

Norway, WGAD, 10. March 2008

Thank you Mr. President,

Let me start by thanking the chairperson of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Ms Leila Zeroughi, for the report.

My Government had the pleasure of receiving the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on an official country visit from 27 April to 2 May 2007. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Working Group, and in particular Ms Zeroughi, for the excellent manner in which they undertook the visit to Norway. Their approach demonstrated a high degree of quality and professionalism not only during the visit itself, but also in the preparatory phase, as well as in the follow-up to the visit.

The Government of Norway is pleased that the Working Group did not find any cases of arbitrary detention during its visit.

In the report, the Working Group raises some issues of concern and makes 5 concrete recommendations to the Government. Let me assure you that Norway takes the Working Group's issues of concern and the recommendations from the report very seriously.

We would like to make short comments to the 5 recommendations in the report:

1. Regarding the recommendation in para 98 litra a), to arrange a survey on applications for remand and restrictions, and partial and complete isolation in pretrial detention, the Norwegian Government will ensure that such a survey will be arranged by the Director of Public Prosecution to follow up the survey conducted in 1999 on applications for remand and restrictions, and partial and complete isolation in pre-trial detention. The Norwegian Government will inform the Working Group of the results.
2. In para 98 litra b), the Working Group invites the Government to consider establishing a new system for challenging decisions taken by the correctional services authorities on restrictions or partial or total isolation imposed upon prison inmates serving their sentences. Since 2002, the Correctional Service in Norway has had six Supervisory Councils. We will consider to establish a central body independent of the Correctional Services to conduct surveillance, quality assurance and supervision.
3. In para 98 litra c) the Working Group supports the establishment of a working group by the Ministry of Justice mandated to evaluate the current system of preventive detention and would like to receive its report. The final report of the

working group mandated to evaluate the current system of preventive detention will be sent to the Working Group.

4. In para 98 litra d), with respect to the “infoflyt” database, the Working Group recommends that the judiciary be granted access to the information as and when the information contained therein is relevant to decisions on the early release of a prisoner or on the release of a preventive detainee. The Government has revised the guidelines for “Infoflyt” and will, in accordance with the recommendation, continue to monitor the system and improve it when necessary.
5. In para 98 litra e), the Working Group recommends that the Government resolve conflicts of competence between correctional service and health-care authorities with respect to the admission of mentally ill prison inmates to psychiatric hospitals, and propose that this could be achieved by creating an independent commission in which all stakeholders are represented. The Norwegian Government will consider the proposal and inform the Working Group about its conclusions.

Thank you Mr President.