



NORWAY

Commission on the Status of Women
52nd Session

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

Check against delivery

STATEMENT

By

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State Secretary
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Mr. Chair,

The global community has missed out on gender equality issues. Intensified action is needed. The Norwegian Government has recently presented a white paper on Women's rights and Gender Equality in International Development Policy – the first of its kind. It will mean more attention and more money to women in the development arena.

We all have to do better. An important opportunity is the Financing for Development conference in Doha later this year. Gender equality must be at the centre stage in our preparations. The Secretary General's report to this Commission on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women provides clear guidelines on how to move forward.

We know that investing in women and girls is good for all. It helps whole societies. It fuels economic growth.

Despite this knowledge, insufficient resources are allocated for women's empowerment.

We need to prioritize gender equality in all national economic policies and strategies - across all policy areas

Governments need to create the economic space needed to fulfil gender equality commitments. Economic growth should lead to job creation and welfare for both women and men. And public funds must be used to meet the needs of the poor. We need to secure gender responsive budgeting on all levels.

Donors need to enhance their efforts and ensure that development assistance promotes gender equality and empowers women. Women's ministries and women's organisations need to be fully resourced and included as equal partners for development.

Mr. Chair,

The economic independence of Norwegian women is at the heart of our gender equality policy. Both men and women should be able to combine paid work and family life. This has been a major factor in Norway's economic success.

We also believe it is imperative to stand up for those who are most vulnerable – even when the issues are sensitive or controversial. Norway supports the rights

of sexual minorities. And we defend women's right to safe and self-determined abortion.

My Government wants to change the male bias of the bastions of power. We have come a long way towards gender parity in political life, but the economic sector has been lagging behind.

Top management groups and board rooms in the private sector used to be nearly all-male arenas. Since January 2008, we have fully enforced legislation obliging all state-owned and public limited company boards to have a minimum of 40% women. This is an important step towards an even distribution of economic power.

Mr. Chair,

We need a UN that is gender responsive, coherent and accountable at all levels. We look to the leadership of the UN, at the highest levels, to bring about the necessary reforms. Now is the time for action. With the necessary information at hand we should go ahead and establish a stronger, consolidated and independent gender entity. The new unit should combine normative and operational responsibilities and should have sufficient resources to ensure a real difference in women's lives.

Thank you.