for **Pakistan**, which is provided through direct support for the authorities, multilateral agencies and local non-governmental organizations.

Norway deplored the military coup in autumn 1999 and has requested the regime to cede control to democratically elected bodies as soon as possible.

The Pakistan Government has launched a plan for decentralization and local government, including publicly elected bodies at three levels below the provincial level. In cooperation with the UN Development Programme and the British Department for International Development (DFID), Norway supports a project that seeks to mobilize women to stand as candidates and vote at elections. This effort is headed by a non-governmental women's organization, the Aurat Foundation, and a network of local organizations is taking part. The results in connection with the first round of elections were positive and as many as 86 per cent of the places reserved for women were filled.

The Election Commission of Pakistan has strengthened its independence and extended its mandate in connection with the local elections. In cooperation with the UN Development Programme and the DFID, Norway is supporting a project that involves institutional and human resource development for the Election Commission. The project includes efforts to mobilize voters at grassroots level with the help of non-governmental organizations.

The human rights programme that Norway is supporting in cooperation with Switzerland has made good progress and is

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providing assistance for a comprehensive human rights campaign that was launched by the authorities in spring 2000. As part of this programme, a Centre for Human Rights Studies has been established at the University of Peshawar, in close cooperation with the Department of Women's Law at the University of Oslo. Cooperation with the ILO on the training of public employees, trade union representatives and non-governmental organizations on fundamental human rights concepts and conventions, etc. continued in 2001.

The Norwegian Embassy supports several non-governmental organizations working to promote human rights in general, and organizations working to protect the rights of women and children in particular. An independent review of this assistance was carried out in autumn 2000. The main conclusion was that the organizations supported by Norway are among the most important human rights agents in Pakistan. The organizations are engaged in serious human rights efforts, often with impressive results, and they have considerable influence in civil society. The majority of organizations cooperate with the authorities in important areas, including local elections and the implementation of the authorities' human rights campaign. The embassy is encouraging both parties to strengthen this cooperation in order to promote democracy and the protection of human rights in Pakistan.

The human rights situation in **Sri Lanka** must be viewed in the light of the fact that the country is fighting a bloody civil war that has been going on for eighteen years, cost more than 60,000 human lives and forced hundreds of thousands to flee. Thus, the most serious human rights problems are linked to the military conflict. Reports are regularly received about violations against civilians in the conflict areas and both parties must take responsibility for serious violations of fundamental human rights. The war is brutal, as may be seen from the fact that very few prisoners of war are registered. Both civilian and military losses are increasing. The use of child soldiers by the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) is also a problem, and the government reports that it is widespread. Such information is difficult to verify, but there is little doubt that many of the LTTE soldiers are young.

Among non-governmental organizations, the general opinion is that the human rights situation in the areas controlled by the government has improved under President Kumaratunga's period in office. In general, the human rights situation is better in the south and west than in the north and east.

Sri Lanka has fairly comprehensive legislation to protect human rights, and human rights have a prominent place in

the new draft constitution. However, the laws are inadequately enforced. An independent Human Rights Commission was appointed in 1997. So far, the Commission has not functioned as well as had been hoped. Its efficacy is highly dependent on the people working for the institution. Since the new leadership took over in spring 2000, an improvement is anticipated. One of the Human Rights Commission's main problems is that the office is currently inundated with the "wrong" types of cases (for instance labour cases relating to persons who have been bypassed for promotion) and that it has therefore lacked the capacity to concentrate on really "serious" human rights cases.

Support for human rights projects is an important part of development cooperation with Sri Lanka which, according to the guidelines, must be concentrated on projects that contribute to peace and reconciliation, democratic development, rehabilitation and development in areas affected by conflict as well as promoting human rights.

In 2001 Norway contributed towards supporting human rights in Sri Lanka primarily by playing a central role in efforts to help the parties initiate negotiations on a political solution to the conflict.

Other projects supported by Norway included:

- A programme to promote national integration and reconciliation between population groups,
- Comprehensive assistance for election monitoring in connection with the parliamentary election, which included support for monitoring the activities of the media,
- Support for the work of non-governmental human rights organizations working in the field of education, free legal aid and legal publications.

Norway raises human rights issues in both bilateral and international forums, including in connection with the annual consultations and at donor meetings under the auspices of the World Bank.

The human rights situation in **South Korea** has improved considerably in the last decade, although human rights violations still occur. In the past year, Norway has raised the question of a Human Rights Act with the South Korean authorities.

Thailand has undergone a comprehensive process in the field of democratization and human rights in recent years. In the last few years, Norway has been in close contact with Thailand on the subject of human rights and democracy. In addition to a number of visits at ministerial level, the Lysøen

In 2001 Norway helped to support human rights in Sri Lanka primarily by playing a central role in efforts to help the parties initiate negotiations on a political solution to the conflict.

■ SRI LANKA. Photo: Rune Eraker



process has played a central role in dialogue with Thailand. There are also substantial and regular contacts at senior official level.

Norway has provided financial support for non-governmental organizations based in Thailand which are involved in human rights and democratization at both national and regional levels. Such organizations may also have considerable influence outside Thailand's borders. One practical result includes training materials and the publication of the Circle of Rights, a manual for a rights-based approach to social and economic development issues. Thailand can also play a leading role in efforts to establish regional human rights mechanisms and national human rights institutions in other countries. By promoting democratic rights where possible in South-East Asia, it may be possible to achieve cross-border effects that, in the longer term, will lead to more effective, democratic forms of government in other Asian countries, closer and more binding regional cooperation, and improved prospects for social and economic development.

Norwegian non-governmental organizations have also received financial support for their work on human rights issues in Thailand and South-East Asia. Norway has not

found grounds to criticize the general human rights situation in Thailand, but has proposed that Thailand give the UN High Commissioner for Refugees an extended mandate to protect refugees in camps along the Burmese border, and that Thailand follow internationally recognized principles for the treatment of refugees. Norway has also encouraged Thailand to adopt several international conventions: the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

In 2000, Norway supported the Thai candidacy to the UN Commission on Human Rights for 2001-2003 and in 2001 maintained close contact with Thailand on central issues in the Commission on Human Rights. Norway also supported the Thai candidate to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2001.

Dialogue has taken place on the preparation of Norway's and Thailand's respective national action plans for human rights. In connection with the establishment of a national Human Rights Commission in Thailand, Norway continued its dialogue with central players and institutions. The Human Rights Commission started work in 2001 and it attaches

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

importance to Norway's assistance during the phase when the Commission is planning its way forward. This will be followed up in 2002. Norway has also cooperated with Thailand on human rights dialogue with other countries in the region. Norway has supported activities based in Thailand in order to pursue efforts to establish a regional human rights mechanism. Among other things, Norway has provided financial support for a regional working group which is considering the establishment of a human rights mechanism for the ASEAN countries.

A network event for a number of human rights organizations in Thailand was held in Bangkok in April 2001 in connection with the launch of the media project The Right to Development and in cooperation with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Worldview Rights. The purpose of the event was to demonstrate support for and increase recognition of the work done by human rights organizations, including the Thai Human Rights Commission, and to contribute towards expanding dialogue between the authorities and civil society in both a national and a regional context.

The human rights situation in **Vietnam** has improved considerably in the past 10-15 years, not least as a result of the general opening up of the country and the Doi Moi process that began in 1986. Ordinary Vietnamese have greater freedom and as a result of rapid economic development in the 1990s, many people have risen above the poverty line. However, Vietnam is still a poor country with an average per capita income of USD 340, unevenly distributed between urban and rural areas. The political and civil rights situation has also improved and the Government is more open to discussing human rights and democracy. However the situation is still characterized by the party's and the authorities' desire to ensure stability and centralized control. There are still serious limitations on freedom of expression, freedom of religion and freedom of association, and ethnic minorities are still controlled.

Human rights dialogue with Vietnam is still at a very preliminary phase, although human rights issues are raised at the annual meetings on development cooperation between Norway and Vietnam, most recently in 2001. Vietnam has been a member of the UN Commission on Human Rights since 1 January 2001 and, with the exception of the Convention Against Torture, has signed the six most important UN human rights conventions.

A Vietnamese human rights delegation at senior official level visited Norway in November 2001 to study the rule of law in Norway. Its members had meetings with judges, Norwegian

non-governmental organizations, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry (NHO), the Norwegian Bar Association, the County Governor of Oslo and Akershus, the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Police Academy, the Institute for Human Rights and representatives of the media, as well as meetings at the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the Storting (the Norwegian parliament) they also met with Norwegian parliamentarians. This was the first step towards extended cooperation with Vietnam on human rights, principles of the rule of law and good governance.

After the referendum on independence from Indonesia in autumn 1999, **East Timor** was more or less devastated by Indonesian police forces, the army and pro-Indonesian militias. A Serious Crimes Unit was established under the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in 2000 to investigate crimes against humanity. Some ten cases have priority and they include the most serious human rights violations committed in 1999. One case has been processed so far and legal proceedings are under way in two other cases.

In parallel with this, a Commission on Reception, Truth and Reconciliation has been established to document violations of a less serious nature committed between 1974 and 1999. The Commission will also facilitate the integration of refugees returning from West Timor and promote local reconciliation initiatives.

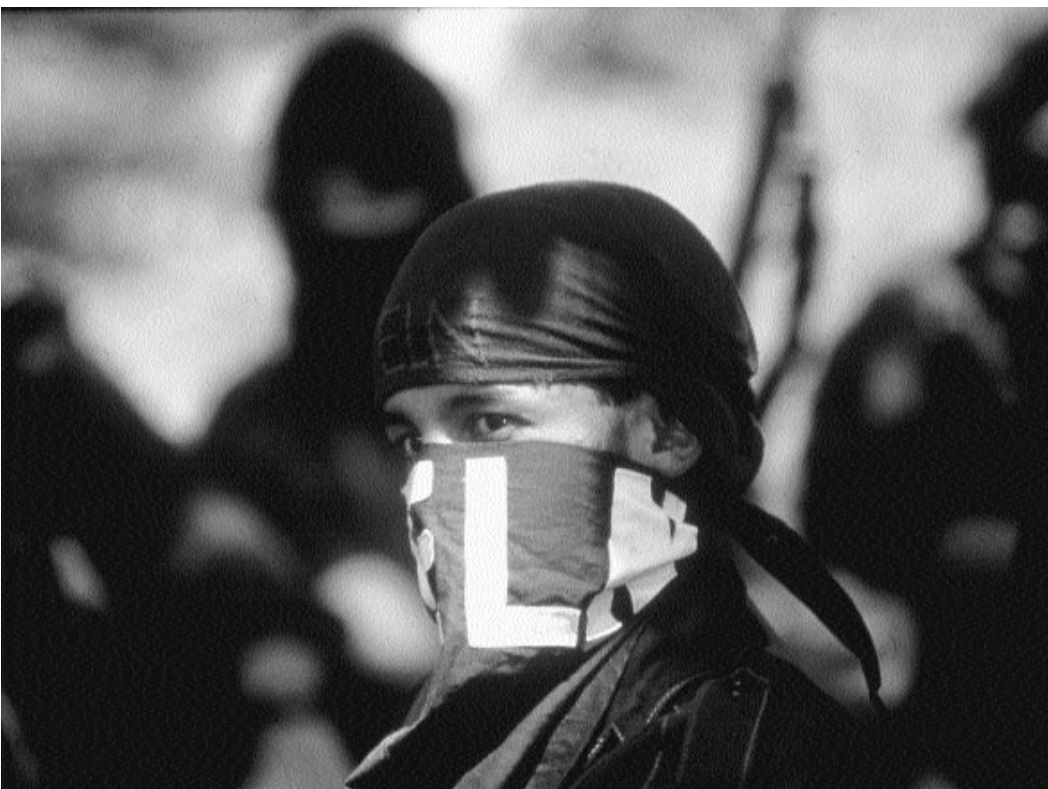
Norway supports both the UN Serious Crimes Unit and the Commission on Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, and has contributed to the training of the East Timorese police force. Since 1999, Norway has provided approximately NOK 50 million a year in assistance for East Timor.

America

Colombia is one of the most violent societies in the world. The armed conflict has been going on for almost forty years. President Pastrana has established separate dialogues with the FARC and ELN guerrilla movements, although shortly before the new presidential elections there are few signs that they have led to binding agreements or any reduction in the violence. The guerrillas are well organized and have considerable power in most of the country. Their strength is partly derived from "milking" the enormous wealth generated by narcotics production and trafficking in Colombia. The fighting mainly affects poor Colombians and the guerrilla forces have little support among the general population, even

For Norway it has been important to participate in projects that seek to protect the population from abuse and facilitate the participation of civil society in the peace process.

■ COLOMBIA. Photo: Paul Grabhorn, ICRC/ Red Cross



among those who are trying to achieve far-reaching political changes and reforms. Norway is involved in peace efforts with both guerrilla organizations and established an embassy in Bogotá in 2001. The FARC was several times allowed to extend its free zone in southern Colombia, which was established in 1999, but in February 2002 their terrorist acts forced a cessation in the dialogue with the government, which also brought an end to the free zone. Efforts to establish a "meeting zone" for the ELN stranded in 2001, but dialogue between the government and the ELN – in which a group of five friendly nations plays an active role – has been resumed, although it is currently treading water. In the first half of 2002, all parties are awaiting the outcome of the imminent presidential and parliamentary elections. The international community has criticized the guerrillas' lack of respect for international humanitarian law, but also points out that the government has a considerable credibility problem as regards its alleged fight against the paramilitary forces.

In 2001, a total of NOK 49.5 million was disbursed from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' budget items for Colombia. For Norway, in addition to humanitarian assistance, it has been important to strengthen the presence of the UN in the country and to participate in projects that seek to protect the population from abuse and facilitate the participation of civil society in the peace process. These will continue to be the most important priority areas in future. Any measures that

the parties agree on in the course of their negotiations will have priority.

The peace agreements in **Guatemala** are probably the most comprehensive of their kind in comparison with other countries in the region. Five years after the peace accord was signed, much of the implementation remains to be done. This particularly applies to the rights of indigenous peoples and the agreement on social and economic reforms.

President Alfonso Portillo from the Frente Republicano Guatemalteco (FRG) declared after taking over in January 2000 that the peace accords were a national concern and that his government was committed to continue implementing them. However, broad-based political groups in Guatemala lack a feeling of ownership of the peace agreements,

which makes it difficult to achieve political support for necessary reforms, not least in the socio-economic area.

Although the political arena has expanded, there is still a widespread culture of violence. Threats against lawyers and human rights activists, journalists and NGO representatives have increased again in the past two years. The number of extra-judicial executions – lynchings – gives cause for concern.

Since the peace accord was signed, Norway's assistance for Guatemala has been in the region of NOK 80-100 million a year. In the initial period, much of this assistance was devoted to demobilizing and integrating former combatants, refugees and human rights monitoring, while in recent years assistance has focused more strongly on developing the rule of law and building democracy. Assistance for civil society and programmes relating to the rights of indigenous peoples have had high priority throughout the period.

In the current guidelines for development assistance for Guatemala, the main priorities are continued strengthening of the rule of law, the democratization process and the rights of indigenous peoples. Assistance is also intended to contribute towards ensuring that the recommendations of the Truth Commission are followed up.

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

Nicaragua was one of Norway's priority partner countries in the period 1987-2001. As a result of reorganization in connection with the 2002 budget, Nicaragua now comes under the group of "other partner countries".

Despite a high level of international assistance throughout the 1990s, the effects of the conflicts in the 1980s are still noticeable. This is one of the reasons why living conditions have scarcely improved. The lack of openness and transparency in the administration and the politicization of independent state bodies and institutions (the Supreme Electoral Council, the Office of the Auditor General and the Supreme Court) are problems that have weakened both economic development and the consolidation of democracy. The new government, which took over in January 2002, has declared that the fight against corruption is one of its main priorities.

The main goal of cooperation with Nicaragua is to strengthen the country's ability and potential to meet the basic needs of broad sectors of the population. Poverty reduction, good governance and transparency are the main objectives of Norwegian assistance and key concepts in Norway's dialogue with the authorities. In recent years, Norwegian assistance has amounted to just over NOK 100 million.

In **Cuba**, there has been no substantial improvement in human rights in the past year. Fundamental rights, such as freedom of expression and organization, are still abused. At the session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, another resolution was passed, urging Cuba to adopt the international and inter-American conventions on civil and political rights.

Like many other countries, Norway has tried to maintain a dialogue with Cuba on human rights issues, but dialogue was suspended by the Cubans after the Norwegian vote in the UN Commission on Human Rights in spring 2000. Cuba has not been willing to resume this dialogue since then.

North Africa and the Middle East

Egypt is in many ways a more open and democratic society than many other countries in North Africa and the Middle East. Given Egypt's size and importance as an intellectual centre, both within Islam and in the secular sphere, this has led to frequent confrontations with the authoritarian power structures that do, after all, exist. The country's authoritarian characteristics are typified by the fact that the multi-year emergency legislation originally passed to combat terrorism is now applied to silence what is clearly non-violent opposi-

tion. Norway and other western countries often become involved in individual cases, one example in 2001 being the case of Dr. Saad Eddin Ibrahim, an intellectual who was sentenced to imprisonment on dubious grounds. Norwegian representatives were present at the trial and visited Dr. Ibrahim in prison. The sentence against Dr. Ibrahim was annulled at the beginning of 2002.

Bashar Al-Assad took over as president of **Syria** after the death of his father in July 2000. Since then there have only been minor changes in the human rights sphere. In 2001, for the first time for many years, Syria submitted its report to the UN Commission on Human Rights pursuant to the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Syria is governed by emergency laws which give the authorities far-reaching powers to limit freedom of expression and association, control mail and other communications, censor the media, expropriate and confiscate private property, and arrest people who are a threat to state security.

The state of emergency, which is of dubious validity under international law, is explained by the fact that the country is at war with Israel. In autumn 2000, ninety-nine intellectuals made an open demand in the media for political reforms and the release of all political prisoners. After the authorities released 600 political prisoners, mainly from the Muslim Brotherhood, in November 2000, human rights organizations estimate the number of political prisoners in Syria to be around 1,500. Norway is closely monitoring the human rights situation. At the local level, there is close cooperation with the embassies of other countries. Representatives of the Norwegian embassy in Damascus have on several occasions been present at trials of persons who have organized political discussion groups and/or criticized the regime.

In **Iran** there is a struggle in progress between authoritarian and liberal forces. One of the goals of Norway's gradual rapprochement with Iran is to support the pro-reform forces. Now that contacts have improved, it is easier for Norway to raise human rights issues, including individual cases, with the Iranian authorities. This has been done on a number of occasions. Norway voted in favour of a critical resolution on human rights in Iran at the UN Third Committee in autumn 2001.

Although the human rights situation in Iran has improved, the trend is not always positive. Setbacks occur, in the form of inhumane legal practice and closure of newspapers. Nevertheless, the long-term trend is favourable, particularly in the area of freedom of expression. Norwegian PEN received NOK 50,000 to support its efforts to promote freedom of expression in Iran.

Kurds in a refugee camp in Iran. One of the goals of Norway's gradual rapprochement with Iran is to support the forces of reform.

IRAN. Photo: F. von Survy, IFRC/ Red Cross



The UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in **Iraq** reports that the Iraqi authorities are responsible for a number of human rights violations. There is widespread use of extra-judicial executions, disappearances, imprisonment without due legal process, and torture. The Iraqi people lack the most fundamental freedoms and the situation gives cause for grave concern. Norway was therefore actively involved in the preparation of resolutions on this serious situation in UN agencies. The Norwegian authorities raised the question of the serious humanitarian and human rights situation during the visit of Iraqi State Secretary Nizar Hamdoon to Norway in June 2001.

Israel's political system is based on democratic principles. All citizens have legal safeguards under the law and Israel has signed the most important human rights conventions. Nevertheless, in practice the non-Jewish population has been subjected to discrimination. Historically, Israel's greatest problems in the human rights field have been related to the occupation of the Palestinian Area. Israel was responsible for a number of serious human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law against the Palestinian population and against Lebanese prisoners in Israeli jails.

The new Palestinian "Intifada", which began in autumn 2000, has led to a dramatic deterioration in the human rights situation in the occupied territories and a marked increase in the

number of Israeli human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. According to the US State Department, Israeli security forces killed more than 500 and injured 6,300 Palestinians in 2001. Israel is carrying out systematic extra-judicial killings of Palestinians who are suspected of having taken part in terrorist activities against Israelis, and at least 33 people are reported to have been killed in 2001 as a result of this policy.

The closure of the Palestinian Area, blockades around towns and villages and long periods of curfew have led to serious restrictions on Palestinians' freedom of movement. Road blocks have prevented access to medical assistance and led to the loss of human lives. Restrictions on the transport of persons and goods between Israel and the Palestinian Area have led to substantial economic loss for the Palestinians. The numbers of poor and unemployed people rose strongly in the Palestinian Area in 2001.

Israel has arrested more than 1,500 Palestinians, many of whom are children, for crimes in connection with the Intifada. Local human rights organizations report a rise in the number of accusations of the use of torture and inhumane treatment in Israeli prisons. Other human rights violations include shooting at and demolition of Palestinian civilian housing. Israeli forces have destroyed a large number of homes belonging to the families of persons suspected of taking part in terrorist activities. In the past

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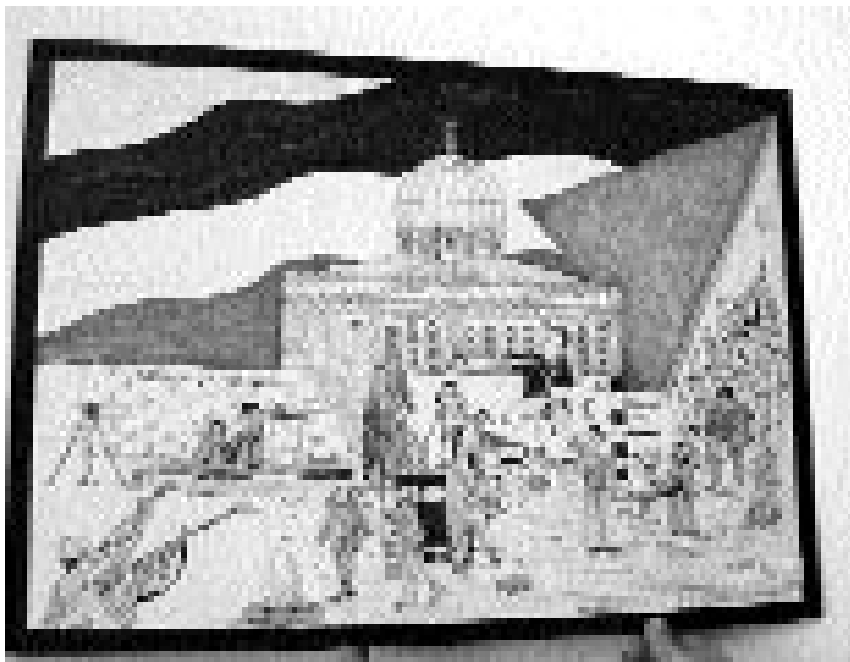
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Child's drawing from Gaza, showing many Israeli soldiers Norway has consistently deplored terrorist acts against Israeli citizens. At the same time, it has deplored Israel's use of excessive force in connection with security measures and reprisals.

THE PALESTINIAN AREA. Photo: Norwegian People's Aid



year, there has also been a rise in the number of demolitions of Palestinian houses which, according to the Israeli authorities, were built without the necessary permits.

Norway has consistently deplored terrorist acts against Israeli citizens. At the same time, it has deplored Israel's use of excessive force in connection with security measures and reprisals resulting from the Palestinian uprising, and explicitly criticized Israel's practice of liquidating Palestinians suspected of terrorist activities. Norway has also repeatedly asked the Israeli authorities to halt its attacks on Palestinian infrastructure, relax the blockades and reduce the number of checkpoints. Norway provides financial support for several human rights organizations working in Israel and the Palestinian Area.

The Palestinian Area is not an independent state and can therefore not be a party to international legal instruments, such as the human rights conventions. Nevertheless, the Palestinian authorities are expected to conform to international custom as regards safeguarding human rights principles and humanitarian legal principles. The Palestinian Area is characterized by a poorly developed judicial system and a weak democratic structure. A number of laws that have been fully processed, including the Constitution and the Act relating to Courts of Law, have still not been ratified by the president. Unclear dividing lines between the civilian judicial system, the military judicial system and the security courts, and the lack of enforcement of court rulings are undermining the civilian judicial apparatus. Freedom of expression is limited and the threshold for criticism and political opposi-

tion is low. The Palestinian authorities impose the death penalty for suspicion of collaboration and alleged collaborators have been assassinated without the authorities attempting to arrest the perpetrators. Norway has repeatedly criticized the Palestinian authorities for this practice, both bilaterally and in international forums.

Since the beginning of the unrest in September 2000, Israeli military and civilian targets have been subjected to attacks by various armed Palestinian groups. According to the US State Department, there were almost 2000 acts of Palestinian violence against Israelis in 2001. More than 200 people were killed and more than 1,500 injured in these attacks. This is a sharp increase in comparison with the previous year. Norway has repeatedly demanded that the Palestinian authorities crack down more strongly on terrorism.

Norwegian political involvement in and development assistance for the Palestinian Area are intended to support the peace process. The development of democracy and the protection of human rights are important goals of Norway's activities in the Palestinian Area. Consequently, a large proportion of Norwegian aid is allocated for the establishment of well-functioning public institutions which fully respect fundamental human rights, and for organizations in civil society. Financial support is provided for both Palestinian and Israeli non-governmental organizations that monitor and record human rights violations in the Palestinian Area.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Angola continued to be the scene of serious human rights violations in 2001. They included both war-related violations and violations arising from institutional weaknesses in the judicial system, the police force and the prison system. Peace and respect for human rights are prerequisites for economic and social development, and Norway's involvement in the human rights sphere in Angola has increased each year, in terms of both the use made of embassy personnel and financial allocations.

Assistance has been channelled through the UN Human Rights Department (ONUA-HRD), the local non-governmental organization ADRA and the Canadian organization Devel-

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

opment Workshop (DW). In addition to cooperating with local churches and NGOs, the main focus has been on the Angolan judicial system, including the courts, the police and the prison service. This assistance has been channelled through ONUA-HRD. The courts were strengthened by training personnel and modernizing procedures, including electronic processing of court records. The work of ADRA and the DW has been focused on the grass-roots level. One of the fundamental weaknesses of the former peace processes in Angola was that dialogue took place only at senior political level. Through the work of ADRA and the DW, a broad range of players from civil society, the churches and traditional leaders have been included and efforts to expand ownership of the process will continue. In 2001 Norway also provided support for a local human rights organization, *Mãos Livres* (Free Hands), which has been involved in several important cases of principle in Angola. Assistance was also provided for cooperation between *Mãos Livres* and the Mozambican human rights organization *Liga de Direitos Humanos*, which also receives Norwegian assistance.

The human rights situation in **Ethiopia** is improving, but still gives cause for concern in several areas, such as the implementation of local elections in the south of the country and the authorities' handling of the student demonstrations and the subsequent riots in April 2001. The lack of capacity and competence in the judicial system is a threat to the rule of law. However, the growing willingness on the part of the central political authorities to discuss these problems has had a positive effect on public debate. This trend is mainly limited to the largest towns, however, and in rural areas, where 80 per cent of the population live, the ruling party's local party apparatus often exercises strict control and sometimes abuses its power. The situation for the media has improved, although official intervention still occurs, and the views of the political opposition are increasingly broadcast in the state-run media. A large number of non-governmental organizations are working on human rights and democracy issues in Ethiopia and their working conditions have improved considerably in the past few years. Efforts to establish an official Human Rights Commission and Ombudsman are under way and these institutions are expected to be operational in the course of this year.

Norway's assistance for Ethiopia in 2001 was mainly provided through the UN system, the Red Cross and Norwegian non-governmental organizations. A considerable proportion was devoted to efforts to promote human rights and democracy. Assistance for the International Committee of the Red Cross contributed to the organization's important efforts to safeguard the rights of deported persons, prison-

ers of war and civilian internees. Children's rights have been the focus of Norway's support for the efforts of Norwegian Save the Children in the judicial sector and in primary education. With Norwegian support, Norwegian Church Aid has been involved in extremely important reconciliation efforts between Ethiopia and Eritrea through the religious leaders of the two countries. The Institute for Human Rights has received financial support to continue its research on the election process in Ethiopia in connection with the local elections in 2001.

Assistance for democracy, human rights and good governance accounted for just over 30 per cent of total bilateral assistance for Ethiopia. NOK 3 million was allocated for the efforts of Ethiopian non-governmental organizations working in the field of human rights education, human rights monitoring, voter education, the rights of women and children, and trade union rights. In addition to this direct support, preparatory work relating to assistance for the judicial sector was resumed after being halted during the conflict with Eritrea. Work on a major programme to support the development of the media was also initiated, with a view to contributing to the development of free, critical, professional media in Ethiopia. Assistance for observation and analysis of the trial of persons responsible for human rights violations under the Mengistu regime continued.

The democratization process in **Eritrea** suffered a serious setback in September 2001. A group of fifteen leading party and cabinet members wrote an open letter to the party in which they accused the government of behaving unlawfully and in contravention of the Constitution. Eleven of them were arrested and all the independent media in the country were closed down because it was alleged that they were in breach of press legislation. Nine journalists were arrested. During the parliamentary session in January 2002, the eleven party members were accused of treason and subversive activities, although the case has not been brought before the courts and they have not been formally charged. The newspapers that were closed down were accused of teaming up with the opposition and weakening national unity. The elections planned for December 2001 have been indefinitely postponed. Parliament also decided that the question of a multi-party system was not relevant at the moment. Furthermore, only "responsible" newspapers are permitted to be published.

Many Ethiopians have been repatriated because it was impossible for them to remain in Eritrea due to official harassment.

Members of the religious sect Jehova's Witnesses have no

Many Ethiopians have been repatriated because it was impossible for them to remain in Eritrea due to harassment by the authorities.

Photo: Rune Eraker



rights and are not permitted to practise their religion.

In the past twelve months there has been little scope for cooperation on human rights and democratic development. In dialogue with the authorities on future cooperation, there will be emphasis on human rights and democracy, and on efforts to secure the peace and the peace process.

The human rights situation throughout the **Democratic Republic of Congo** still gives cause for concern. The situation in the eastern provinces is particularly difficult due to the absence of official structures in the areas controlled by the rebels. Arbitrary arrests, unlawful detention and generally poor treatment are used to harass and humiliate the population, human rights groups, religious communities and other non-governmental organizations. The large number of child soldiers is also a very serious problem. A number of different rebel groups are currently competing for power, which has led to increased rivalry within and between ethnic groups. This has exacerbated the situation of the civilian population more than was previously assumed. There has been a marked increase in the number of local warlords, who have taken part in systematic destruction of civil structures. The Mai-Mai militia, supported by armed Hutu rebels, have continued their widespread human rights violations. They have regularly attacked villages, forced the local population to give up their valuables, or threatened to kill them. A large number of women and children of Rwandan origin are said to have been killed.

In the government-controlled area, the use of the death penalty continues, although to a lesser extent, despite the government's moratorium on this kind of punishment. President Joseph Kabila has announced that civilians will no longer be tried by military tribunals. Journalists and political opponents have been sentenced in such tribunals in contravention of international law. The President has also announced that no more children will be recruited as soldiers, and that the Government is committed to ratifying

the Convention on the Rights of the Child. On a positive note, several human rights activists have been released and some of the restrictions on non-governmental organizations have been lifted. The Government has also introduced legislation that makes it easier for political parties to operate.

Norway's contribution to human rights projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo is limited. In 2001, assistance was provided for the following: the Norwegian Refugee Council for the start-up of their activities in Goma, reconciliation and humanitarian aid; the Pentecostal Mission of Norway for democratization projects and humanitarian aid; the Christian Relief Network for repatriation of refugees and demobilization of guerrilla soldiers; the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, i.e. the negotiations on DR Congo's political future (USD 500,000 was disbursed in November 2000). Assistance was also provided through international NGOs (through the Norwegian Red Cross to the ICRC).

Rwanda is still facing significant political challenges, both national and regional. The country is governed by a minority (Tutsi) while the majority (Hutu), which constitute approximately 85 per cent of the population, have little political influence. Since 1994, Rwanda has formally had a coalition government comprising members from both ethnic groups, but the government is still dominated by the Rwandan Patriotic Front, which is President Paul Kagame's party.

The legal process after the genocide in 1994 and the country's involvement in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo are Rwanda's main political challenges. There are still 120,000 prisoners in jail without due process, suspected of participating in the genocide. In order to be able to handle these cases more rapidly, Rwanda has established traditional tribunals (Gacaca) which are due to begin work in spring 2002. Despite certain concerns about legal safeguards, the international community has now accepted that the introduction of this system is the only way of being able to complete the legal process within a reasonable period of time.

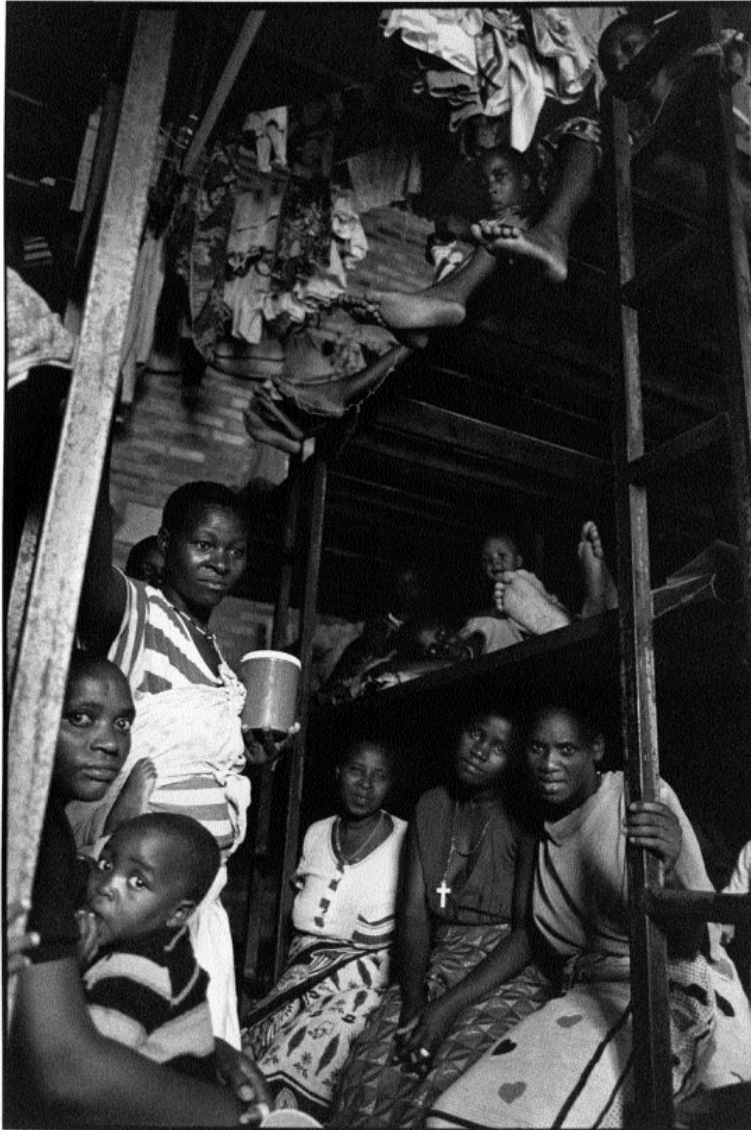
The human rights situation is still affected by the genocide, and although it has improved in recent years there are still serious deficiencies. Political and civil rights are still limited; freedom of expression is particularly vulnerable and many journalists were arrested in 2001-2002. Abuses of individuals still take place. The new Constitution will be an important step towards democracy. Relations between the authorities and international human rights institutions and the UN have been strained. However, cooperation with the UN Commission on Human Rights has resumed since Rwanda established its own Human Rights Commission in 1999. The Commission has a very broad mandate, although its ability

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

Women's prison in Rwanda. There are still 120,000 prisoners in jail without due process, suspected of participating in the genocide in Rwanda.

■ RWANDA. Photo: Rune Eraker



to implement its recommendations is weak. It is too early to say whether the Commission will function independently of the government. Many of the members of the Commission have strong ties with the government.

Rwandan military forces are also accused of participating in serious human rights abuses in areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where Rwanda has de facto military control. The Rwandan authorities have denied most of these accusations. However, they maintain that all the people responsible for such abuse must be punished for their actions.

Norway supported various reconciliation and confidence-building measures at both national and local levels, partly through the UN system (UNDP) and cooperation with the

Red Cross, and partly through Norwegian non-governmental organizations. Norway has actively supported the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Assistance has been provided for the following projects:

- Contributions in terms of money and personnel to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Among other things, Norway is financing one of the judges at the Tribunal (High Court Judge Erik Møse)
- International information activities relating to the Tribunal (Hirondelle's Outreach information programme)
- Assistance for Norwegian People's Aid and the reconciliation and reintegration activities of Norwegian Church Aid
- UNDP Good Governance projects
- War Torn Society reconciliation projects.

As in the two countries described above, human rights practice in **Burundi** is also poor. The security forces are probably responsible for killing many civilians. The army is accused of being responsible for killing both armed rebels and unarmed civilians, including women and children. For security reasons, the army is also said to have prevented various human rights observers from gaining access to certain parts of the country. Attacks by various rebel groups on the army have often been followed by reprisals against civilians suspected of having cooperated with the rebels. Despite certain improvements, conditions in the country's prisons appear to be intolerable and life-threatening.

Arbitrary arrest and detention and a long remand period prior to trial continue to be a problem. Moreover, the judicial system is suffering from serious deficiencies and a number of abuses are committed with impunity due to the lack of independence of the judicial system, the lack of resources, inefficiency, corruption and administrative deficiencies. The indigenous Twa population (pygmies) are economically, socially and politically marginalized. Burundi is governed by a minority (Tutsi), while the majority (Hutu), which account for approximately 85 per cent of the population, have little political influence. Hutu rebels (particularly the FNL and the FDD) are responsible for serious abuses against civilians, including murder, rape, theft and forced labour.

Norway's contribution to human rights projects in Burundi is limited. In 2001 assistance was provided for the following:

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

- Norway has for several years supported the mediation process/the Arusha peace negotiations to find a political solution to the conflict in Burundi;
- The Norwegian authorities are supporting the reconciliation, rehabilitation and capacity-building efforts of the Norwegian Refugee Council;
- The work of the UN Human Rights Centre in Burundi;
- Norway also provided USD 1 million for the South African protection force that is stationed in Burundi and NOK 30 million in transitional aid in 2002. This comes in addition to comprehensive humanitarian aid for the region provided through the UN and Norwegian humanitarian organizations.

Norway's assistance for the promotion of human rights in **Kenya** is mainly focused on a nationwide social education programme under the auspices of four consortia of non-governmental organizations. In 2001, this assistance amounted to approximately NOK 3 million. Norwegian funding was also provided for the establishment of a Human Rights House in Nairobi and for other projects relating to human rights and democracy-building measures, including NOK 200,000 for an organization working for the release of political prisoners.

In **Malawi**, Norway supports institutions whose main task is to strengthen citizens' rights and consolidate democracy. These are publicly appointed bodies, such as the Commission for Human Rights and the Law Commission. Assistance is also provided for the Ombudsman and the government's Anti-Corruption Bureau. Norway also supports public education and training under the UNDP Malawi Democracy Consolidation Programme.

Human rights violations in Malawi are partly due to poverty and a lack of resources, but it also takes time to change the attitudes and behaviour of the police force and the prison service after thirty years of dictatorship. Nor is understanding of democratic rules and the rights of individuals always equally great among the country's leaders. In the past year there have been signs of increasing political intolerance and politically inspired violence.

Norway continued to support the peace and democratization process in **Mali** through the UNDP programme to demobilize and reintegrate former soldiers from the civil war. Through the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), support was also provided for a project concerning land rights, decentralization and conflict resolution in the agricultural sector. Measures supported through multilateral channels and non-governmental organizations focused on developing and strengthening local democracy.

Several of these measures particularly targeted women and children. Norway has decided to contribute NOK 6 million towards the implementation of the presidential election in 2002.

Norway supports two non-governmental organizations in **Mozambique** that are directly involved in the human rights sphere, Liga dos Direitos Humanos (LDH) and Associacao dos Direitos Humanos e Desenvolvimento (DHD). Both these organizations are able to work freely and have published several critical reports on the situation in the police force and the prisons. In connection with the deaths in Montepuez, both organizations prepared independent reports which were published and commented upon in the media.

The LDH has done a great deal of work to provide information to the public on human rights. One of its methods is to use paralegals, or "lay lawyers", who are able to provide initial guidance regarding where and how people should present their problem, for example in matters relating to housing, employment or physical and mental abuse. The DHD is a newer organization, established mainly with the support of the ruling party, Frelimo. The DHD has published annual reports of varying quality on the human rights situation in Mozambique.

Norway also supports a media project under the auspices of UNESCO which is training journalists, establishing local radio stations and providing technical assistance, as well as a training centre for employees in Mozambique's judicial sector. Another, smaller project concerned support for the dissemination of a report on a corruption investigation carried out by the Mozambican non-governmental organization Etica Mozambique.

Human rights issues are included in the ongoing dialogue with the authorities. At the annual consultations on development cooperation in 2001 and at the Consultative Group meeting in October 2001, the Norwegian Embassy raised the issue of the deaths in Montepuez at a separate meeting with the Prime Minister.

Despite the fact that the political rights situation in **Nigeria** has improved considerably since civilian rule was introduced in 1999, Nigeria still has serious problems in the area of economic and social rights. Education and health services are extremely poor and the "fruits of democracy" are not very apparent to the approximately 70 per cent of the population that are living on less than USD 2 per day.

Brutality on the part of the police, the army and the security

Norway supports two non-governmental organizations in Mozambique that are directly involved in the human rights sphere. In connection with the deaths in Montepuez, both organizations prepared independent reports which were published and commented upon in the media.

■ MOZAMBIQUE. Photo: Per Kr. Lunden/Majorityworld



forces is a regular occurrence. We must realize that it will take time for a change in attitude to take place in the often brutal way in which these public servants relate to individuals and groups in civil society. The judicial system and legal safeguards, which were more or less pulverized during the military regime, are still regarded as being unsatisfactory, although the authorities have initiated reforms of the police, prison and judicial systems with the assistance of several donors. Political, ethnic and religious unrest have resulted in a deterioration in personal safety in many parts of the country.

The full or partial introduction of Sharia law in twelve provinces in the north has contributed to increased tensions between Muslims and Christians, particularly in areas where groups of Muslims and Christians live in close proximity to each other. The practice of Sharia law has resulted in several amputations. In January 2002 a man was hanged for murder in the province of Kaduna. This was the first execution since Sharia law was introduced in the north. A woman was sentenced to death for having an illegitimate child. The sentence has been appealed and there will be a new hearing in March 2002.

The relatively comprehensive involvement of the Norwegian Human Rights Fund in Nigeria continued, and an additional allocation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was provided for this purpose in 2001. The Fund intends to support organ-

izations outside the larger urban areas to a greater extent than before and is planning a follow-up visit to Nigeria in spring 2002.

Since Prime Minister Bondevik's visit to Nigeria in 2000, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also channelled funds through the Norwegian Embassy for human rights and democracy measures under the auspices of Nigerian human rights organizations.

In autumn 2001 it was decided that Nigeria will be one of Norway's partner countries in development cooperation. NORAD will support measures to improve governance.

NORAD is currently discussing with the UNDP the possibility of providing assistance through the UNDP for the government's good governance programme. The newly-established secretariat for the programme will take over the UNDP's responsibility for coordinating regular donor meetings.

Sierra Leone is devastated after ten years of war and the immediate challenge is to organize the return and reintegration of a large number of refugees, internally displaced persons and former rebel soldiers. Most of the country has now been declared safe for returnees.

Through the World Bank, Norway has contributed USD 1.5 million to the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (DDR), USD 0.5 million of which was transferred in December 2001. Particular attention is being paid to the many child soldiers and Norway is contributing through UNICEF to a protection programme for children that particularly targets child soldiers. Norway supports specially-adapted educational programmes for children who have missed schooling through both UNICEF and the Norwegian Refugee Council.

Norway has also provided assistance for the implementation of elections through the UNDP, and a decision was made to send Norwegian election observers in connection with the

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

1: May 2002 election. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also provided funding for the Sierra Leone Tribunal.

2: A report has uncovered widespread sexual abuse of refugee children by aid workers in West Africa, and Norway has raised this issue with the organizations with which it cooperates and in international forums. It has also been reported that extensive sexual abuse of children and women took place during the war in Sierra Leone, and the perpetrators included peace-keeping personnel.

Norway contributed a total of NOK 112 million to West Africa in 2001, NOK 81 million of which went to Sierra Leone.

The question of human rights violations in connection with the elections in 2000 and the riots in Zanzibar in **Tanzania** in January 2001 was a focal point throughout 2001, both in domestic politics and in Tanzania's relations with donor countries. Norway raised this issue in ongoing dialogue and in connection with the Consultative Group meeting in September. At the end of the year, the opposition CUF party and the ruling CCM party reached an agreement that includes the establishment of a commission to investigate these events. The people who were arrested in connection with the riots were released immediately after the agreement was signed. It will now be appropriate to support measures on Zanzibar, among other things with a view to strengthening the reconciliation and democratization process.

Norway participates actively in cooperation with the authorities and other donors on measures to accelerate plans for a reform of the judicial system. Norway has allocated NOK 4 million for this purpose. The reform covers all levels and is regarded as being essential in order to strengthen the rule of law in Tanzania.

Conditions in the prisons are still deplorable and by supporting the African Commission on Human Rights and People's Rights and their Special Rapporteur, it is possible to spread information about these conditions and promote the implementation of international standards in Tanzania.

Non-governmental organizations are an important channel for strengthening civil society. In this connection, assistance for organizations working in the field of free legal aid for women and raising awareness of women's rights are particularly important. Through non-governmental organizations, Norway also supports training for politicians at several levels. Education in democratic processes is also provided for local politicians through the local government reform,

which is supported by Norway.

Democratic development and human rights were a focal point of negotiations on guidelines for Norway's cooperation with Tanzania, and will continue to be an important element of cooperation in the future.

The main problems in **Uganda's** human rights situation are specifically related to armed terrorist movements in the west and north, which are perpetrating bestial attacks on the population. These movements appear to have no other goal than to destabilize the current regime. However the activities of these terrorist groups appear to have declined recently and the authorities now maintain that they have totally defeated terrorism in the west (the Allied Democratic Forces). The relaxation of relations with Sudan also appears to have led to reduced activity on the part of the Lords Resistance Army (LRA). Both these groups have been classified as terrorist organizations.

Abuses of the civilian population in DR Congo have been reported in areas where Congolese groups supported by Uganda are in control. However, Uganda's military presence in the DR Congo has recently been strongly reduced, in terms of both the number of personnel and the number of places where they are stationed, with the result that we do not hear of alleged abuses as frequently as before.

The authorities have a clear policy of reducing human rights violations as much as possible. Uganda has ratified a number of international human rights conventions and also has an independent Human Rights Commission, which reports directly to parliament and publishes an annual report on the human rights situation in Uganda. There are many non-governmental organizations working without hindrance. The Constitutional Court recently ruled that corporal punishment of prisoners, which is permitted under the Penal Code, is in contravention of principles and provisions in Uganda's Constitution (admittedly by three votes to two).

Freedom of opinion and expression, including press and media freedom, is satisfactory and perhaps the most important means of monitoring and preventing human rights violations, whether they be perpetrated by persons in positions of authority or private individuals. In certain cases, however, journalists and editors have been summoned to the police/investigating authorities to make statements in connection with articles they have written. Freedom of association and organization is satisfactory, with one important exception: there are significant restrictions on the activities of political parties. A Political Organization Bill, which proposes a certain relaxation in this area, is currently up for

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The judicial system functions relatively well at the higher level. The lower courts often function less well, however, and there are reports of widespread corruption.

■ UGANDA. Photo: Ingvald Hestad



debate in parliament. Freedom of religion is strong and respected.

Most civil rights are guaranteed under Ugandan law, although in practice abuses occur, such as extra-judicial executions (usually mob justice, although the police have also killed people in connection with the pursuit of persons suspected of crimes), torture and maltreatment in connection with arrests/investigations, serious contraventions of imprisonment and custody regulations and deplorable prison conditions. The death penalty is imposed for murder and other serious crimes of violence. There is a great deal of support for the death penalty among the general population and it is unlikely to be repealed in the immediate future, although several groups (including religious communities and human rights organizations) are making strenuous efforts to abolish capital punishment. The judicial system functions relatively well at the higher level. The lower courts often function less well, however, and there are reports of widespread corruption. There are long lists of cases waiting to be heard. Fines that are imposed in cases of economic crime are too low. In certain cases, community service is gradually being introduced as an alternative to prison sentences for minor crimes. The weak judicial apparatus is also an obstacle to development of the private sector. However a Commercial Court has recently been established,

which will facilitate registration, mortgages, etc. and also lead to quicker processing for these types of cases. A strategic investment plan for the entire judicial sector has recently been approved and, in time, its implementation is expected to lead to considerable improvements in all the areas it covers.

Freedom of movement is regarded as being satisfactory and Ugandans can easily obtain passports and travel out of the country. A common East African Community passport has been introduced for Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. It can be obtained easily and quickly and facilitates movement between these three countries.

The authorities have done a great deal to improve gender equality by improving legislation and ratifying international agreements. However, implementation is often deficient, particularly in rural areas. Uganda has a woman Vice President and several strong women politicians, and there are many organizations working to promote gender equality. Nevertheless, many abuses still take place. The majority probably occur in the family, where the status of women has traditionally been weak. Female circumcision is still practised in some areas, although it is probably becoming less common. Comprehensive efforts are being made by many organizations to combat female genital mutilation.

Zambia was involved in preparations for and the implementation of presidential, parliamentary and local elections in 2001. There was a certain amount of tension at times and conflicts were exacerbated, but this did not lead to serious violence. Freedom of expression and freedom of the press are largely respected. Nevertheless, there were some attacks on private radio stations and newspapers, particularly in connection with the run-up to the elections. The elections were held in December 2001 and Norwegian election observers were present. Zambia plays a particularly prominent role in peace efforts in the region as it holds the chairmanship of the OAU until July 2002. In general, abuse of children and women is a serious social problem.

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Norwegian efforts to promote human rights at the international level

Good governance is one of four main areas for Norway's cooperation with Zambia. Human rights are included in several areas. Norway continues to support the Permanent Human Rights Commission and in 2001 signed an agreement to provide NOK 3 million for a three-year cooperation programme to decentralize the activities of the Commission. In cooperation with the government authorities, a major project has been initiated to improve legal safeguards for prisoners, and assistance is also provided for qualitative improvements in the judicial system, amounting to some NOK 20 million in the first couple of years. Sweden and Denmark are the two other countries cooperating in this process.

Norway cooperates with several non-governmental organizations to safeguard the rights of poor people and increase general human rights awareness. In recent years, the Norwegian Embassy has particularly increased its efforts to promote the rights of families affected by HIV and AIDS. Assistance is intended to improve the rights of women and children and combat tendencies towards violence against these groups. Efforts to help children, particularly those who have lost both parents, will also be one of the main goals of assistance in the human rights sphere in the months and years ahead.

The human rights situation in **Zimbabwe** deteriorated even further in 2001. Political violence against the opposition has increased, while violence in connection with the land reform is continuing. The free press is under pressure and new legislation has been introduced which is intended to make the work of the opposition more difficult. As a result of this, government-to-government cooperation has been frozen, while Norway's assistance for Zimbabwe has increasingly been focused on civil society, democracy, good governance and human rights.

Norway placed particular emphasis on supporting projects in connection with the parliamentary elections in 2001 and the presidential election in 2002. This included support for voter education and election monitoring. Assistance was also provided for the victims of abuse in connection with the political violence.

Norway sent 25 election observers to the presidential elections in March 2002 and played a key role in this connection in the light of the EU's decision to cancel its planned election observation programme.

In 2001 assistance was otherwise provided for the following:

- Efforts to prevent the abuse of women and children and promote respect for the rights of women and children
 - The independent trade union movement and efforts to safeguard the rights of agricultural workers in connection with the ongoing land reform
 - Efforts to strengthen freedom of expression, which continued through measures to ensure free and independent media.
 - The anti-corruption efforts of non-governmental organizations
 - The training of parliamentarians in their role as representatives of constituencies.
- One of the main goals of development cooperation with **South Africa** is to consolidate democracy and contribute towards the further development of efforts to promote human rights.
- In addition to providing direct support for individual organizations, the Norwegian Embassy cooperates with the Institute for Human Rights at the University of Oslo, which has helped the embassy to prepare a comprehensive project portfolio in this area. The aim is to contribute towards the implementation of existing legislation and the international human rights conventions which South Africa has signed, and towards strengthening and further developing human rights expertise in South Africa. Another goal is to establish contacts between Norwegian and South African technical institutions that will be sustainable above and beyond the aid period.
- Of concrete projects that received assistance in 2001, the following may be mentioned:
- Cooperation with the Electoral Institute of South Africa (EISA) on the participation of women in politics.
 - Cooperation with the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) on, among other things, the consequences of the authorities' budget allocations for the social and economic rights of children (the Children's Budget) and documentation and dissemination of information from the Parliamentary Monitoring Group.
 - Cooperation with Rape Crisis on assistance for abused and raped women.
 - Cooperation with the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) at the Faculty of Law, Witwatersrand University on discrimination in working life.
 - Cooperation with the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) on conflict resolution and peace education for children and adolescents.
 - Cooperation with the School of Government at the University of Western Cape on issues relating to land reform. The Agricultural University of Norway is taking

part in the project through NORAGRIC.

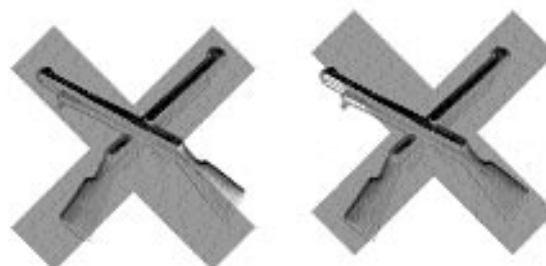
- Cooperation with the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation on the follow-up to the Truth Commission and mediation projects in areas of conflict in Africa.
- Cooperation with the South African Human Rights Commission on monitoring and reporting on social and economic rights.
- Cooperation with the South African Broadcasting Corporation on the production of Justice for All, a television series on human rights.

The Norwegian Embassy is also supporting two projects at the Institute of Security Studies (ISS), one concerning children in armed conflict and the other concerning control and limitation of handguns in Africa. As part of the effort to increase Africa's capacity in the field of peace-keeping activities, Norway is also supporting the Training for Peace programme, the main focus being on education and research.

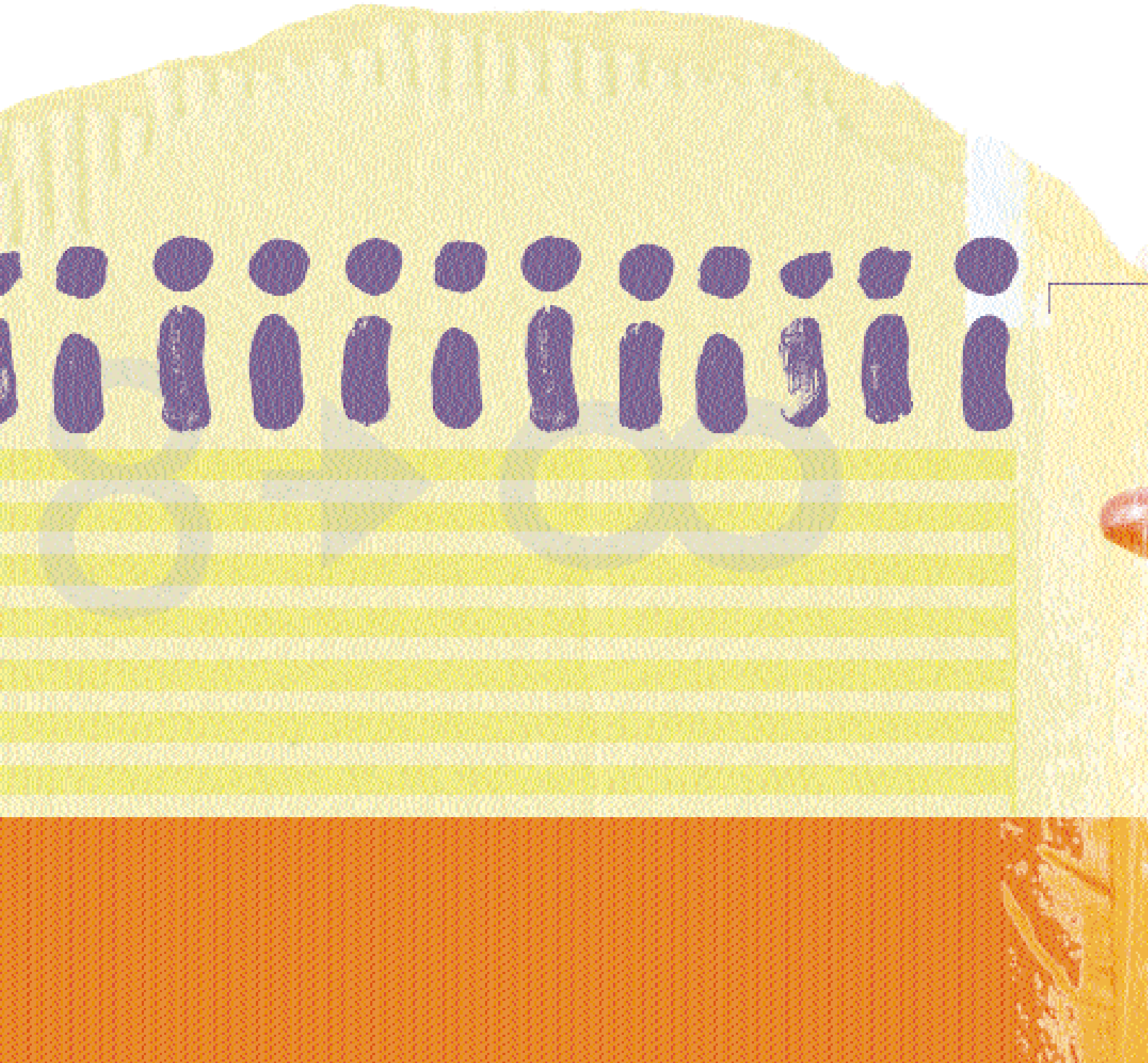
Norway also contributed USD 400,000 for the destruction of handguns and ammunition and provided NOK 3.5 million for South Africa in connection with the UN World Conference on Racism in Durban in September 2001.

Handguns – West Africa

Due to the many civil wars and armed conflicts in Africa in the past decade, illegal handguns pose a serious problem. Norway has been supporting a moratorium on light handguns in West Africa since it was initiated. The moratorium includes Mali, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Gambia and Senegal. A proposal to extend the moratorium was adopted in 2001 and it will require further follow-up.



Statistics





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Statistics

Table 1. Statistics relating to financial assistance for international human rights measures, regions

Regions	Total	Regions	Total
Africa		Europe	
Africa unspecified	87 380	Albania	8 832
Angola	46 605	Bosnia-Herzegovina	20 197
Botswana	3 788	Croatia	16 554
Burundi	3 075	Europe unspecified	120 477
Cameroon	532	Fed Rep of Yugoslavia	66 365
Cape Verde	67	Former Yugoslavia unspecified	1 979
Chad	254	Macedonia (FYRoM)	21 725
Congo	1 049	Moldova	2 050
Congo (Dem Rep)	9 336	Turkey	1 427
Egypt	123	Total Europe	259 606
Eritrea	8 734	Latin America	
Ethiopia	25 477	America unspecified	21 326
Gambia	176	Argentina	374
Ghana	690	Belize	284
Guinea	5 854	Bolivia	6 697
Guinea-Bissau	160	Brazil	20 210
Ivory Coast	323	Central America unspecified	21 295
Kenya	10 000	Chile	5 574
Lesotho	1 438	Colombia	38 263
Liberia	1 021	Costa Rica	538
Madagascar	4 280	Cuba	5 625
Malawi	10 007	Dominican Republic	2 213
Mali	25 474	Ecuador	13 448
Mauretania	961	El Salvador	6 405
Mauritius	115	Guatemala	74 203
Mozambique	60 622	Haiti	11 406
Namibia	545	Honduras	6 732
Niger	3 237	Jamaica	903
Nigeria	1 522	Mexico	2 047
Rwanda	3 899	Nicaragua	48 841
Sierra Leone	4 998	Paraguay	3 508
Somalia	8 615	Peru	7 125
South Africa	46 689	South America unspecified	1 547
Sudan	25 369	Uruguay	114
Sub-Saharan Africa unspecified	15 361	Venezuela	128
Tanzania	20 692	Total Latin America	298 804
Togo	350	Middle East	
Tunisia	210	Iraq	1 750
Uganda	45 298	Iran	420
Zambia	34 199	Jordan	5 024
Zimbabwe	37 455	Lebanon	2 975
Total Africa	555 981	Middle East unspecified	17 692
Asia		Palestinian Area	150 721
Afghanistan	13 507	Total Middle East	178 583
Armenia	1 604	Oceania	
Asia unspecified	40 821	Papua New Guinea	1 244
Azerbaijan	3 809	Total Oceania	1 244
Bangladesh	33 315	Global	
Bhutan	139	Global unspecified	261 547
Burma	15 853	Total Global	261 547
Cambodia	17 134	Multilateral contributions¹⁾	1 000
China	20 703		
East Timor	27 159	Total	1 873 175
Georgia	3 788		
India	23 941		
Indonesia	17 402		
Kyrgyzstan	89		
Laos	12 355		
Malaysia	729		
Mongolia	2 471		
Nepal	20 400		
North Korea	2 700		
Pakistan	18 474		
Philippines	3 132		
Sri Lanka	32 181		
South Asia unspecified	438		
Tajikistan	717		
Thailand	94		
Uzbekistan	500		
Vietnam	2 958		
Total Asia	316 410		

¹⁾ Comprises general contributions to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR)

Table 1. Statistics relating to financial assistance for international human rights measures, countries

Country	Total	Country	Total
Afghanistan	13 507	Lesotho	1 438
Africa unspecified	87 380	Lebanon	2 975
Albania	8 832	Liberia	1 021
America unspecified	21 326	Madagascar	4 280
Angola	46 605	Macedonia (FYRoM)	21 725
Argentina	374	Malawi	10 007
Armenia	1 604	Malaysia	729
Asia unspecified	40 821	Mali	25 474
Azerbaijan	3 809	Mauretania	961
Bangladesh	33 315	Mauritius	115
Belize	284	Mexico	2 047
Bhutan	139	Middle East unspecified	17 692
Bolivia	6 697	Moldova	2 050
Bosnia-Herzegovina	20 197	Mongolia	2 471
Botswana	3 788	Mozambique	60 622
Brazil	20 210	Namibia	545
Burma	15 853	Nepal	20 400
Burundi	3 075	Nicaragua	48 841
Cambodia	17 134	Niger	3 237
Cameroon	532	Nigeria	1 522
Cape Verde	67	North Korea	2 700
Central America unspecified	21 295	Pakistan	18 474
Chad	254	Palestinian Area	150 721
Chile	5 574	Papua New Guinea	1 244
China	20 703	Paraguay	3 508
Congo	1 049	Peru	7 125
Congo (Dem Rep)	9 336	Philippines	3 132
Colombia	38 263	Rwanda	3 899
Costa Rica	538	Sierra Leone	4 998
Croatia	16 554	Somalia	8 615
Cuba	5 625	Sri Lanka	32 181
Dominican Republic	2 213	Sudan	25 369
East Timor	27 159	South Asia unspecified	438
Ecuador	13 448	South Africa	46 689
Egypt	123	South America unspecified	1 547
El Salvador	6 405	Sub-Saharan Africa unspecified	15 361
Former Yugoslavia unspecified	1 979	Tajikistan	717
Eritrea	8 734	Tanzania	20 692
Ethiopia	25 477	Thailand	94
Europe unspecified	120 477	Togo	350
Fed Rep of Yugoslavia	66 365	Tunisia	210
Gambia	176	Turkey	1 427
Georgia	3 788	Uganda	45 298
Ghana	690	Uruguay	114
Guatemala	74 203	Uzbekistan	500
Guinea	5 854	Venezuela	128
Guinea-Bissau	160	Vietnam	2 958
Haiti	11 406	Zambia	34 199
Honduras	6 732	Zimbabwe	37 455
India	23 941		
Indonesia	17 402	Global unspecified	261 547
Iraq	1 750		
Iran	420	Multilateral contributions¹⁾	1 000
Ivory Coast	323		
Jamaica	903		
Jordan	5 024	Total	1 873 175
Kenya	10 000		
Kyrgyzstan	89		
Laos	12 355		

¹⁾Comprises general contributions to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR)

Table 2. Type of Aid

Regions/Countries	Bilateral	Multi-bilateral	Total
Africa			
Africa unspecified	45 605	41 775	87 380
Angola	25 605	21 000	46 605
Botswana	3 788		3 788
Burundi	3 075		3 075
Cameroon	532		532
Cape Verde	67		67
Chad	254		254
Congo	1 049		1 049
Congo (Dem Rep)	8 836	500	9 336
Egypt	123		123
Eritrea	5 734	3 000	8 734
Ethiopia	18 977	6 500	25 477
Gambia		176	176
Ghana	690		690
Guinea	1 854	4 000	5 854
Guinea-Bissau	160		160
Ivory Coast	323		323
Kenya	10 000		10 000
Lesotho	1 438		1 438
Liberia	1 021		1 021
Madagascar	280	4 000	4 280
Malawi	8 007	2 000	10 007
Mali	18 374	7 100	25 474
Mauretania	961		961
Mauritius	115		115
Mozambique	47 472	13 150	60 622
Namibia	545		545
Niger	3 237		3 237
Nigeria	1 522		1 522
Rwanda	1 690	2 208	3 899
Sierra Leone	477	4 522	4 998
Somalia	3 615	5 000	8 615
Sudan	25 369		25 369
South Africa	46 689		46 689
Sub-Saharan Africa unspecified	15 361		15 361
Tanzania	20 242	450	20 692
Togo		350	350
Tunisia		210	210
Uganda	45 298		45 298
Zambia	33 771	428	34 199
Zimbabwe	37 347	108	37 455
Total Africa	439 504	116 477	555 981
Asia			
Asia unspecified	16 522	24 299	40 821
Afghanistan	2 560	10 947	13 507
Armenia	1 604		1 604
Azerbaijan	3 809		3 809
Bangladesh	32 515	800	33 315
Bhutan	139		139
Burma	15 853		15 853
Cambodia	11 334	5 800	17 134
China	20 703		20 703
East Timor	2 839	24 320	27 159
Georgia	3 788		3 788
India	18 645	5 296	23 941
Indonesia	14 552	2 850	17 402
Kyrgyzstan	89		89
Laos	7 282	5 073	12 355
Malaysia	729		729
Mongolia	942	1 529	2 471
Nepal	7 450	12 950	20 400
North Korea	2 700		2 700
Pakistan	14 149	4 325	18 474
Philippines	3 132		3 132
Sri Lanka	32 181		32 181
South Asia unspecified	438		438
Tajikistan	717		717
Thailand	94		94
Uzbekistan	500		500
Vietnam	2 958		2 958
Total Asia	218 220	98 189	316 410

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Statistics

Table 2. Type of Aid - continued

Regions/Countries	Bilateral	Multi-bilateral	Total
Europe			
Albania	7 832	1 000	8 832
Bosnia-Herzegovina	19 697	500	20 197
Croatia	16 554		16 554
Europe unspecified	81 398	39 078	120 477
Fed Rep of Yugoslavia	57 020	9 345	66 365
Former Yugoslavia unspecified	1 979		1 979
Macedonia (FYRoM)	19 942	1 784	21 725
Moldova	2 050		2 050
Turkey	1 427		1 427
Total Europe	207 898	51 707	259 606
Latin America			
America unspecified	5 142	16 184	21 326
Argentina	374		374
Belize	284		284
Bolivia	6 697		6 697
Brazil	20 210		20 210
Central America unspecified	10 954	10 342	21 295
Chile	5 574		5 574
Colombia	34 263	4 000	38 263
Costa Rica	538		538
Cuba	5 625		5 625
Dominican Republic	2 213		2 213
Ecuador	13 448		13 448
El Salvador	6 405		6 405
Guatemala	37 528	36 675	74 203
Haiti	10 406	1 000	11 406
Honduras	6 732		6 732
Jamaica	903		903
Mexico	2 047		2 047
Nicaragua	35 616	13 225	48 841
Paraguay	3 508		3 508
Peru	6 710	415	7 125
South America unspecified	1 547		1 547
Uruguay	114		114
Venezuela	128		128
Total Latin America	216 964	81 841	298 804
Middle East			
Iraq	1 750		1 750
Iran	420		420
Jordan	4 671	353	5 024
Lebanon	2 975		2 975
Middle East unspecified	17 692		17 692
Palestinian Area	59 893	90 828	150 721
Total Middle East	87 402	91 181	178 583
Oceania			
Papua New Guinea	1 244		1 244
Total Oceania	1 244		1 244
Global			
Global unspecified	129 681	131 866	261 547
Total Global	129 681	131 866	261 547
Multilateral contributions¹⁾			1 000
Total	1 300 913	571 262	1 873 175

¹⁾ Comprises general contributions to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR)

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Statistics

Table 3. Type of Aid

Regions/Countries	Bilateral	Multi-bilateral	Total
Afghanistan	2 560	10 947	13 507
Africa unspecified	45 605	41 775	87 380
Albania	7 832	1 000	8 832
America unspecified	5 142	16 184	21 326
Angola	25 605	21 000	46 605
Argentina	374		374
Armenia	1 604		1 604
Azerbaijan	3 809		3 809
Asia unspecified	16 522	24 299	40 821
Bangladesh	32 515	800	33 315
Belize	284		284
Bhutan	139		139
Bolivia	6 697		6 697
Bosnia-Herzegovina	19 697	500	20 197
Botswana	3 788		3 788
Brazil	20 210		20 210
Burma	15 853		15 853
Burundi	3 075		3 075
Cambodia	11 334	5 800	17 134
Cameroon	532		532
Cape Verde	67		67
Central America unspecified	10 954	10 342	21 295
Chad	254		254
Chile	5 574		5 574
China	20 703		20 703
Colombia	34 263	4 000	38 263
Congo	1 049		1 049
Congo (Dem Rep)	8 836	500	9 336
Costa Rica	538		538
Croatia	16 554		16 554
Cuba	5 625		5 625
Dominican Republic	2 213		2 213
East Timor	2 839	24 320	27 159
Ecuador	13 448		13 448
Egypt	123		123
El Salvador	6 405		6 405
Eritrea	5 734	3 000	8 734
Ethiopia	18 977	6 500	25 477
Europe unspecified	81 398	39 078	120 477
Fed Rep of Yugoslavia	57 020	9 345	66 365
Former Yugoslavia unspecified	1 979		1 979
Gambia		176	176
Georgia	3 788		3 788
Ghana	690		690
Guatemala	37 528	36 675	74 203
Guinea	1 854	4 000	5 854
Guinea-Bissau	160		160
Haiti	10 406	1 000	11 406
Honduras	6 732		6 732
India	18 645	5 296	23 941
Indonesia	14 552	2 850	17 402
Iraq	1 750		1 750
Iran	420		420
Ivory Coast	323		323
Jamaica	903		903
Jordan	4 671	353	5 024
Kenya	10 000		10 000
Kyrgyzstan	89		89
Laos	7 282	5 073	12 355
Lesotho	1 438		1 438
Lebanon	2 975		2 975
Liberia	1 021		1 021
Madagascar	280	4 000	4 280
Macedonia (FYRoM)	19 942	1 784	21 725
Malawi	8 007	2 000	10 007
Malaysia	729		729
Mali	18 374	7 100	25 474
Mauretania	961		961
Mauritius	115		115
Mexico	2 047		2 047
Middle East unspecified	17 692		17 692
Moldova	2 050		2 050

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Statistics

Table 3. Type of Aid - continued

Regions/Countries	Bilateral	Multi-bilateral	Total
Mongolia	942	1 529	2 471
Mozambique	47 472	13 150	60 622
Namibia	545		545
Nepal	7 450	12 950	20 400
Nicaragua	35 616	13 225	48 841
Niger	3 237		3 237
Nigeria	1 522		1 522
North Korea	2 700		2 700
Pakistan	14 149	4 325	18 474
Palestinian Area	59 893	90 828	150 721
Papua New Guinea	1 244		1 244
Paraguay	3 508		3 508
Peru	6 710	415	7 125
Philippines	3 132		3 132
Rwanda	1 690	2 208	3 899
Sierra Leone	477	4 522	4 998
Somalia	3 615	5 000	8 615
South America unspecified	1 547		1 547
Sri Lanka	32 181		32 181
Sub-Saharan Africa unspecified	15 361		15 361
Sudan	25 369		25 369
South Asia unspecified	438		438
South Africa	46 689		46 689
Tajikistan	717		717
Tanzania	20 242	450	20 692
Thailand	94		94
Togo		350	350
Tunisia		210	210
Turkey	1 427		1 427
Uganda	45 298		45 298
Uruguay	114		114
Uzbekistan	500		500
Venezuela	128		128
Vietnam	2 958		2 958
Zambia	33 771	428	34 199
Zimbabwe	37 347	108	37 455
Global unspecified	129 681	131 866	261 547
Multilateral contributions¹⁾			1 000
Total	1 300 913	571 262	1 873 175

¹⁾ Comprises general contributions to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR)

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Statistics

Table 4. Funds channelled through Norwegian and foreign non-governmental organizations

Regions/Countries	Non-NGO	Norwegian NGOs	Local NGOs	Regional NGO	Global NGO
Africa					
Africa unspecified	56 517	27 242	2 800		
Angola	29 284	17 321			
Botswana		3 788			
Burundi		3 075			
Cameroon		532			
Cape Verde		67			
Chad		254			
Congo		1 049			
Congo (Dem Rep)	500	8 836			
Egypt		123			
Eritrea	3 420	5 134	180		
Ethiopia	14 101	10 609	767		
Gambia	176				
Ghana		690			
Guinea	4 000	1 854			
Guinea-Bissau		160			
Ivory Coast		323			
Kenya	3 058	6 510			
Lesotho		1 438			
Liberia		1 021			
Madagascar	4 000	280			
Malawi	8 101	659	997		
Mali	7 161	15 522			
Mauretania		961			
Mauritius		115			
Mozambique	25 987	29 204	5 432		
Namibia		545			
Niger		3 237			
Nigeria	1 094	428			
Rwanda	2 475	1 424			
Sierra Leone	4 522	477			
Somalia	6 595	2 020			
Sudan	3 266	22 103			
South Africa	17 371	18 556	1 174		
Sub-Saharan Africa unspecified	3 668	5 690	3		
Tanzania	12 553	4 782	3 357		
Togo	350				
Tunisia	210				
Uganda	25 675	19 623			
Zambia	17 885	1 806	11 608		
Zimbabwe	20 189	9 381	5 180	50	
Total Africa	272 157	226 840	31 498	50	
Asia					
Asia unspecified	31 145	8 376			
Afghanistan	10 947	2 028			
Armenia	28	1 576			
Azerbaijan	2 322	1 382			
Bangladesh	10 402	4 509	18 104		
Bhutan	139				
Burma	3 353	12 499			
Cambodia	9 170	7 964			
China	6 227	11 048			
East Timor	24 564	2 565		30	
Georgia	887	2 522			
India	12 681	3 886	7 349		
Indonesia	13 344	3 558			
Kyrgyzstan	89				
Laos	5 073	7 282			
Malaysia		729			
Mongolia	1 529	942			
Nepal	13 831	6 302	128		
North Korea					2
Pakistan	7 601	409	10 308		
Philippines	2 145	986			
South Asia unspecified		438			
Sri Lanka	14 756	10 085	7 339		
Tajikistan	54	663			
Thailand	50	45			
Uzbekistan		500			
Vietnam	1 055	903	1 000		
Total Asia	171 392	91 197	44 229	30	5

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Table 4. Funds channelled through Norwegian and foreign non-governmental organizations - continued

Regions/Countries	Non-NGO	Norwegian NGOs	Local NGOs	Regional NGO	Global NGO
Europe					
Albania	4 231	4 601			
Bosnia-Herzegovina	8 573	11 623			
Croatia	4 799	11 255	500		
Europe unspecified	72 918	20 566			2
Fed Rep of Yugoslavia	32 714	33 182	469		
Former Yugoslavia unspecified	29	1 950			
Macedonia (FYRoM)	18 928	1 973			
Moldova	1 968	82			
Turkey	1 040	387			
Total Europe		145 201	85 620	969	
Latin America					
America unspecified	16 184	5 142			
Argentina	249	125			
Belize		284			
Bolivia		6 697			
Brazil	1 684	12 391	5 973		
Central America unspecified	19 055	2 084	156		
Chile		4 054	1 129	391	
Colombia	15 776	19 416	1 300		
Costa Rica		538			
Cuba	912	4 713			
Dominican Republic		2 213			
Ecuador		13 448			
El Salvador	2 250	3 405	750		
Guatemala	44 785	21 040	7 015		
Haiti	4 180	7 226			
Honduras	2 635	4 097			
Jamaica		903			
Mexico	18	2 029			
Nicaragua	19 123	22 517	7 201		
Paraguay	137	811	2 560		
Peru	2 829	2 590	1 706		
South America unspecified		1 547			
Uruguay		114			
Venezuela	128				
Total Latin America		129 945	137 383	27 790	
Middle East					
Iraq	1 750				
Iran	420				
Jordan	4 333	691			
Lebanon		2 975			
Middle East unspecified	6 270	11 423			
Palestinian Area	109 556	36 452	3 562		
Total Middle East		122 329	51 541	3 562	
Oceania					
Papua New Guinea		1 244			
Total Oceania		1 244			
Global					
Global unspecified	178 567	40 349	725	200	
Total Global		178 567	40 349	725	
Multilateral contributions¹⁾		1 000			
Total		1 019 590	634 175	108 771	

¹⁾ Comprises general contributions to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR)

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Statistics

Further sources of information

The following is a list of some of the non-governmental organizations and public institutions working on human rights issues.

1: Amnesty International

P.O. Box 702 Sentrum
N-0106 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 40 22 00
Fax: +47 22 42 94 70
E-mail: admin@amnesty.no

2: Antiracist Centre

Antirasistisk Senter
P.O. Box 244 Sentrum
N-0103 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 11 60 00
Fax: +47 22 11 61 00
E-mail: nadeem@antirasistisk-senter.no

3: Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination

Senter mot etnisk diskriminering

P.O. Box 677 Sentrum
N-0106 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 24 69 70
Fax: +47 22 24 69 72
E-mail: smed@smed.no

Christian Michelsen Institute

Chr. Michelsens Institutt

Fantoftveien 38
N-5036 FANTOFT
Tel.: +47 55 57 40 00
Fax: +47 55 57 41 66
E-mail: cmi@cmi.no

Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations

Mellomkirkelig Råd for Den norske kirke

P.O. Box 5816 Hegdehaugen
N-0308 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 93 27 50
Fax: +47 22 93 28 28
E-mail: churchnor@kirken.no

Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry

NHO
P.O. Box 5250 Majorstua
N-0303 OSLO
Tel.: +47 23 08 80 00
Fax: +47 23 08 80 01
E-mail: firmapost@nho.no

FOKUS - Forum for Women and Development

Forum for kvinner og utviklingsspørsmål

Storgata 33 C
N-0184 OSLO
Tel.: +47 23 01 03 00
Fax: +47 23 01 03 01
E-mail: fokuskvinner@online.no

Forest Finns

Skogsfinske interesser i Norge

v/ Anne Berit Gullikstad
N-2256 GRUE-FINNSKOG
Tel. (private): 62 94 81 60
Tel. (work): 62 94 72 08
E-mail: smed@smed.no

International Romani Union - Norway

Kjelsåsveien 28 F
N-0488 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 89 20 21
Fax: +47 22 15 77 58

International Society for Health and Human Rights

Urtegata 50
N-0187 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 68 22 20
Fax: +47 22 57 00 88
E-mail: ishhr@online.no

Latin America Groups in Norway

Latin-Americagruppene i Norge

Solidaritetshuset
Osterhaugsgate 27
N-0183 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 98 93 00
Fax: +47 22 98 93 01
E-mail: lagnorge@online.no

MiRA Resource Centre for Black, Immigrant and Refugee Women

MiRA-ressursenter for innvandrerkvinner

P.O. Box 1749 Vika
N-0212 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 11 69 20
Fax: +47 22 36 40 19
E-mail: post@mirasenteret.no

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**Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NORAD**

P. O. Box 8034 DEP
N-0030 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 24 20 30
Fax: +47 22 24 20 31
E-mail: informasjonssenteret@norad.no

**Norwegian Church Aid
Kirkens Nødhjelp**

P. O. Box 4544 Torshov
N-0404 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 22 22 99
Fax: +47 22 22 24 20
E-mail: nca-oslo@sn.no

**Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions
LO**

Youngsgate 11
N-0181 OSLO
Tel.: +47 23 06 10 50
Fax: +47 23 06 17 43
E-mail: lo@lo.no

**Norwegian Council for Africa
Fellesrådet for Africa**

Osterhaugsgata 27
N-0183 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 98 93 10
Fax: +47 22 98 93 01
E-mail: africa@online.no

**Norwegian Federation of Organizations of
Disabled People
Funksjonshemmedes Fellesorganisasjon**

P. O. Box 4568 Torshov
N-0404 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 79 91 00
Fax: +47 22 79 91 98
E-mail: info@ffo.no

**Norwegian Gender Equality Ombudsman
Likestillingsombudet**

Grensen 5
P. O. Box 8048 DEP
N-0031 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 24 25 61
Fax: +47 22 24 09 01
E-mail: post@likestillingsombudet.no

**Norwegian Helsinki Committee
Den norske Helsingforskomité**

Urtegata 50
N-0187 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 57 12 20
Fax: +47 22 57 00 88
E-mail: nhc@nhc.no

**Norwegian Human Rights House
Stiftelsen Menneskerettighetshuset**

Urtegata 50
N-0187 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 57 12 20
Fax: +47 22 57 00 88
E-mail: mail@humanrightshouse.org

**Norwegian Humanist Association
Human-Etisk Forbund**

P. O. Box 6744 St. Olavs Plass
N-0166 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 11 10 10
Fax: +47 22 11 02 40
E-mail: human@human.no

**Norwegian Institute for Human Rights
Institutt for menneskerettigheter (UIO)**

Universitetsgata 22 - 24
N-0162 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 84 20 01
Fax: +47 22 84 20 02
E-mail: admin@nihr.no

**Norwegian Kven Foundation
Norske Kvener Forbund/ Ruijan Kveenillitto**

Strandvegen 144 B
N-9006 TROMSØ
Tel.: +47 77 69 05 02
Fax: +47 77 69 53 86
E-mail: kvener@c2i.net

**Norwegian Medical Association's Committee
on Human Rights**

Den norske lægeforenings MR-utvalg
Bjørn Oskar Hoftvedt
P. O. Box 1152 Sentrum
N-0107 OSLO
Tel.: +47 23 10 90 00
Fax: +47 23 10 90 01
E-mail: bjorn.hoftvedt@legeforeningen.no

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**Norwegian Organisation for Asylum Seekers
Norsk Organisasjon for Asylsøkere (NOAS)**

P. O. Box 8893 Yongstorget
N-0028 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 36 56 60
Fax: +47 22 36 56 61
E-mail: noas@noas-asyl.no

**Norwegian P.E.N.
Norsk P.E.N.**

Etterstadgata 25
N-0658 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 19 45 51
Fax: +47 22 19 45 51
E-mail: k-o-jens@online.no

**Norwegian People's Aid
Norsk Folkehjelp**

P. O. Box 8844 Youngstorget
N-0028 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 03 77 00
Fax: +47 22 20 08 77
E-mail: norsk.folkehjelp@npaid.no

**Norwegian Red Cross
Norges Røde Kors**

P. O. Box 1 Grønland
N-0133 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 05 40 00
Fax: +47 22 05 40 40
E-mail: documentation.centre@redcross.no

**Norwegian Refugee Council
Flyktningsrådet**

P. O. Box 6758 St. Olavs Plass
N-0130 OSLO
Tel.: +47 23 10 98 00
Fax: +47 23 10 98 01
E-mail: nrc-no@online.no

**Norwegian Save the Children
Redd Barna**

P. O. Box 6902 St. Olavs Plass
N-0130 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 99 09 00
Fax: +47 22 99 08 60
E-mail: post@reddbarna.no

**Norwegian Tibet Committee
Den norske Tibet-komit **

Urtegata 50
N-0187 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 68 88 84
Fax: +47 22 57 00 88
E-mail: info@tibetkomite.no
andrew.preston@online.no

**Norwegian Youth Council
Landsr det for norske barne- og ungdomsorganisasjoner - LNU**

Rolf Hofmosgate 18
N-0655 OSLO
Tel.: +47 23 31 06 00
Fax: +47 23 31 06 01
E-mail: lnu@lnu.no

**Ombudsman for Children
Barneombudet**

P. O. Box 8036 DEP
N-0030 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 24 26 30
Fax: +47 22 24 95 24
E-mail: bo@barneombudet.no

**Organization Against Public Discrimination
Organisasjonen mot offentlig diskriminering (OMOD)**

P. O. Box 2832 Tøyen
N-0608 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 20 87 37
Fax: +47 22 20 62 17
E-mail: omod@online.no

**Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief
Oslokoalisjonen for religions- og livssynsfrihet IMR**

Universitetsgata 22 - 24
N-0162 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 84 20 45
Fax: +47 22 84 20 02
E-mail: lana.larsen@nihr.no

**Roma Foundation
Stiftelsen Roma**

v/Anne-Jorunn Merkesvik
Nettaveien 22
N-4275 S VELANDSVIK
Tel.: +47 52 81 71 96

**Romani/Tater Foundation
Stiftelsen romanifolket/taterne**

Skarpsnogata 2
N-0271 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 12 51 20
E-mail: thunlaw@online.no

**The Romani People (Travellers) Association of Norway
Romanifolket (taterne/de reisende)
Romanifolkets Landsforening**

P. O. Box 80
N-2436 VÅLER
Tel.: +47 62 42 35 31

**Saami Council
Samerådet**

FIN-99980
UTSJOKI, Finland
Tel.: +358 16 677 351
Fax: +358 16 677 353
E-mail: samiradd@netti.fi

**Sami Parliament
Sametinget**

P. O. Box 144
N-9730 KARASJOK
Tel.: +47 78 47 40 00
Fax: +47 78 47 40 90
E-mail: adm@samediggi.no

**SOS Racism
SOS Rasisme**

P. O. Box 4720 Sofienberg
N-0506 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 35 00 56
Fax: +47 22 35 00 57
E-mail: au@sos-rasisme.no

**Teachers' Union, Norway
Lærerforbundet**

Wergelandsveien 15
N-0167 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 03 00 00
Fax: +47 22 11 05 42
E-mail: lærerforbundet@lærerforbundet.no

**UN Association of Norway
FN-sambandet**

Storgata 33 A
N-0184 OSLO
Tel.: +47 22 20 91 70
Fax: +47 22 20 81 42
E-mail: hovedkontoret@fn-sambandet.no

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