

Delegation from the Kingdom of Norway

Position Paper for the Economic and Social Council

The topics before the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) are: Education in Post-Conflict Situations; Implementing SDG 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All; and Promoting the Political, Socioeconomic, and Cultural Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Kingdom of Norway is deeply dedicated to protect international peace and security, as well as to promote and protect human rights universally. We are therefore highly grateful to take part in the discussion on these very significant topics and committed on finding multilateral solutions.

I. Education in Post-Conflict Situations

In 2012, 58 million children were out of school, 21 million of them were living in conflict-affected countries. Poor quality of education at the primary level has resulted in 250 million children leaving school without learning to read, write or count. In countries of conflicts, great challenges in providing educational opportunities occur while having to cope with violence, intolerance, fear, and financial and infrastructure constraints. This leads to ongoing cycles of local and regional instability and hinders economic growth and prosperity. Education represents a fundamental right, on which other human rights depend. It enables economic growth in a sustained and equitable manner and accelerates poverty eradication and inequality reduction. For the Norwegian Government education is a priority area and public spending on education institutions amount to 7 % of GDP.

The International Community (IC) has increasingly recognized education as an important catalyst for sustainable development. With the General Assembly Resolution 70/1 of 2015, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, education was addressed through SDG 4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". As a signatory of the *Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict* (2002), which emphasizes the need to protect vulnerable populations while facilitating their participation in and equal access to education, the Kingdom of Norway stands in full support with the efforts done by the IC. By assuming an international leadership role, Norway has helped to increase political awareness and provide concrete measures for education in situations of crisis and conflict. The Government has taken great efforts in advocating that at least 4 % of global humanitarian aid should go to education. Therefore, we are working very closely with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

In cooperation with UNICEF and Safe the Children, Norway hosted the Oslo Conference on Safe Schools in May 2015, an international conference on the protection of children and education during armed conflict. We led the work to develop the *Safe Schools Declaration*, which aims to prevent attacks on educational facilities. The declaration also targets to raise awareness of the fact that armed conflicts today are preventing millions of children from having access to safe schools. The Kingdom of Norway would like to invite all Member States, who have not yet endorsed the *Safe Schools Declaration* to support the idea. Together with Safe the Children and UNICEF we will do our best to create a better coordination between humanitarian and long-term development efforts and to ensure that the Guidelines are implemented in practice.

II. Implementing SDG 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All

Approximately 40 % of the global population still relying on non-renewable energy sources like coal, fossil fuels, and natural gas. Renewable sources of energy have the potential to promote safer and cleaner energy services that are more efficient and affordable to all segments of society. Simultaneously, sustainable energy access can increase the standard of living of modern societies through improved health, education, and household conditions. It enhances social progress while promoting economic growth and can help minimize environmental concerns such as climate change. The implementation of SDG 7 can help ensure sustainable livelihoods and alleviate poverty by lowering energy costs and increasing access to sustainable energy.

The Norwegian Government is conscious that security of supply, climate change and economic development must be considered together to secure an efficient and climate-friendly energy supply. Through SDG 7 the global community commits to increasing investment in and accessibility to reliable and sustainable energy infrastructure. These targets on energy have been achieved nationally or are in line with national policies and goals. Norway offers universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services for all, as appropriate. We also have a very high proportion of renewable energy, as almost 100 % of our electricity production is from renewable energy sources. As a membership of the International Energy Agency (IEA), Norway is very committed on sharing best practices worldwide. Therefore, we have established the Norwegian Investment Fund for Developing Countries (Norfund) to raise our financial support for countries in need.

Norway has unique expertise and experience in the field of sustainable energy production. The objective of Norwegian support internationally is to increase access to renewable energy and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Norway allocated 1.8 billion in 2015 to sustainable energy in developing countries. This includes support through the Norfund, which in 2014 led to the production of 10 TWh of electricity. Through Norfund, Norway supports 15 African and Asian countries in promoting sustainable energy and reducing CO2 emissions. Therefore, the Kingdom of Norway would like to encourage all Member States to work closely with the IEA and receive some assistance in the implementation of sustainable energy measures within national policies.

III. Promoting the Political, Socioeconomic, and Cultural Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Today, there still exist over 5.000 distinct indigenous communities in 90 countries. Indigenous peoples account for a significant portion of the world's extreme poor, although they only represent five percent of the world's total population. Many of them still live in very difficult circumstances, as they are often largely excluded from political, economic and cultural life and face obstacles in their access to health services and education. Lower secondary education rates make higher paying jobs and careers difficult to obtain. As a result of globalization, a small number of dominant languages are increasingly used to conduct business, school, and government proceedings. Protecting and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples must be of highest priority to the whole IC.

Promoting the rights of indigenous peoples internationally is an important part of Norway's human rights policy. The establishment of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the appointment of the UN's first Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples in 2001, the adoption of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)* in 2007, and the establishment of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) by the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in 2008 are important milestones in the international efforts to promote indigenous issues. In addition, the International Labor Organization (ILO) *Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries*, which Norway was the first country to ratify in 1990, sets out important provisions on the right of indigenous peoples to maintain and further develop their cultures, and to be consulted on matters that affect them.

The indigenous peoples' perspective is particularly relevant in our efforts to promote human rights in the context of corporate social responsibility. Our priorities are to play a leading role in the international effort to promote indigenous rights, by encouraging more countries to become party to the *UNDRIP* and *ILO Convention*, and promoting the implementation of these instruments. As well as to seek to ensure that indigenous peoples are able to take part, at both national and international level, in decision-making processes that affect them. Therefore, we would like to include indigenous groups in all meetings of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the HRC. The Kingdom of Norway is looking forward to fruitful discussions and finding solutions for these topics of utmost importance.