



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Report No. 11 (2007–2008) to the Norwegian Parliament, Stortinget

On Equal Terms: Women's Rights and Gender Equality in International Development Policy





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*Recommendation of 18 January 2008 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
approved in the Council of State on the same date.
(White paper from the Stoltenberg II Government)*

1 Introduction and summary

1.1 Introduction

Women's rights and gender equality are among the most important priorities of the Government's international development policy as set out in its policy platform of 13 October 2005. In the Government's view, women's participation and women's rights are of paramount importance if we are to realise the vision for the world's future enshrined in the UN Millennium Declaration. At the halfway mark between 2000 and 2015, we must acknowledge that the UN Millennium Development Goals on poverty eradication will not be achieved unless women are put centre stage.

With this white paper, the Government is inviting the Storting to engage in a broad debate on the overriding, long-term political guidelines for promoting women's rights and gender equality through Norway's international development policy. The purpose is to focus attention on and enhance understanding of women's rights both as aims in themselves and as necessary prerequisites for achieving other development policy objectives.

This white paper is the first of its kind to be drawn up in Norway. Moreover, no like-minded

Box 1.1 Gender equality as good economics

«My main message today, however, is that the greatest gains countries can achieve, economically as well as politically, come with empowering women, ensuring equal opportunity and health care, and increasing the ratio of women's active participation in working life.» From Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg's keynote address at the opening of the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC in July 2006.

country has produced a comparable white paper. The purpose of this document is not to examine all the aspects of women's rights and gender equality in international development policy in detail, but to focus on the overall picture in a political perspective.

The white paper begins with a general account of the situation as regards women's rights and gen-

der equality, followed by a brief analysis and the Government's proposals for the political action that should be taken by Norway.

When working on this white paper, and particularly on the action plans on which it is based, we have maintained close dialogue with relevant organisations and institutions in Norway. We have received important input from a number of different actors in Norwegian society, including NGOs and research institutions.

Although Norwegian international development policy has also previously had a strong focus on women's rights and gender equality, in practice this field has not been given the necessary priority over time. Failure to follow up women's and gender equality issues is one of the great sins of omission in both Norwegian and international development policy. This is changing now. The Government's aim is that Norway should be a fearless champion of women's rights and gender equality. However, although the main focus of this white paper is on women, our policy must also mobilise boys and men. The white paper also discusses Norwegian development policy measures designed to help other groups that are disadvantaged in terms of equal rights. Efforts will also be made to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, which affects homosexuals, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals. This will involve broad, clearly targeted measures in sensitive areas. Norway will speak out where others find it easiest to remain silent; we will act where others find it easiest to do nothing.

Although there is still a great deal to be done, the status and role of women in Norwegian society is one of the hallmarks of our country. It is the result of decades of efforts to promote gender equality in which cooperation between equality-conscious individuals and groups in politics, government, the women's movement and research institutions has played an important role. Norway's gender equality efforts have considerable international credibility. This is an area where we have a good reputation and a high level of expertise. Moreover, the Norwegian model and the experience we have gained are relevant for others who are seeking to deal with these issues. Gender equality is an area where Norway is listened to. We must take advantage of this.

We will speak out boldly and clearly, even on the most sensitive issues. But sometimes we need to speak softly. This important cause must be promoted with consideration and prudence. Promoting gender equality is a long process, and we must

address the challenges with humility. We must hasten slowly. In many countries, abortion and sexual minority rights are particularly controversial. We are challenging powerful cultural and religious forces. Thus, even though we feel we have found a good model for gender equality, it cannot be exported across the board. Norway is a small, highly developed, homogeneous and consensus-oriented society, and is in that sense very different from many other countries, particularly some developing countries. The relationship between the sexes is a fundamental aspect of the social structure and power relations in any country. The challenges and appropriate tools will thus vary from country to country. We must take this into account in our development policy.

In accordance with universal human rights, we have a right and an obligation to intensify our efforts to promote women's rights. The rights of sexual minorities and those concerning sexuality are more controversial, but there too, we feel that we are on firm ground. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted as early as 1948. Since then the UN has developed a number of internationally binding human rights conventions. The majority of countries have, for example, committed themselves to promoting women's rights and gender equality by acceding to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Thus, by attaching more importance to this theme in our political dialogue and in our development cooperation, we are in fact taking their decisions seriously. We urge them to fulfil their obligations and offer them our assistance in achieving their objectives.

Our insistence on the importance of women's rights and gender equality is founded on a scientific basis and a body of international agreements. However, this must not prevent us from taking a critical approach to these issues – including their development cooperation implications. We use our position as a prosperous country to promote a view on gender roles and values that is perceived as alien in many countries. It is valid to question whether this conflicts with the culturally sensitive approach usually taken by Norway in international development policy. Is this compatible with our usual approach to development cooperation, which is that the countries themselves should, as far as possible, have ownership of the development processes and priorities? This poses a fundamental dilemma, which we must be aware of and which merits the Storting's attention.

1.1.1 Without women, no development

In the statistics on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, women as a group lag far behind men. The situation is complex, and there is considerable variation between countries and regions, but women are an important target group for Norwegian development policy in all the countries we are operating in. If the world is to succeed in reaching the Millennium Development Goals, we must target our efforts directly at women. We must help to ensure that women are empowered and enabled to take their rightful place in development processes on equal terms with men. All experience shows that development is

dependent on women's resources and expertise being fully utilised.

International development policy and development assistance are not solely a matter of international solidarity or altruism. In this age of globalisation, the links between living conditions in developing countries and in the rich part of the world are evident. We must reap the benefits offered by globalisation – for example as regards migration, development policy, democracy and energy security – and manage the risks it entails, such as human trafficking, the spread of HIV and AIDS, conflict and climate change. This means that when we give priority to these areas in our international development policy, we are dealing with matters that also concern us directly. Development is inextricably linked to stability, security and environmental sustainability – at local, national and global levels.

Given such a world view, it is also in donors' interests to engage in development cooperation. In the Government's view, for Norway this is a matter of enlightened self-interest that does not conflict with developing countries' own interests.

Box 1.2 The Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted by Heads of State and Government at the UN Millennium Assembly in 2000. Two of the eight goals are specifically concerned with women, namely MDGs 3 and 5. However, all of the goals are relevant for gender equality. The following overview of the MDGs includes targets specifically related to women.

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
 - including a target concerning the right of women and other groups to decent working conditions where labour rights are respected
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
 - including a target to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005, and at all levels by 2015
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
 - including a target to reduce maternal mortality by three quarters by 2015
 - including a target concerning universal access to reproductive health services by 2015.
6. Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

1.1.2 A coherent new approach

Up until now, Norwegian policy aimed at integrating women's rights and gender equality into development cooperation has been very ambitious, but its implementation has not, unfortunately, been systematic enough. Norway can point to many important, good results at measure level, but only to a limited degree have we brought about any fundamental change.

The Government is doing something about this now. We are implementing a number of concrete measures based on our national and international experience. The aim is to develop a coherent international development policy in which women's rights and gender equality are mainstreamed in all development cooperation. The Norwegian Government has developed four action plans that are currently being implemented in our development cooperation efforts to strengthen women's rights and gender equality at the global level. These action plans deal with the following:

- women's rights and gender equality in development cooperation (2007–2009)
- UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, adopted in 2000 (action plan launched in 2006)
- human trafficking (2006–2009)
- female genital mutilation (2003–2010)

These four action plans are important tools to be used in Norway's efforts to promote gender equality and safeguard women's rights in accordance with international human rights conventions. Additional funds have been allocated for intensifying these efforts. After a short period of time, we are already well underway.

1.2 The Government's view

The Government will pursue an international development policy that promotes equal rights and opportunities for women and men. This means pursuing a proactive policy based on the following principles:

- Women and men are to participate on equal terms in political processes.
- Women and men are to participate on equal terms in economic processes
- Women and men are to have equal access to education
- Women have a right to adequate health services and to control their own bodies and sexuality
- Women have a right to a life free of violence
- Women are to have an equal role in peace and reconciliation efforts
- Women and men are to participate on equal terms in efforts to combat climate change, environmental degradation and humanitarian crises

At the same time, Norwegian policy for promoting women's rights and gender equality must not be confined to the seven principles set out above, but must be reflected in all aspects of Norwegian international development policy. The Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation 2007–2009 goes a long way in translating this into practical terms. The Government also states that the aim is to see a steady increase in the percentage of development funding that is allocated to women's rights and gender equality efforts. This aim will be achieved by making use of the full range of grant schemes. Administrative routines must be established to ensure that the objectives are achieved.

Norway will seek to promote greater recognition and realisation of women's rights. This means helping to ensure that women have economic opportunities, an opportunity to influence social development and, not least, control over their own lives. Norway will promote women's rights and opportunities to participate on equal terms in

national and local government. And we will seek to foster women's legal, economic and social independence.

Norway will promote decent work for both women and men. This entails employment where labour rights are respected and where there is dialogue between the social partners and schemes that protect employees in the event of illness, old age or disability.

Our policy is to promote the redistribution of power, resources and care responsibilities between men and women. This requires that we target our efforts at both sexes. In order to fully utilise women's resources to effect change, we must also focus on women's own efforts to organise and mobilise. At the same time we must support and encourage our cooperation partners at government level in order to achieve national development goals in this area and fulfil obligations in accordance with human rights instruments and international action plans for promoting women's rights and gender equality.

Box 1.3 Targeting and prioritising of activities necessary

Efforts to empower women and promote gender equality have to do with the redistribution of power and authority. This is, and will continue to be, a sensitive area that encounters considerable opposition. Wisdom, willingness and the ability to enter into alliances and develop win-win situations are required. There are many indications that focusing on and prioritising efforts to empower women and promote gender equality are becoming increasingly important and that it is essential to address the areas that have a high political profile, such as the new aid modalities and the area of peace and conflict resolution. The challenge is to change work on women and gender equality from a supply-driven, institutionalised area to an area where there is greater demand from the field. Consequently, this work must be more targeted and activities must be more strongly prioritised.

Source: *Lessons from Evaluations of Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation*, Berit Aasen, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research NIBR, 2006, pp. 15–16.

Norway's new policy must also seek to mobilise boys and men. In most countries, boys and men dominate in the areas where women are discriminated against. This means that our policy must be designed to encourage men to loosen their grip and give women an opportunity to participate fully in economic, political and social processes. On the other hand, men must not be regarded solely as impediments and barriers to women's development. Men can play an important role in efforts to promote women's rights. Boys and men must be mobilised as allies. This can best be done by showing that men, too, benefit from a more egalitarian society. Women are motors of development, which also benefits men. When rigid gender patterns become more flexible, men also gain greater freedom to make individual choices.

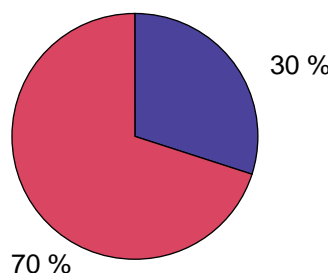
Norway will be a fearless champion of women's sexual and reproductive rights. This is a matter of women's right to control over their own bodies and to freedom from violence and sexual abuse both in and outside the family. It is also a matter of making information on sexuality and birth control available to teenagers and adult women and men. We will make a concerted effort to combat all forms of discrimination and stigmatisation on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. Norway will spearhead these issues even where they are not generally recognised or considered accepted.

Our policy must take into account that girls' needs and the challenges facing them change during the course of their lives. Our policy must therefore have a life-cycle perspective. Gender patterns are established early in life. Efforts to raise both boys' and girls' awareness of their rights and of the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion must start when they are young. National and regional differences must also be taken into account. We must not be tempted to believe that the world is divided into two parts – the rich coun-

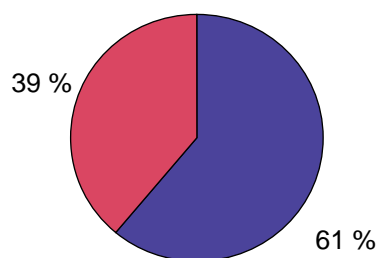
tries that have achieved gender equality and the poor countries that have not. This is not the case. Some poor countries score very high on gender equality, whereas certain rich countries score low. Our policy must be flexible enough to be applicable to a broad variety of situations.

For far too long, multilateral organisations have failed to take women's rights and gender equality seriously. Norway has been advocating the establishment of a strong women's rights entity in the UN as part of the reform process. The UN needs a strong internal advocate to ensure that it is able to deliver on gender equality. Norway will work through a range of actors, including representatives of civil society, all of whom must demonstrate that they possess the practical expertise required to deal with gender equality, international development policy and development assistance.

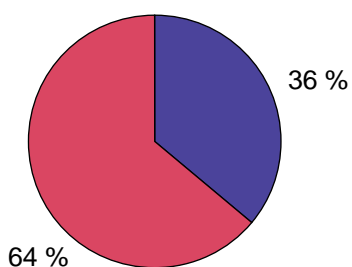
Norway's international development policy is conveyed and implemented through political dialogue, transfer of expertise and economic support. The main policy lines remain unchanged, but the priority given to women's rights and gender equality is to be evident in all aspects of our development policy engagement. Efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality must not be an appendage or add-on to our other efforts, but must be mainstreamed in everything we do. We must abandon the traditional idea that the fight for women's rights is confined to social sectors. On the contrary, this fight must be an integral part of Norway's efforts in key policy areas such as democracy and human rights, the fight against corruption, environmental sustainability and our Oil for Development initiative. We will insist that our cooperation partners, whether they are governments, international institutions or NGOs, take issues related to women's rights and gender equality seriously.

MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

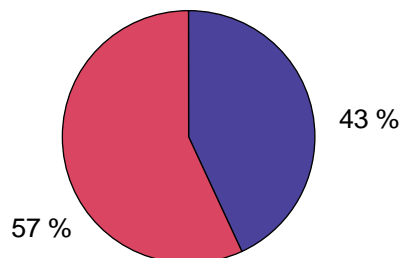
Two thirds of the people whose income is less than one dollar a day are women.



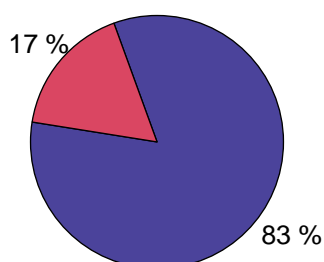
Women account for more than a third of all paid work outside the agricultural sector.

MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

Two thirds of all illiterate adults are women.

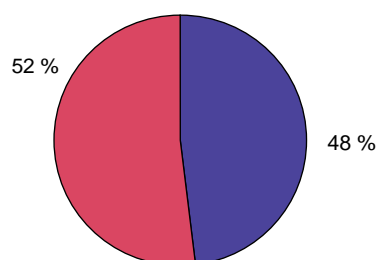


There are still more girls than boys who do not attend school.

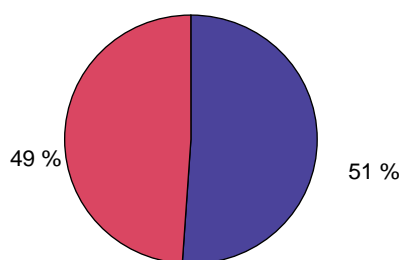
MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Only 17% of the representatives in the world's national assemblies are women.

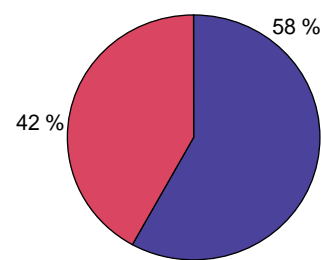
Figure 1.1 What is the situation for girls and women in relation to the UN Millennium Development Goals?

MDG 4: Reduce child mortality

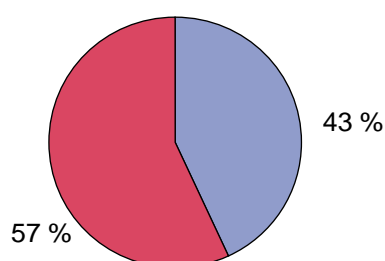
In *Africa*, more girls than boys survive their fifth birthday. This is normal in most countries.



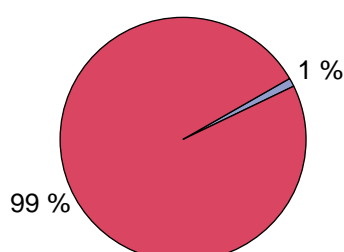
In *India*, the mortality rate for girls is slightly higher than for boys.



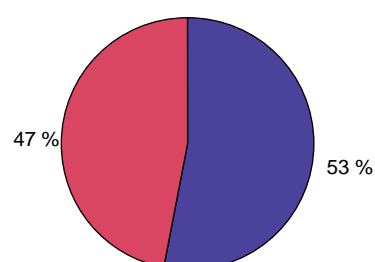
In *China*, almost six in ten of the children who die before their fifth birthday are girls.

MDG 5: Improve maternal health

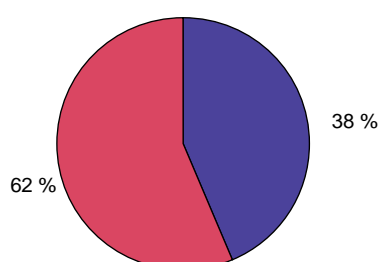
In *developing countries*, just over half of women receive help from qualified health workers during childbirth.



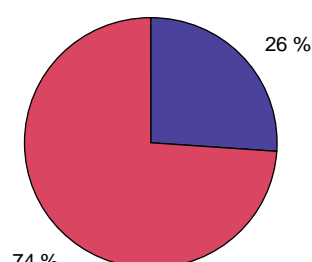
In the *rich part of the world*, qualified health workers are present at almost all births.

MDG 6: Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

Around half of the people suffering from AIDS are women.



Almost two thirds of all young people who have recently been infected by HIV are girls.



Three quarters of all young people between 15 and 24 who are suffering from AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa are girls.

There are no statistics that show the gender distribution for MDG 7 on ensuring environmental sustainability or for MDG 8 on developing a global partnership for development.

2 Background and analysis

Norway has been engaged in development cooperation since the 1950s. There is broad agreement among the population that Norway should use some of its wealth to promote development in poor countries. Norwegian development cooperation and international development policy has thus been characterised by continuity. Norway's policy is based on values such as solidarity and compassion, and a fundamental belief in the right of all people to a dignified life. World poverty is an affront to human dignity, and is often caused by violations of other fundamental human rights.

Traditionally, Norway's development cooperation has been based on a sense of own obligation and needs –based in the South. In recent years however, this approach has come under pressure. International development policy and cooperation are no longer primarily a matter of solidarity or altruism, but are increasingly regarded as being in our own interests. In this age of globalisation, it is evident that living conditions in developing countries also affect people in the rich part of the world. We must reap the benefits offered by globalisation, for example as regards migration, development policy, democracy and energy security; but we must also manage the risks it entails, such as human trafficking, the spread of HIV and AIDS, conflict and climate change. In giving priority to these areas in our international development policy, we are therefore also giving priority to matters that concern us directly. These areas are also linked to lack of development, poverty and marginalisation. Lack of development is thus inextricably linked to a lack of stability, security and environmental sustainability, at local, national and global levels.

In this perspective, it is thus also in Norway's and other donors' interests to engage in development cooperation. Many would claim that international development policy is also ultimately part of the policies of globalisation, migration and security. This is a policy approach that is consistent with other areas of Norwegian policy. In the Government's view, Norway has an enlightened self-interest that does not conflict with developing countries' own interests.

There is also general agreement as regards the choice of international development actors. Norway is a firm supporter of the UN and the multilateral system, where the international financial institutions play a key role. Civil society actors in Norway, particularly NGOs, play an important role in Norwegian development cooperation, as do civil society actors in our partner countries, in addition to the authorities.

2.1 Considerable variation and scope

We must take care not to oversimplify reality. It is easy to view the world in black-and-white terms, contrasting the egalitarian, rich part of the world with the poor part of the world where women and sexual minorities are oppressed. But the picture is far more complex than that. There are poor countries that have made great progress in terms of gender equality, and there are rich countries that have made very little. The underlying causes of gender inequality vary from country to country. This is why we need both a sound knowledge of the global situation and access to expertise on the particular situation in each partner country. We must identify and support relevant agents of change and tailor our approach and efforts to local conditions. If we fail to do so, there is a danger that our efforts will be in vain, or, at worst, counterproductive.

The progress reports on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals present the status for women and men in different parts of the

Box 2.1 Equal access to education

According to Article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that women have the same rights as men in the field of education, including the same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas.

world. They include data for both sexes as regards education, participation in political and economic processes and health targets such as the use of contraception and the incidence of AIDS. The MDG indicators do not measure other gender disparities, for example regarding income and life expectancy. It is therefore necessary to consult other sources to get a full picture of how progress towards gender equality varies between countries and regions. NGOs and various parts of the UN system are doing important work gathering such data.

Every year the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) ranks the countries of the world according to their success in ensuring longevity, basic education and a decent standard of living for their populations. Human development indexes are drawn up both for the population as a whole and for women compared with men. These comparisons show clearly that the position of women in a particular country cannot be deduced from the country's general level of development. Knowledge of the country's politics and traditions is important in order to understand the status of women's rights. Pakistan, for example, scores higher than Bangladesh as regards general development, but the reverse is the case as regards the situation of women. This is because women in Bangladesh have a higher level of literacy and earn more than Pakistani women. In many Arab countries, women are lagging behind in development, and these countries score lower on the gender-equality index than on the general human development index. Other countries, such as Sri Lanka, Namibia, Uganda and Kenya, rank higher on the gender equality index than on the general human development index. In Oman, women's purchasing power is less than one fifth of men's; in Burundi women earn less than 80 % of what men earn. In countries like Nicaragua and Honduras, the literacy rate is approximately the same for women and men. In Yemen and Guinea, on the other hand, illiteracy is more than twice as high among women as it is among men.

The World Economic Forum, which arranges annual meetings in Davos, also draws up a comprehensive report, *The Global Gender Gap Report*, on women's participation in four different areas: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment. The report compared the status of gender equality in 115 countries in 2006, both in general and in each of the four areas.

Not surprisingly, the Nordic countries topped the list in 2006, with Sweden coming first, closely

Box 2.2 Equal access to health services

Article 12 of CEDAW requires the States Parties to ensure, on the basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning, and appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary.

followed by Norway. These two countries score highest on political empowerment, but lower on health and survival. It is interesting to note that a poor country like the Philippines ranks sixth, with top scores in both health and education. Another poor country, Sri Lanka, scores high on gender equality, ranking thirteenth overall. It occupies first place as regards health and survival and seventh place as regards women's political empowerment. Tanzania, which ranks 24th overall, has a first place as regards women's economic participation. However it ranks 97th and 95th on education and health, respectively, which is what pulled its overall score down.

Japan, which is a rich country, ranks 79th. Even with a first place on health and survival, a scoring it shares incidentally with Cambodia among others, its overall ranking is low, as it scores 83rd on economic participation and opportunity, 59th on educational attainment, and 83rd on political empowerment. Another rich country, Cyprus, ranks 83rd, just behind Malawi. Yemen and Saudi Arabia rank last and second-to-last in this index.

This report is a useful practical tool because the areas it analyses largely correspond to our own main priority areas. Equally important, the report shows that we are facing a multifaceted, complex situation that we need to address in our international development policy. The figures indicate that there are considerable variations; poverty should not automatically be equated with gender inequality, and wealth does not necessarily mean gender equality. The report shows that the gender gap can be caused by many different factors, and that efforts must be focused on different areas in different countries. Therefore the Norwegian model cannot be transferred automatically to our partner countries. Our approach must be tailored to the situation on the ground.

2.2 Life cycle and diversity

It is an oversimplification to regard girls and women as a single, homogeneous group. There are great variations, and different groups have different needs and interests. Norwegian policy must address this diversity. Special measures are also needed to combat discrimination against sexual minorities.

Our policy for promoting women's rights and gender equality must have a life-cycle perspective. This is important both in order to get an accurate picture of the situation and in order to target our policy. Poverty and marginalisation affect children and young people particularly severely, and girls more so than boys. Girls are often far less visible and active in society than boys. There may be severe restrictions on how and where girls can participate. More boys have access to education than girls, and boys stay in the school system longer than girls. Discrimination against girls starts at birth – and in some cases even earlier. Modern-day technology makes it possible to choose not to give birth to girls. The problem is very real. In some parts of the world many more female than male fetuses are aborted. According to figures presented by the international development agency Plan, this results in a shortage of girls in the order of 100 million. Discrimination against girls also leads to considerable disparities in the health status of girls and boys. Particular health problems are associated with teenage girls who are married off and give birth before their bodies are fully

mature. Early marriage and pregnancy often put a stop to a girl's education. For many girls, pregnancy means automatic expulsion from school. The early sexual debut of many girls, often with older men, is a clear factor in the spread of HIV and AIDS. Girls are also physiologically more at risk of infection than boys, and sexual violence and coercion further increase their vulnerability. In sub-Saharan Africa, girls account for three quarters of all HIV-infected people in the age group 15 to 24. Ensuring that girl's needs are sufficiently safeguarded in efforts to promote gender equality and when working with children and young people is a particular challenge. General programmes are often designed for adults, and are not necessary suited for children. Programmes for children must be tailored to reach both girls and boys.

Our policy must also be designed to address the situation of older women and widows, particularly with regard to inheritance, land, housing and property rights. In many countries women do not have such rights. The situation of single and divorced women also deserves special attention in many countries.

Women are discriminated against in all countries – albeit to different degrees and in different

Box 2.3 Children's clubs in Nepal

«Before I became a member of the Children's Club, I thought my life was over. I was treated badly by my boss and was too shy to tell him what I thought. Then I joined the Children's Club and learned that children and children working as domestic servants also have rights. I learned to express myself and speak in front of other people. I learned to believe in myself. I became bolder towards my boss. Now he lets me go out and have friends and free time. I feel like a person, I am demanding my rights.» (Girl, age 16)

Norway has been supporting a network of children's clubs in Nepal through UNICEF. The majority of the members are child workers, and many are domestic servants.

Box 2.4 Strategic efforts for indigenous peoples in Guatemala

One of the aims of Norway's efforts in Guatemala is to enhance the indigenous peoples' opportunity to gain political influence. Indigenous women are the most important target group. Despite the fact that indigenous peoples make up the majority of the population, they are politically, economically and socially marginalised. Since 2005, Norway has granted university scholarships to Mayan women, and we are pleased with the results. Indigenous women have qualified for key positions in politics and public administration, for example in the Government's Secretariat of Planning and Programming. Norway has also been supporting research on ways to increase indigenous people's participation in political processes. This research will provide more knowledge on how democracy-building efforts can be designed to include both women and men from indigenous groups in a multicultural, multi-ethnic society where several languages are spoken.

ways. Many women face double discrimination, as poverty is in itself a cause of discrimination. Other factors that can influence or increase discrimination are membership of a minority ethnic community, indigenous affiliation, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression and identity, disability or serious illnesses such as AIDS.

Groups and individuals who face multiple discrimination, such as women with indigenous backgrounds, are particularly vulnerable. Indigenous groups are often politically, economically and socially marginalised. Thus indigenous women are in a particularly vulnerable situation, facing marginalisation not only due to their gender, but also due to their ethnicity and their poverty. This may be part of the reason why indigenous women are overrepresented among victims of human trafficking, and why sexual abuse against women from minority groups is so prevalent in conflict situations and war. It is less likely that an offender will be prosecuted for sexual abuse in cases where the victim is an indigenous woman than in cases where the victim is from the majority population. And it is even less likely if the offender is from the majority population.

2.3 Mobilisation of boys and men

It will only be possible to achieve gender equality if we involve not only girls and women, but also boys and men. There is no getting around the fact that men and male gender roles are among the obstacles to gender equality, but it is also important to highlight that men are an important part of the solution. Men can play a key role in promoting women's rights and gender equality, and they too should therefore be mobilised.

Gender inequality also has a price for men and boys. It is important to realise that while men and women tend to have different interests and live different lives, there are also great differences within the sexes. Men, too, can be subject to discrimination, often from other men with more power. This may be economic, political or military power, or the power conferred by age and authority. Boys as well as girls are vulnerable to sexual abuse.

Unprotected sex is a high-risk behaviour that accelerates the spread of HIV and AIDS, and has fatal consequences for both men and women. In many societies and circles, it is acceptable for men to purchase sex. The combination of purchasing sex and failure to use condoms considerably increases the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases by all those involved, including the

men themselves and their regular partners. The lack of acceptance of homosexuality in many societies drives homosexual boys and men into the prostitution market, both as buyers and sellers of sexual services involving other boys and men. Moreover, many boys feel constrained by rigid gender role patterns and norms of masculinity, and those who are unable to live up to social expectations lose out.

It is essential that our policy takes a critical approach to male and female roles in relation to cultural and religious factors. There are great national and regional differences in this respect. In certain religiously conservative countries, it is not just a matter of redefining roles, but of men actually relinquishing their control over women. This raises issues of fundamental conceptions of honour and other deeply rooted traditions. It is one of the

Box 2.5 Awareness-raising among men in the Philippines

It is important to raise young men's awareness of gender disparities in empowerment and freedom of choice, particularly with regard to sexual relations. Norwegian NGOs are supporting projects that encourage young men to promote gender equality and mutual respect between the sexes. In the Philippines, for example, the Women's Front of Norway and FOKUS (Forum for Women and Development) are cooperating with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW). Young men attend courses led by male instructors where they discuss gender roles and take part in group work with their peers. The course participants have been particularly affected by meeting former prostitutes. The insight they gained into these women's backgrounds, marked by poverty and abuse, gave them greater respect for the women as individuals. They also gained an understanding of how their own behaviour, including the purchase of pornography and sexual services, contributed to the oppression and degradation experienced by these women. These young men, prospective agents of change, found that it was not easy to convince other men, particularly members of the older generation. But when they managed to do so, they saw it as a great personal victory.

main challenges we are facing in our international development policy in this area.

Therefore, it is essential that our international development policy includes measures targeted specifically at boys and men. But we must find a way of focusing on men and boys without pitting men and women against each other. The measures we implement must promote an awareness among men of the need for change, a realisation that the situation in many societies where men have a virtual monopoly on power is not viable, and that power-sharing is the key to progress and a well-functioning society. We must ensure that our activities demonstrate that men too have a clear self-interest in gender equality and women's full participation in development processes. Better utilisation of resources means more rapid development and a better life situation for everyone. Breaking down rigid gender role patterns leads to more freedom for both sexes. In societies without strong expectations or preconceived ideas about how people should behave, individuals have greater freedom of choice – and this also applies to men.

2.4 International normative framework

There is a comprehensive set of widely recognised norms that provide an international framework for efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality as well as giving them their legitimacy. CEDAW is the central human rights convention relating to girls and women. It sets out the obligations of states to eliminate discrimination against women in such areas as family relations and entering into and dissolution of marriage, education, health and participation in political and economic life. Almost all of the countries that receive emergency relief and development assistance from Norway have acceded to the Convention. The States Parties are to report every fourth year to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which is responsible for monitoring the progress made in the implementation of the Convention. On the basis of the reports and subsequent dialogues with the countries concerned, the Committee draws up recommendations for each country.

These recommendations provide a good basis for efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality in the various countries. However, Sudan and Somalia are among the countries that have not acceded to CEDAW. Other countries have made reservations with regard to some of the obliga-

tions, such as the prohibition of discrimination against women in national legislation.

Norway's policy is to encourage countries that have not yet done so to accede to the convention without any reservations. Norway has ratified CEDAW and will seek to comply with its provisions, including in its international development policy.

The UN has also established several Special Rapporteur positions, for example a Special Rapporteur on violence against women. The Special Rapporteurs conduct country visits, collect data and publish annual reports containing recommendations to the Human Rights Council. Women's rights are on the agenda of the General Assembly and the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women. Regional organisations such as the African Union have also adopted declarations on women's rights and gender equality, which the member states have undertaken to follow up and report on.

In 2000, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, according to which women are to participate on equal terms in decision-making processes related to conflict resolution, peace and security. Girls and women are to be protected against the increased brutality and sexual violence and abuse that occurs in many situations of armed conflict. The resolution is not legally binding, but it provides important political guidelines.

Action plans adopted at UN summits are not legally binding either, but they are politically binding. The Platform for Action adopted at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 set out a broad agenda for promoting women's rights and gender equality globally. The international community managed to agree on an ambitious final document aimed at promoting women's empowerment and access to resources in all areas of society. Important themes and perspectives included the feminisation of poverty, health, income and inheritance, land, housing and property rights. The Conference also addressed the alarming prevalence of violence against women and highlighted the importance of ensuring that women participate in, and have an opportunity to exert an influence on, working life and political processes. The Beijing Conference also marked a breakthrough in efforts to devise a broader strategy for promoting women's rights and gender equality in all sectors of society. It was agreed that gender issues should not be confined to a separate sector where they only have a limited effect on other policy areas. The Platform for Action is based

on the principle that all projects and programmes must be analysed in terms of their effects on women and men, respectively, before any decisions are taken. At the same time, the need for targeted measures to eliminate existing disparities and power imbalances between the sexes is emphasised. In 2005 the UN Commission on the Status of Women, which brings together all UN member states, assessed the progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. It concluded that there is still a big gap between global aims and activities and results at national level. As the progress made has been modest, the Beijing Platform for Action remains highly relevant.

Many other UN summits have dealt with women's rights, which has led to increased focus on the issue. At the 1993 UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the rights of women and girls were put on the agenda in earnest. According to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, gender-based violence and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation are incompatible with the inherent dignity and worth of the human person. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo was a milestone in the recognition of the principle of the rights of families and individuals to control their own fertility and to enjoy good sexual and reproductive health. The Conference also recognised the rights of young people in this area, which was an equally important step forward. Norway played a proactive

role both in Cairo and in Beijing in efforts to liberalise restrictive abortion laws, but the progress made in this area was limited. The vital role played by women in environmental management and development was underscored at the summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and in Johannesburg 10 years later. In Agenda 21, the action plan adopted at Rio, it was established more clearly than before that women are to be empowered through full participation in decision-making.

The key recommendations of the various UN summits in the 1990s were incorporated into the UN Millennium Declaration, which was adopted by world heads of state and government in 2000. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are included in this declaration. Although the goals themselves were not new, they reflect a renewed global commitment in the sense that concrete deadlines were set, indicators agreed, and annual reporting routines established. All the MDGs are important in terms of gender equality, but two of them are specifically targeted at improving the situation of women. These are MDG 3 concerning gender equality and women's empowerment and MDG 5 concerning maternal health.

The review of the Millennium Declaration at the UN World Summit in 2005 reaffirmed that women's empowerment must be mainstreamed in all efforts if the MDGs are to be achieved. The Summit led to the adoption of four new targets at the General Assembly the following year. Three of these targets are important for advancing women's

Box 2.6 Universal human rights conventions and guidelines

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN) (1966)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN) (1966)
- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) and the Optional Protocol (1999)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993)
- UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (2000)
- UN Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (2000)

Box 2.7 Key world conferences and UN summits

- World Summit for Children (New York, 1990)
- UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992)
- UN World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993)
- International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994)
- UN Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995)
- UN Millennium Assembly (New York, 2000)
- International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, 2002)
- World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002)
- UN World Summit (New York, 2005)

empowerment: incorporation of goals concerning full employment and decent work into national and international development strategies; universal access to treatment for HIV and AIDS by 2010; and universal access to reproductive health by 2015. Several countries voiced scepticism about the resolution when it was put to a vote in the General Assembly. The UN has not yet begun to refer to the new targets in its annual reporting on the MDGs.

It is clear that the challenges related to women's rights and gender equality are not due to a lack of international rules and guidelines. There is a comprehensive normative framework that enjoys broad support, at any rate on paper. However, a great deal remains to be done in translating these commitments into action. One of the main tasks in this respect is to persuade countries to incorporate their international obligations into national legislation and implement them in practice.

2.5 Previous experience

Women's rights and gender equality have been important themes in Norway's development cooperation for several decades, but the approach has varied. In some periods, the focus has been on individual programmes, while in others the main strategy has been to integrate the gender perspective into all of our development assistance efforts. In international development circles, the term «mainstreaming» is generally used to describe the latter type of thematic integration.

In 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad commissioned the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research to carry out an evaluation of the *Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation* (1997–2005). The evaluation revealed significant weaknesses in the institutionalisation and implementation of efforts. Despite the fact that this was a high-priority area politically, with strategies setting out clearly defined aims, the gender perspective receded into the background when development plans and projects were implemented. The reporting routines did not reveal the failure to translate political priorities into practical assistance. The funds earmarked for this purpose were reduced, as were expertise and capacity. In 2002, the special allocation for gender-related measures and activities was discontinued in connection with a large-scale budget reform, and was replaced by an explicit policy recommendation prescribing that gender equality was to be promoted under all the develop-

ment budget lines. The number of employees in the Foreign Service with thematic responsibility for this issue was also reduced. Gender equality courses were no longer provided as part of in-house training for Norad and Foreign Service employees. The idea was that theme-specific expertise and training were to be mainstreamed.

In retrospect it is clear that the intention to mainstream the gender perspective came to nothing. In practice it was mere rhetoric. Similar evaluations carried out by other actors have reached the same conclusion. Thus, this criticism does not just apply to Norwegian development assistance, but seems to be more generally applicable.

2.6 Current policy and practice

The negative evaluation in 2006 of Norwegian efforts to mainstream gender equality in development cooperation led to a turnaround in Norway's policy. Since then, new plans and tools have been developed to address priority areas that are vital for the empowerment of girls and women.

Increased capacity and expertise are needed to achieve these priorities, and resources from many areas are being drawn on. It is generally recognised that this is a complex area involving major challenges. The process of change will take time. In order to get this work off to a good start, a three-year project (2006–2009) on women's rights and gender equality has been established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project, which is headed by the Ministry's ambassador for women's rights and gender equality, aims to boost efforts in this field and make them more visible. It will work closely with all relevant units in the Ministry and Norad. The embassies play a central role. They have the day-to-day responsibility for dialogue with the host countries' authorities, and they administer Norwegian funds and are important sources of information in the field. There will be regular contact with civil society representatives and multilateral and international actors. The ambassador is supported by a team organised under the Section for Global Initiatives and Gender Equality in the Foreign Ministry.

Other ministries will also play an important role in promoting women's rights and gender equality, for example in administering Norwegian cooperation with relevant UN organisations and the relevant authorities in developing countries.

It is generally agreed that a broad range of tools is required in order to succeed. All the central development cooperation channels and processes

must be utilised. We will build on the best of our previous experience, both in implementing a broad range of measures to mainstream the gender perspective in all policy goals, and in specifically targeting activities to empower women. Women's rights and gender equality must be explicitly and comprehensively incorporated into Norway's development cooperation efforts. To do so, we must increase expertise in this field both in Norway and among our cooperation partners. Key tools in the Government's efforts will be targeted measures, competence- and capacity building and earmarked resources. Strong political focus, management accountability, training programmes and specific follow-up requirements are essential.

2.6.1 Economic and administrative consequences

Gender equality is to be promoted both by mainstreaming the gender perspective in all policies and through specific targeted activities. This two-pronged approach is to be reflected in Norway's development assistance budget by earmarking allocations and including gender-related objectives and criteria for disbursements under all important budget lines. Administrative routines must ensure that these objectives are achieved.

Efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality are to be stepped up. This will mean giving priority to gender-related measures and activities within existing budgetary frameworks. However this should not have a negative impact on other important priority areas such as peacebuilding,

humanitarian assistance and human rights, good governance, the fight against corruption, oil and energy, and the environment and climate change. On the contrary, effectiveness in these areas will be increased through stronger focus on women as a resource in combating poverty and promoting development. The budget will be an important tool for achieving results. A separate chapter in the Foreign Ministry's budget proposal monitors gender-focused expenditure. The aim is to see a steady increase in the percentage of development funding earmarked for this purpose. This is in keeping with the *Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation 2007–2009*.

2.6.2 Action plans

A series of action plans have been drawn up that set out criteria and guidelines for promoting women's rights and gender equality in development cooperation.

The Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation was launched on 8 March 2007 and covers the period 2007–2009. The purpose of the plan is to boost Norway's efforts in this field in the international community and among our cooperation partners. It is the result of a comprehensive process involving broad-based dialogues with partners in Norway and abroad. The action plan sets targets and stakes out the course for the realisation of women's rights and gender equality both as a separate priority area and as an integral dimension of the Government's other development cooperation priority areas. The

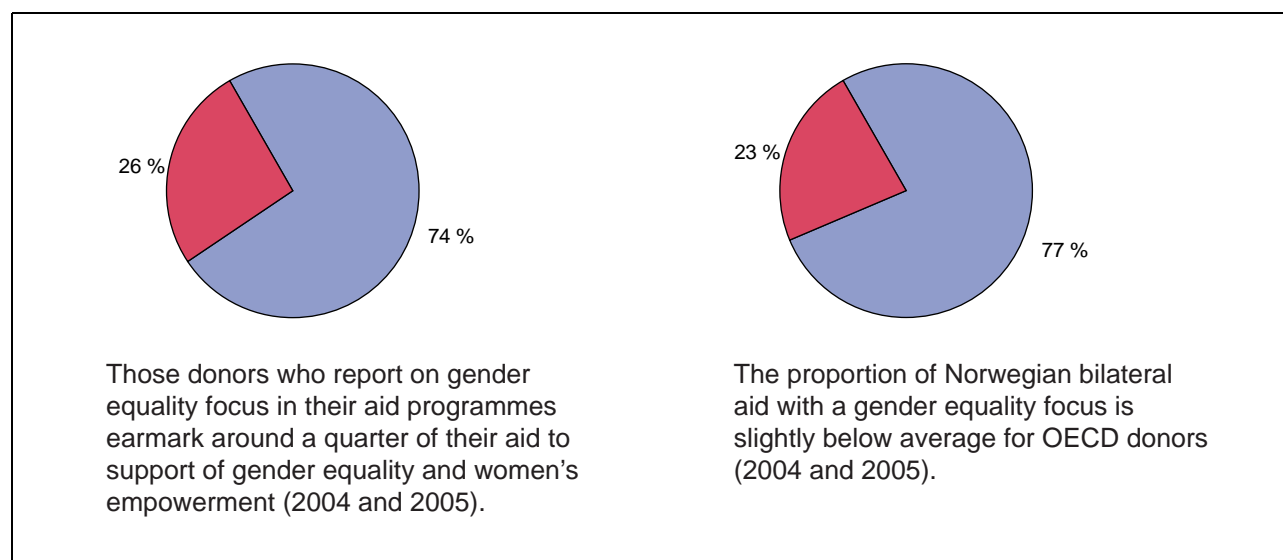


Figure 2.1 OECD's figures for aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment, for all OECD donors (average) and for Norway.

action plan is the most important operational tool we have today for ensuring that women's rights and gender equality are given the status and priority needed to achieve our aims.

The Norwegian Government's Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security was launched on 8 March 2006. It provides guidelines for safeguarding the rights of girls and women in war and conflict situations, increasing the participation of both women and men, and mainstreaming the gender perspective in Norway's conflict-prevention and peacebuilding efforts. The plan provides guidelines for Norway's high-profile engagement in a number of conflict areas worldwide.

The Government's Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking (2006–2009) sets out measures to intensify efforts to empower women and reduce their vulnerability to recruitment to and abuse in the slave trade of our times. Most of the victims are women and children, both girls and boys, who are trafficked across borders for sexual exploitation through prostitution, for forced labour or for the illegal organ trade.

The Government's International Plan of Action for Combating Female Genital Mutilation was adopted in 2003, and has been extended to the end of 2009. The plan calls for intensified efforts to combat female genital mutilation and for the integration of these efforts into ongoing cooperation in the health and education sectors. The issue will be included in Norway's political dialogues at country level where relevant.

Other strategies and action plans for development cooperation that are important in this context include the *Action Plan against Forced Marriage* (2008–2011), *Aid for Trade: Norway's Action Plan* (2007), the *Position Paper in Development Cooperation on Norway's HIV and AIDS Policy* (2006) and the *Action Plan for Environment in Development Cooperation* (2006).

2.6.3 Cooperation with partner countries

Policy dialogue with the authorities of our partner countries is the cornerstone of Norway's development cooperation. We will push the gender perspective higher up on the development agenda through targeted use of the relevant forums and channels for policy dialogues and the use of development assistance. We will utilise our opportunities to exert an influence, including in situations where women's rights and gender equality are not an explicit priority for our partners. At the same

time, however, we must ensure that our policy is in keeping with the principle of country ownership. The promotion of gender equality must be linked up to the partner countries' own development targets and international commitments – for example regarding CEDAW if the country has acceded to it – and tailored to local challenges and opportunities for change.

In many of our partner countries, the authorities responsible for gender equality are marginalised in relation to national planning and budget processes. These authorities and other gender equality stakeholders are important actors and cooperation partners for Norway.

At country level, we must constantly assess which gender equality challenges are most important and which local actors we can draw on at any given time. The situation varies greatly from country to country. In many countries, there are discrepancies between policy and practice. This may provide an opening for an effective policy dialogue. It is important to identify and utilise the opportunities that arise in forums and arenas where Norwegian actors are already active, have gained credibility and have developed good relations. Relevant issues to address include empowerment and par-

Box 2.8 Maternal health services in Malawi

Malawi is the country where Norway is doing most to promote women's rights and gender equality. The maternal mortality rate in Malawi is among the highest in the world. The country's authorities recognise the seriousness of the situation and are giving higher priority to improving maternal health services. However, there is still a great need for supplementary measures.

Norway is financing a cooperative initiative between three Norwegian university hospitals (Ullevål, Haukeland and Tromsø) and the maternity ward of Bwaila Hospital, which is the main hospital in the capital, Lilongwe. Bwaila Hospital is the leading institution for the training of midwives in Malawi, and the initiative is expected to have a positive impact throughout the country. The cooperation between the two countries is mainly focused on improving systems and routines, and providing on-the-job training by health personnel from Norway. Some equipment will also be provided.

ticipation, access to and control over resources, and the impact of projects and programmes – for both women and men. Women's rights and gender equality must be prioritised in day-to-day activities, through dialogue with and support for the country's own agents of change in the government, in publicly elected bodies and in civil society.

The Government does not wish to sidestep sensitive issues, such as abortion and homosexuality, which are prohibited by law in many countries. We must find an approach that is challenging, without being unnecessarily offensive. It is important to bear in mind that this is a long process, and that we must «hasten slowly». Norway can provide moral and financial support to organisations and projects that promote rights in these areas. At the same time, we should use our policy dialogue with national authorities to pursue these issues.

2.6.4 Cooperation with civil society

Civil society has played an important role in shaping democratic development in Norway. Women's rights and gender equality are one of the areas where this can be most clearly seen. Women's participation in NGOs and the establishment of women's networks and organisations have been instrumental in putting women's issues on the national agenda. Many Norwegian NGOs and research institutions have acquired broad experience and extensive knowledge of women's rights and gender equality. A number of Norwegian NGOs that work specifically with gender issues are organised under the umbrella organisation FOKUS – the Forum for Women and Development. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has high expectations of Norwegian NGOs' efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality in development cooperation. However, as is the case with other actors, the picture is complex and the results uneven. The challenge lies in acquiring the right expertise not only in the field of gender equality but also in the field of international development. Working methods and approaches that have worked well in Norway cannot be transferred automatically to developing countries.

There is broad popular support in Norway for gender equality. Civil society has played a decisive role in promoting women's rights and putting them on the political agenda. Various organisations have provided key arenas for articulating women's demands and setting women's own priorities. The efforts made by women themselves to organise and mobilise have been crucial. It is therefore natural for Norway to give priority to supporting civil

Box 2.9 Norway supports the right to safe abortion on demand

Norway is seeking to promote women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. One of our main partners in these efforts is the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), one of the world's largest NGOs, with member associations in 150 countries. As the IPPF is a non-governmental network, member associations can take a proactive role in issues that are sensitive in the country concerned, and provide reproductive health services to groups that otherwise would have no access to such services. In 2006, Norway contributed to a new multi-donor fund under the IPPF to promote safe abortion, which supported 45 different measures in 32 developing countries during its first year of operation.

The lack of access to contraception and safe abortion on demand causes women and their families great suffering. Progress in these areas is essential in order to achieve the MDG target on reducing maternal mortality. Unsafe abortions are primarily a poverty-related problem in countries that have restrictive abortion legislation. This problem can only be eliminated by providing safe and legal abortion services. Organisations that promote safe abortion on demand are fighting an uphill battle, particularly due to the restrictive policy of the US. Norway's efforts in this field are therefore important. Norway provides about NOK 50 million a year to the IPPF, NOK 10 million of which goes to the safe abortion fund. This is Norway's largest individual contribution to the promotion of women's rights that is channelled through an NGO.

society in the South. Civil society plays an important role as an advocate for women's rights and in holding the national authorities accountable for their obligations in this field. This is why national and regional women's organisations and networks in developing countries are given such high priority as cooperation partners.

Norway will pursue a clear policy in its efforts to promote gender equality and women's rights. In some cases, local civil society representatives are the most important actors. For example, Norway's

efforts with regard to culturally rooted discrimination against women including in sensitive areas – are frequently channelled through local agents for change. This applies, for example, to abortion, female genital mutilation, homosexuality and the general promotion of women's rights in the interface between state law and customary law and practices. Although women's formal rights are in many cases safeguarded by national legislation, the national authorities may not be able to enforce this legislation at the local level. In such cases, local civil society actors play a key role.

2.6.5 Cooperation with multilateral actors

Norway has played a key role in efforts to ensure that the gender perspective is mainstreamed in the activities of multilateral development organisations. We have been among the leading advocates of establishing accountability for these efforts at a high level in the UN and the development banks. Together with like-minded countries, Norway has insisted that these organisations develop strategies for mainstreaming the gender perspective systematically in all their activities.

Many of the first positions for gender advisers in UN organisations and the development banks were financed by Norway. Norway also played an instrumental role in the establishment of the position of Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women. We have contributed ideas, personnel and funds for the development of strategies for promoting women's rights and gender equality in development cooperation. In response to pressure from Norway, increasing priority is being given to these efforts. The organisations themselves are now financing these positions. In the board meetings of such organisations, Norway has actively espoused the view that gender equality is too important to be left to voluntary contributions from a handful of donor countries.

These efforts are important because the multilateral organisations have considerable influence. More can be gained by mainstreaming the gender perspective in the activities of these institutions than can be achieved by the various donors on their own. The World Bank and UNDP, for example, play key roles in policy dialogue with partner countries and advise them on their national development strategies. The World Bank and the regional development banks transfer substantial resources, and the other UN organisations provide expertise and networks that are far more extensive than the resources available to individual coun-

Box 2.10 Priority to girls' education

In 1996, Norway took the initiative for a programme for the advancement of girls' education in cooperation with UNICEF. The programme originally focused on certain countries in Africa and, because of the interest shown, was later extended to include additional countries. The final evaluation, which was carried out in 2003, showed that the Norwegian initiative had produced good results. More girls were completing their basic education. The programme has also helped to move girls' education higher up on the agenda, both within UNICEF and in the various countries. However, the evaluation also revealed that UNICEF was not working in a sufficiently systematic way. This made it difficult for the organisation to make use of lessons learned and to scale up measures that were working well. With the support of Norway and other countries, girls' education has now been mainstreamed as one of UNICEF's five main priorities. Norway is a major donor to the organisation.

Since 2003, Norway has provided approximately NOK 450 million annually for girls' education. This is the largest single Norwegian contribution that can be defined as being targeted towards women. At the same time we have managed to make UNICEF accountable for addressing this issue. New donors have been mobilised. The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, which is specially designed to advance girls' education, has been established. Thirteen organisations, including the World Bank, participate in the initiative.

tries. The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are playing a key role in promoting women's health and access to family planning. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which is the only organisation in the UN system dedicated exclusively to fostering women's empowerment and gender equality at the global, regional and national levels, is another key cooperation partner. UNIFEM's mandate is to play an innovative and catalytic role in efforts to promote the

rights of women and gender equality at country level and vis-à-vis the rest of the UN system.

A number of evaluations show that there was less focus on women and gender equality in many multilateral organisations towards the end of the 1990s. In fact, mainstreaming the gender perspective in all activities, whereby everyone became responsible for everything, meant that no one had real responsibility for this area any more. This was the case for Norway's efforts as well. Norway's renewed focus on women's empowerment and gender equality therefore also applies to its efforts in the UN, the World Bank and the regional development banks. In the board meetings of these organisations we are calling for stronger leadership, clearer objectives and better reporting of results. This applies both to the measures exclusively targeted at women and to the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in broader programmes.

Norway is again providing earmarked funds for promoting the gender perspective in key multilateral organisations. Experience has shown that when donors identify specific priorities, these issues move higher up on the organisation's agenda. Gender advisers in the UN and the development banks have more influence if their policy guidelines and instruments are backed up by funding. Norway has, for example, played a proactive role in the development of a new World Bank action plan for mainstreaming gender equality in development. The plan, which is entitled *Gender Equality as Smart Economics*, focuses on the Bank's role in securing women's access to financial, land, product and labour markets. The action plan was adopted by the Board of Directors of the World Bank in 2006, and Norway is providing funding for its implementation.

Increased focus on women's empowerment and gender equality is one of the main causes advocated by Norway in the efforts to strengthen the UN. Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg co-chaired the UN High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence. Norway actively supports the Panel's recommendation to consolidate several important but small gender equality bodies into a new, more effective entity. A strong, independent UN entity dedicated to promoting women's empowerment and gender equality in development processes is needed in order to ensure that the UN is able to fulfil its watchdog, advocacy and operational roles.

2.6.6 Cooperation forms

Strategies for mainstreaming the gender perspective in development policy cannot be developed in

a vacuum, but must take into account general approaches to and discussions on development cooperation.

Since the second half of the 1990s, there has been a growing awareness that separate donor-initiated measures do not produce the development results expected. Donors therefore sought to ensure better utilisation of assistance funds by enhancing aid effectiveness. A new approach developed with a focus on coherent strategies, sector programmes and budget support. Although there was a big gap between theory and practice and considerable variation among donors, the importance of coordinating donor efforts with the aims and plans of governments and other recipients was increasingly emphasised.

The International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey in 2002 and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005 were milestones in this regard. The Monterrey Consensus bears witness to the global consensus between donor and recipient countries that developing countries are responsible for their own development, and that more assistance should be provided to countries that have good governance and realistic plans.

According to the Paris Declaration, development processes should be clearly owned by the recipient. Donors should align themselves with recipients' priorities and plans and insofar as possible utilise their systems and procedures. Donors should coordinate their activities among themselves. Today there is a much sharper focus on results and accountability, both within the country in question and between recipients and donors. However, implementation of the Declaration has led to a great deal of energy and resources being put into studies, meetings and dialogues with partner countries on sector-specific issues, while cross-cutting themes such as gender have been relegated to the background. This does not necessarily have to be the case. The aid effectiveness agenda provides new opportunities for mainstreaming the gender perspective. Dialogues on national development strategies and forms of cooperation such as budget support provide opportunities to bring gender equality efforts into policy making, particularly in ministries of finance and planning, but also in other ministries. However, a number of challenges remain, both in relation to the development of plans that integrate the gender perspective and in relation to the development of reporting routines.

The principles of ownership and accountability must be interpreted broadly and inclusively. Responsibility for development processes must lie

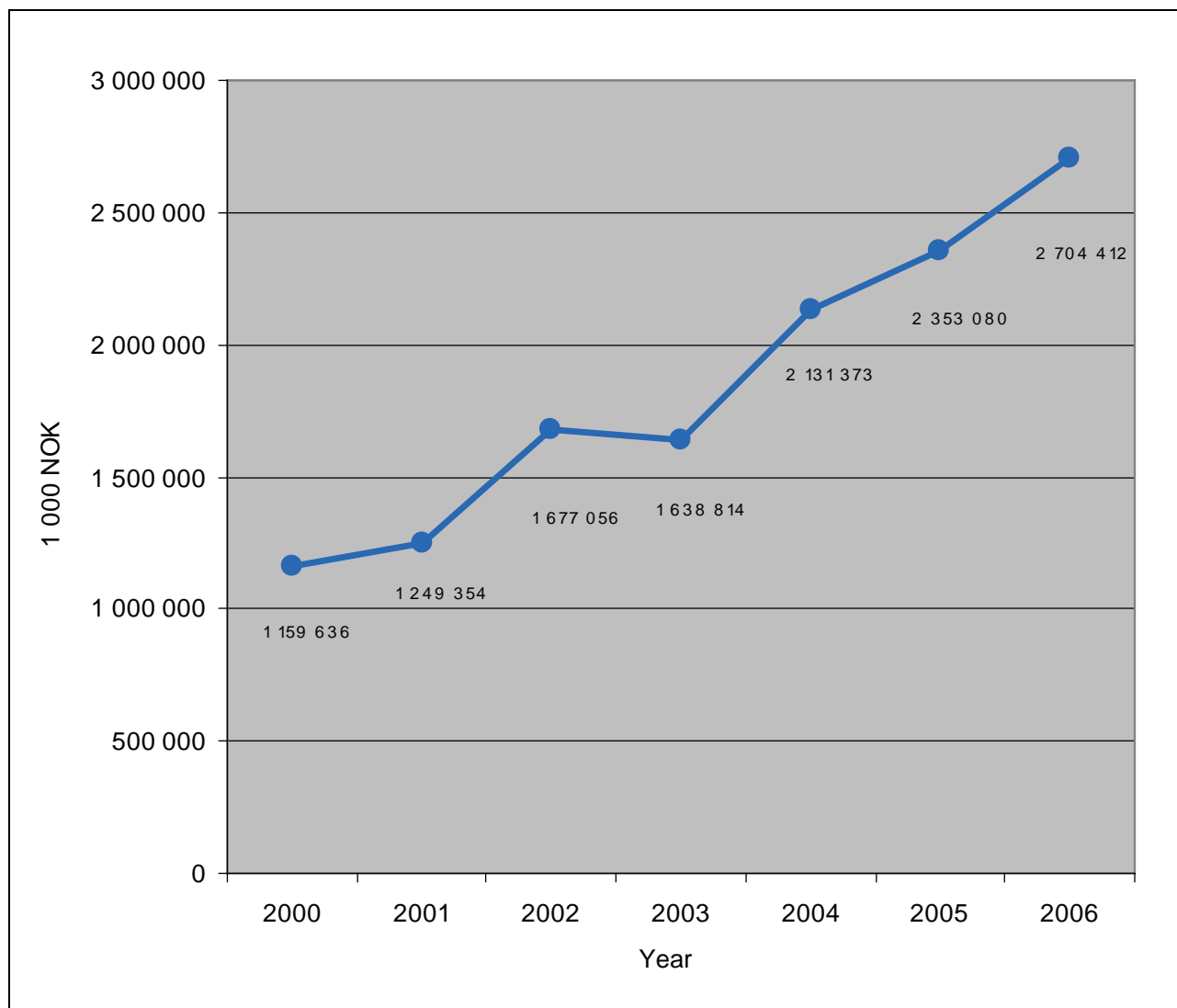


Figure 2.2 Norwegian bilateral assistance¹ with women's empowerment and gender equality as the principal or a significant objective, 2000–2006

¹ Includes bilateral assistance provided through multilateral organisations

not only with finance ministries, but also with other line ministries as well as with gender equality authorities. Norway must be an advocate for the important role played by parliaments and civil society in the shaping of policy and the importance of ensuring that the executive authorities are accountable to the parliament and the whole population – both women and men. This means that partner countries are expected to integrate the gender perspective into their national development strategies and plans and into their national budgets. The results of development cooperation in terms of poverty reduction and economic and

social development must benefit both women and men, both girls and boys. Explicit objectives related to women's rights and gender equality, gender-sensitive indicators and gender-disaggregated statistics need to be developed. In connection with coordinating assistance with national strategies and plans, specific action plans and measures for promoting women's rights and gender equality must be required. Norway must require that partner countries use public resources to the benefit of both women and men, not least in connection with new forms of cooperation, such as budget support.

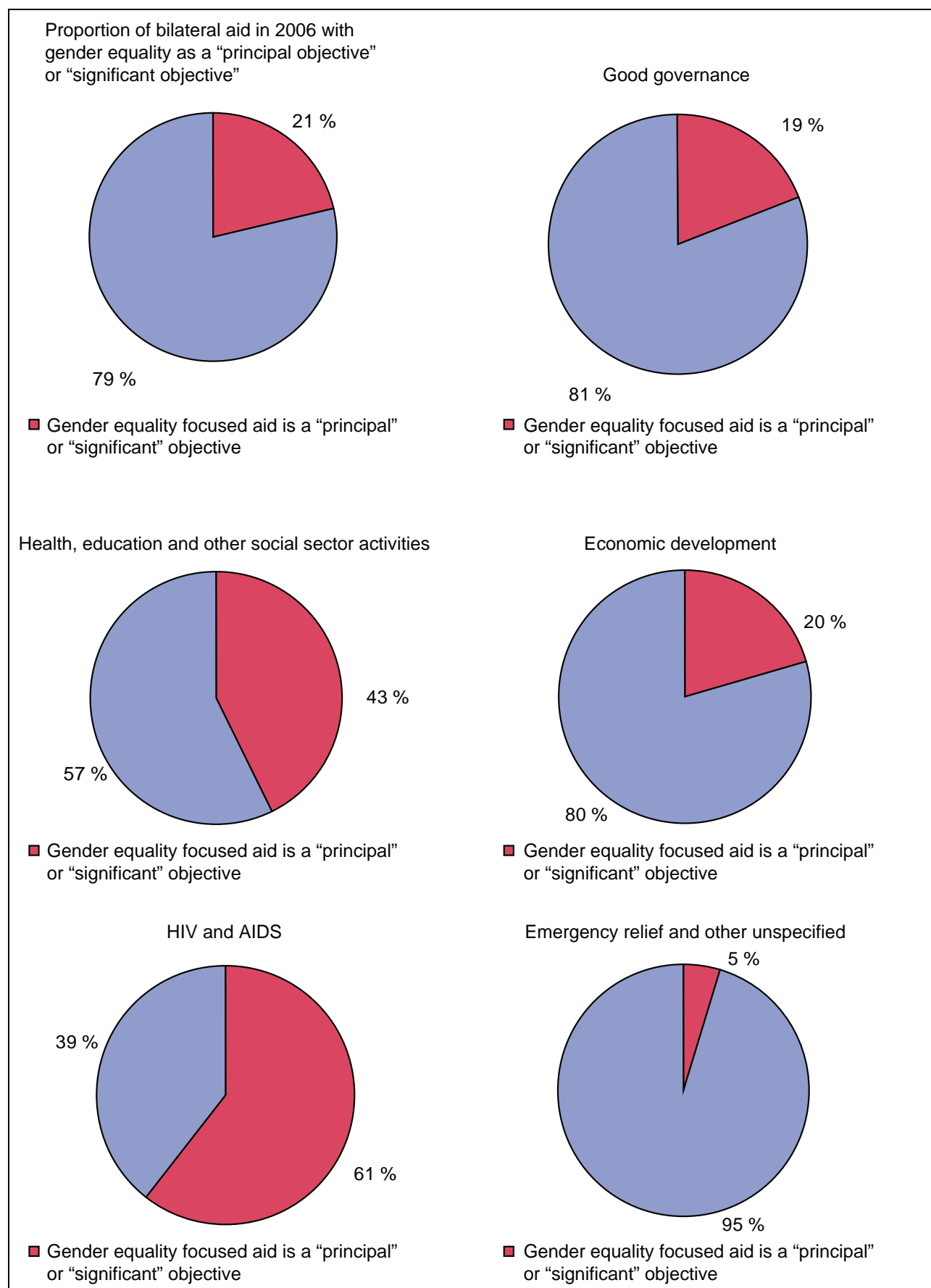


Figure 2.3 Proportion of Norwegian assistance targeted at women's empowerment and gender equality

¹ Includes bilateral assistance provided through multilateral organisations

3 New focus and new priorities

Women's rights and gender equality are relevant issues in most sectors of society. We should be aware of this fact and make use of it. We should therefore take a broad approach when promoting these issues in our development policy, but if we are to achieve the ambitions we have set ourselves, we must select partners and use arenas strategically. We must identify the various actors' strengths and weaknesses when tasks and funds are to be distributed.

The Government's aim is that Norway should now focus on areas that are vital for promoting women's rights and gender equality, such as participation in political processes, economic life and education. Women must have control of their own health, bodies and sexuality. They also have the right to a life free from violence. This means that Norway must help to ensure that conflict-prevention, conflict-resolution and peacebuilding efforts take the interests of women into account. The same applies to efforts to address climate change. We will not be able to meet and overcome the most important challenges of our time unless women participate on the same terms as men. At the same time, our efforts must also be broad and inclusive. The fact that certain areas have been singled out as particularly important does not mean that we can relax our efforts in others. In the Government's view, women's rights and gender equality should be included as readily in our energy programmes as they are in our health programmes; it should be equally self-evident to include these considerations in our infrastructure programmes as it is in our education programmes.

3.1 Women and men are to participate on equal terms in political processes

Considerable progress has been made since women's rights and gender equality were put on the international development agenda in connection with the UN's first world conference on women in 1975. Institutions have been established to promote the empowerment of women in the vast majority of Norway's partner countries. The issue

is on the agenda of international and regional organisations. Many countries have passed national legislation that to a large extent sets out the principles of non-discrimination and equality between women and men. The main challenge is to ensure that the normative framework is implemented in practice at all administrative levels.

Good governance is not just a question of formal democracy and sound economic policy. It is also a matter of having a well-functioning, active and incorrupt state with an effective distribution policy and adequate institutions. Key criteria are having both sexes well represented in elected bodies and equitable distribution of public resources between women and men. In many places, the legal rights of girls and women are poorly safeguarded, particularly with respect to family law, inheritance rights and the right to protection against violence in the family. Norway's policy aims to promote women's rights and empowerment in all levels of society. This constitutes part of the support Norway provides for democratic reforms, the free media, legal institutions and judicial reform.

In many cases, special measures will be needed to ensure that information about democracy and election processes reaches both men and women, for example through establishing separate forums and meeting places for women. The fight against corruption must also extend to the contact points between poor women and men on the one hand, and public authorities on the other. The practice of

Box 3.1 Equal political rights

According to Articles 7 and 8 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), States Parties are to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life, and to ensure that women have the opportunity, on equal terms to men, to represent their governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organisations.

bribery hits poor women particularly hard and can prevent them from having access to health, education, police and legal services, and from having the opportunity to register property and businesses. Sexual extortion, demands for sexual services, represent a form of corruption and abuse that affects women in particular.

The increasing participation of women in all levels of political decision-making processes is encouraging. The election of women heads of state in Chile and Liberia has broken new ground and gives reason for optimism. This paves the way for more women to take on leading political positions. President Michelle Bachelet has appointed a Gov-

ernment made up of equal numbers of women and men. The symbolic value of the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in Liberia in 2006 – the first woman president to be popularly elected in Africa – is significant. Rwanda is at the forefront internationally in this respect, with women making up 49 % of the country's parliament.

Since 1990, the proportion of women in national parliaments has tripled in North Africa from 3 % to 9 %, and has doubled in sub-Saharan Africa from 7 % to 14 %. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the proportion has increased from 12 % to 19 %, while it has remained constant at 5 % in western Asia. In comparison, the proportion of women in national parliaments has increased from 15 % to

Box 3.2 The fight for gender equality in political life in Kenya

Women are severely underrepresented in Kenyan politics. Only 18 of 222 seats in the Kenyan parliament are held by women. Moreover, only nine of these women have been elected; the others have been appointed. The political culture and system are dominated by men. Huge financial resources are needed to climb to the top of the political ladder. Women who take part in election campaigns are met with violence and deep-seated prejudices. They are overlooked within their own political parties and are given less attention than men in the media. There are many obstacles to gender equality in political life.

Norway is seeking to promote change in this area. The Norwegian Embassy in Nairobi has facilitated broad dialogue between women candidates, women's organisations and donors. Norway is supporting UNIFEM's efforts to strengthen gender equality and good governance. It is a matter of reducing the barriers to women's participation and assisting women who hope to be elected to parliament. This requires long-term efforts on several fronts simultaneously. In the run-up to the election, a broad selection of organisations and other partners were mobilised, and these assisted women candidates by providing support for media training and publicity campaigns and by mobilising voters throughout the country. These activities were developed in close dialogue with the women concerned, across party-political and regional boundaries.

Box 3.3 How we work in practice

With a view to strengthening the participation of women in political life, Norway is directly involved in efforts to pave the way for women's participation in elections and other democratic processes. This may involve support for voter registration, information on quota systems and training, or support for building networks of women parliamentarians and election candidates. Other efforts include integration of the gender perspective into reform programmes for good governance, campaigns to raise awareness of women's capabilities as decision-makers and political actors, and support for building networks between women in politics, administration and NGOs at local, national and international levels. Norway supports concrete efforts to mobilise boys and men as partners in the promotion of gender equality, for example through increasing knowledge and understanding of the benefits of gender equality, with a view to combating male-biased norms and stereotypical gender roles.

Our partners

Natural partners in these efforts are political parties, publicly elected bodies, women's organisations, and central and local authorities, including the gender equality mechanisms in the country in question. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNIFEM are important multilateral actors.

21 % in developed countries during the same period. The proportion of women in national parliaments globally was still only 17 % in 2005. All the same, the progress that has been made is linked to the introduction of quotas for women in more than 80 countries all over the world. Campaigns, training and gender equality efforts within political parties have also had a positive effect, and continue to do so.

However, women are still significantly under-represented in governing bodies and decision-making processes at all levels. Formal and informal barriers prevent women from participating. There is often distrust of women's decision-making abilities, including by women themselves, because there is a socially accepted and generally agreed conception that this is a male domain. Education, training, awareness-raising and mobilisation are key elements in any strategy to increase the political participation of women.

Norway has taken important initiatives to support competence-building for popularly elected women representatives in several parts of the world. The introduction of new quota rules in countries in South Asia in connection with the election of local government representatives has resulted in around one million more women being elected. In Liberia, Norway supported a project that focused on the registration and mobilisation of women voters, among other things. In many countries, taking part in national political life is prohibitively expensive for women candidates. In certain cases, Norway has provided financial support for groups of women candidates across the party-political spectrum, to enable them to run election campaigns on equal terms to men. Norway does not support individual candidates, for obvious reasons.

The Government will:

- use the recommendations from the CEDAW Committee and UN country resolutions in our political dialogue with individual countries;
- help to ensure that women candidates are able to stand for election on the same terms as men;
- help to strengthen the political impact of women who have been publicly elected;
- help to increase understanding among both sexes of the importance of women's participation in political life; and
- help to ensure that the rights of women are fully reflected in national legislation.

3.2 Women and men are to participate on equal terms in economic processes

Failure to acknowledge the actual role played by women in the economic sector is slowing economic development in all countries. One of the main objectives of our renewed focus on women's rights and gender equality in our development policy is to help strengthen the role of women as economic actors and to render the contribution they make visible.

The majority of the world's poorest people are women; moreover, women have a greater workload in many parts of the world than men. Estimates by UNICEF indicate that women in developing countries in Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa have considerably longer working days than men. In India and South Africa, the working day for women is approximately one hour longer than for men. In Benin, women work two and a half hours more than men per day, while in Mexico they work one and three quarter hours more. In Mauritius, however, the difference is less than half an hour. This is related to the fact that women are increasingly taking on paid work, while they still have the main responsibility for unpaid housework and the care of children, the sick and the elderly. Time-use studies show that women in employment in Mexico also spend 33 hours a week on household and care-related tasks, while men spend four hours a week on such tasks.

Many women do not have control of the money they earn. It is estimated that women account for more than half of all economic activity in developing countries, but that only a third of this is registered in public statistics. More women are employed in the informal sector than men. Moreover, women dominate the least secure forms of informal work, such as home-based industrial piecework and employment as domestic workers. Women account for up to 80 % of food production in sub-Saharan Africa, but receive only 1 % of all financial assistance provided in the form of credit. Access to paid work in the formal labour market is important for women's economic security. Besides, it is only in the formal labour market that labour rights can be fully guaranteed. Norway will promote decent work for both women and men. This means respect for employees rights, dialogue between the social partners, and schemes to protect employees in connection with illness, age and disability.

The role of women in economic development must be seen in the context of other relevant Nor-

Box 3.4 Microloans provide opportunities in the agricultural sector

Norway is supporting the Norwegian Mission Alliance's microloan project for poor women in the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. The main objective is to increase the income of poor families so that they are in a better position to take charge of their own lives. Some of the money made available is invested in agriculture, for example pig, poultry and fish farming, as well as rice and fruit cultivation. Some is used for small-scale trade and handcraft enterprises. Loans are given to women only. The women borrowers are organised in groups of 10 who act as guarantors for each other. The groups meet once a month to compare notes. These meetings are also opportunities for the Alliance to provide information on such topics as health, economics and family planning.

wegian efforts. This applies particularly to microfinance and support for the development of trade and industry. The opportunities for women to participate in the formal and informal economies, as well as the conditions for such participation, must be improved. Trade policy and trade agreements must be designed to ensure that women enjoy the same opportunities and benefits arising from increased trade and economic growth as men. Trade liberalisation can help to reduce poverty for women, too, particularly in countries where trade has increased employment levels. However, several studies show that developments in international trade can also have especially negative effects for women as workers, producers and consumers.

Microcredit arrangements give the poor better opportunities to engage in income-generating activities, increased access to resources and a better self-image. Women are sought-after customers for microcredit institutions. This is no coincidence. Women have tended to be better at paying back what they owe and are thus more creditworthy than men. Besides, granting loans to women has been found to promote development to a greater extent than granting loans to men. Continued support for microcredit programmes will therefore be an important means of creating economic opportunities for women.

International migration is having an increasingly profound effect on the economies of coun-

Box 3.5 How we work in practice

Norway supports a range of measures to promote the economic empowerment of women. These include gender impact assessments and measures targeting women in connection with the preparation, implementation and monitoring of national poverty reduction strategies, sector strategies and action plans, as well as gender responsive budgeting. The aim is to ensure that the needs of both women and men are taken into account in the administration of public resources and the provision of public services. We are seeking to promote women's trade union participation, the strengthening of labour rights and gender mainstreaming in work on legal reforms, including those regarding the right of women to inherit and own land, housing and other property regardless of their marital status. It is also important to support women's entrepreneurship, with particular focus on advisory and financial services, insurance, pensions and cash transfers.

Our partners

Important partners in our efforts to enhance the economic empowerment of women are the authorities at all levels, the social partners, NGOs, women's networks and research institutions. The International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank and the regional development banks are among our most important multilateral partners.

tries of origin and recipient countries alike. At the same time, migration entails both opportunities and risks for those involved. Worldwide, roughly equal numbers of women and men become migrants. Migrants send large sums of money back to their countries of origin. It is estimated that these private money transfers, in total, exceed global development assistance. Although women tend to earn less than men, individual studies indicate that women, taken as a group, send larger sums of money home than men do.

Structural and cultural conditions limit the opportunities for women to participate in and influence the economy. One area that is important for

boosting the position of women in many societies is that of property rights. In many countries, women are excluded from the management of natural resources, and the ownership of land, housing and other property. Widows in many African and Asian countries do not have inheritance rights, and it is not unusual for their user rights for land, housing or other property to be withdrawn when they are widowed or divorced. This is tantamount to disempowerment, and these women are thus no longer in a position to manage their own affairs and become dependent on others. They are trapped in a vicious circle where there is no legal protection and the strongest prevail. Without formal and equal rights to inheritance, land, housing and ownership, poor women all over the world are vulnerable to abuse.

The Government will:

- promote the economic empowerment of women;
- promote the employment of women in the formal sector;
- promote the right of women to decent work with full labour rights;
- promote equal property, land, ownership and inheritance rights for women and men; and
- seek to ensure that trade policy increases the economic resources available to women.

3.3 Women and men are to have equal access to education

The MDGs can only be achieved if girls and women have access to education. Education is essential for women's rights and gender equality.

Experience shows that educating girls can help to eradicate poverty if the education they receive is good. This depends on having well-qualified teachers, satisfactory teaching materials and adequate premises with good sanitation facilities. Thorough

and carefully designed teacher training is important for ensuring that future teachers have knowledge and awareness of gender equality and gender discrimination. Teacher training with an integrated focus on gender and gender equality can considerably boost the opportunities for girls and women to participate in economic and political life and academia. The recruitment of women teachers is important, because women role models can help to change traditional, negative attitudes to girls and women and their role in the education system. Women are the most important care providers in almost all societies. For this reason, the education of women gives added value. Girls who complete a good programme of education get married later, have fewer and healthier children, and are able to provide better care for their families. Children need schooling, care and protection. Education can

Box 3.7 How we work in practice

Norway gives priority to girls in education from primary school to university. Our main focus is to seek to ensure that all girls have the opportunity to attend school, for example by supporting programmes that teach girls and women to read and write. We also promote the integration of the gender perspective in the curriculum and in the classroom. We support the training of women teachers. The likelihood of parents sending their daughters to school increases considerably where there are women teachers.

In the field of higher education, Norway emphasises support for measures to promote equality between women and men both among students and among the staff. We provide funding for a number of academic courses relating to gender equality. Moreover, we have set gender quota requirements in several of our higher education and research programmes.

Our partners

Norway cooperates with a number of government institutions and NGOs to promote the right of girls to education. Key multilateral partners in this field are the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI). These organisations receive significant funding from Norway.

Box 3.6 Equal rights to education

Article 10 of CEDAW sets out that States Parties are to take all appropriate measures to ensure that women have equal rights to men in the field of education, including the same conditions for career and vocational guidance, access to studies and the achievement of diplomas.

be a means of giving protection to girls and boys, especially in situations of war and conflict. Education also provides knowledge about health. Primary, secondary and higher education are all important focus areas, and adult education and vocational training must also be included. Education is a priority area both for general development efforts and for Norway's targeted efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality.

The Government will:

- seek to ensure that women have the same access to education as men; and
- seek to ensure that education services are designed to promote gender equality.

3.4 Women have the right to adequate health services and to control over their own bodies and sexuality

Norway's international engagement in the field of health is extensive. Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, in collaboration with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and heads of state and government of countries such as the UK, Indonesia, Tanzania and Mozambique, has established the Global Campaign for the Health MDGs and a Network of Global Leaders to support the Campaign. The aim of this initiative is to accelerate progress in reaching the health-related MDGs (with special emphasis on women and children, in accordance with MDGs 4 and 5). The Campaign and Network were launched on 26 September 2007 in connection with the 62nd session of the UN General Assembly in New York, and were developed in partnership with UNICEF and WHO, among others.

Child and maternal mortality are primarily poverty-related. There are particularly close links between a woman's financial situation and the level

of prenatal care she receives. When comparing the richest 20 % of the population with the poorest 20 %, we find that the poorest children are 50 % less likely than the richest to be properly vaccinated. Inadequate health care in connection with pregnancy, childbirth and abortion in developing countries is the main cause of death among women of reproductive age. The contrasts between rich and poor countries are alarming. A woman dies every minute from complications associated with pregnancy or childbirth, adding up to half a million women each year. In Africa, one in 16 women die from complications during pregnancy or childbirth. The equivalent figure for rich countries is one in 4000. The level of maternal mortality is a good indication of the status of women in society.

Today the world is witnessing a feminisation of the AIDS epidemic. Globally, there are slightly more men than women living with the disease, but the proportion of women is increasing dramatically. This trend is particularly pronounced among young people, and girls currently account for three-quarters of all young AIDS victims in Africa. This is largely due to women's lack of control over their own bodies and sexuality.

Efforts to protect sexual health are based on fundamental human rights. The right to life and health is key. The Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out firm provisions on the right to

Box 3.8 Homophobia

«Everyone should have equal rights. Sexual orientation is just a small part of a person and should not cause them problems in any way.»

Comment signed Friicc-93, under the heading *Homophobia* («*Homorasisme*») on the Norwegian national newspaper *Aftenposten's* debate page for young people, (Si ;D) 19 September 2007.

Box 3.9 Sexual rights

WHO's working definition of sexual rights was developed at an international technical consultation on sexual health in January 2002 and subsequently revised by a group of experts. The working definition includes all persons' rights to:

- the highest attainable standard of sexual health, including access to sexual and reproductive health care services;
- seek, receive and impart information related to sexuality;
- sexuality education;
- respect for bodily integrity;
- choose their partner;
- decide to be sexually active or not;
- consensual sexual relations;
- consensual marriage;
- decide whether or not, and when, to have children; and
- pursue a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life.

health, and as the Convention applies up to the age of 18, it can be used to protect children from being forced into sexual activity, and it gives particular protection to young people who enter into sexual relations and those who become pregnant. CEDAW also contains provisions that protect life and health, with particular reference to the special needs of women.

The Government intends to take a clear and courageous stand on key issues relating to body and health, sexual orientation and gender identity and sexual rights, and family planning and fertility. The concepts sexual orientation and gender identity in this context refer to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals. The concept of sexual rights is not set out in CEDAW, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the programme of action from the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 or the platform for action from the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. It is therefore much debated, but it is Norway's view that this interpretation is in line with the intentions of the various conventions and action plans.

Sexuality is a controversial issue in many of our partner countries and in international forums, where powerful forces are undermining efforts to strengthen women's rights. This is hampering efforts to give advice on contraception, ensure access to condoms, prevent AIDS and combat unsafe abortions, and is making an integrated sectoral approach to health impossible. Norway will speak out where others are silent. We will do so in clear, unambiguous language, but where neces-

sary we will speak softly. We have to accept that these are controversial issues in many parts of the world, and that our approach must be adapted when necessary to ensure that our efforts are not counter-productive.

Efforts to promote greater tolerance for different sexual orientations and gender identities constitute an important element of Norway's policy in this field. The decriminalisation of homosexuality and the fight against all forms of discrimination and stigmatisation on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity are important in this

Box 3.11 How we work in practice

The measures that will be adopted to promote Norway's policy in this area include support for the implementation and follow-up of national, regional and international plans for sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as information and awareness-raising efforts. We will use several channels, including the education system, the health system and workplaces.

Norway will also contribute to efforts to provide family-planning and contraception advice for both sexes, and will advocate the decriminalisation of abortion as well as research relating to abortion and associated issues. We will support the development of health services at primary and district level, and advocate that safe abortion and the treatment of any complications from abortions are given priority and followed up in sector programmes and health sector reforms.

Our partners

Important partners in the health sector include the authorities, NGOs and other civil society actors. Long-standing multilateral organisations such as WHO, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are key partners, together with more recent initiatives such as the GAVI Alliance, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and the Bill & Melinda Gates and William J. Clinton Foundations. The International Planned Parenthood Federation is also an important partner.

Box 3.10 The third sex

In Nepal, Norway is seeking to improve conditions for a group that is locally referred to as the «third sex» – transsexuals. They are discriminated against and often have no other means of income than sex work. This entails a major risk of HIV infection. Norway is supporting a project based on the wishes and needs of this sexual minority, providing funding and training to enable them to work in beauty salons, and thus offering them an alternative way of earning a living. The project gives this group greater self-respect and reduces the spread of AIDS. Norway's funding is channelled via the Norwegian National Association for Lesbian and Gay Liberation.

context. In many countries, lesbians are discriminated against along similar lines to gay men.

Political will and national efforts are needed to strengthen health systems and provide adequate integrated health services that fully meet the needs of all target groups, including women and girls and sexual minorities. Developing and implementing a national health plan that takes into account women, sexual minorities and gender equality is a vital step in this work.

The Government will:

- intensify its efforts to reduce pregnancy-related mortality;
- combat feminisation of the AIDS epidemic;
- strengthen health services that reduce child mortality;
- seek to win international acceptance of the concept of sexual rights;
- fight fearlessly for the right of women to control their own bodies and sexuality;
- promote access to contraception and safe abortion on demand; and
- fight against criminalisation, discrimination and stigmatisation on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

3.5 Women are entitled to a life free of violence

Violence against women and sexual minorities is a global phenomenon; it is found in all kinds of societies, in times of war and in times of peace. But the form and the scope of such violence varies from one society to another. Violence against women and sexual minorities may have a basis in local beliefs, culture and tradition, and in many cases is tolerated and even sanctioned by society. Violence prevents women from living full lives and participating in society throughout their life course. Violence deprives women of choices, it undermines their self-confidence and self-esteem, and damages their health. Violence against women must be regarded as one of the main social mechanisms that force women into a subordinate position in relation to men. Gender-based violence and the use of force are very much a question of gaining control over women and failing to respect their human rights. Violence helps to perpetuate discrimination of women and sexual minorities in education, politics, culture and society as a whole and in relation to access to and control of financial resources. This has grave societal consequences.

Norwegian People's Aid estimates that one in three women worldwide will be subjected to violence during the course of their lives. Violence against women varies in form and severity. It includes violence in close relationships, child marriage and other forms of forced marriage, harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual abuse and harassment. It includes rape both in times of peace and in times of war, when it may be used systematically as a weapon. Trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation is also a form of violence against women. Among the most grotesque forms

Box 3.12 An alternative to female genital mutilation among Masai girls

Norway is contributing to efforts to eliminate female genital mutilation (FGM) among the Masai, a minority group in Kenya. This support is being channelled through Masai groups that are seeking to prevent the mutilation of girls and young women. The Masai have traditionally carried out FGM in connection with the rituals that mark the transition from girlhood to womanhood. Now an alternative ceremony is being offered without mutilation, where all the other local customs and traditions are retained. The girls who choose the alternative ceremony are also offered a grant for schooling.

First of all, a study of attitudes and practices in relation to FGM, other harmful traditions and AIDS was carried out with support from Norway. This was followed by an information campaign targeted at girls, families and religious and political leaders. The first alternative ceremony for girls and their families was held in December 2007, in cooperation with the local community. All the girls in the relevant age group in the villages taking part in the project chose the alternative ceremony. It is also important to underline that the families and local leaders have given their full support to this work. We hope that this is the start of a real change of attitude.

Women employees at the Norwegian Embassy have also agreed to be personal support persons for these girls. They will take part in the alternative ceremony and maintain contact with the girls through letters and personal visits.

Box 3.13 How we work in practice

Efforts to combat violence against women include integrating the gender perspective into work on legal reform and reform of the justice sector. The aim is to ensure that women's rights are respected, to protect women against violence and sexual abuse within and outside the family, and to prosecute the perpetrators. We will support awareness-raising and education campaigns, including efforts to mobilise boys and men join the fight against violence of this kind. Proactive efforts and low-threshold legal services for poor women in rural areas and deprived city areas will also be important. In addition, it is essential to ensure the rights of girls and women in the interface between state (secular) law on the one hand, and traditional or religious law and legal practices on the other. A multi-donor fund has been established in the UN to support the fight against female genital mutilation. Norway also provides funding for the UNFPA's Campaign to End Fistula. With regard to human trafficking, priority will be given to information efforts, shelters and temporary accommodation, health services, social services, and repatriation and resettlement in the country of origin. It is important to strengthen judicial systems and police efforts. We also contribute, through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), to the implementation and follow-up of the Palermo Protocol (to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime), to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

Our partners

Key partners in these efforts are national organisations that work with women and women's health, and authorities at all levels. Norwegian NGOs play an important role in this area. Important UN organisations include UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, ILO and UNIFEM. Other key partner organisations are the OSCE and NATO. In addition, Norway aligns itself with the efforts under the auspices of the EU and other international forums to combat human trafficking.

of violence are female infanticide, dowry murders and «honour» killings.

The perpetrators of violence and their victims are found at all levels of society. The overwhelming majority of perpetrators are men. Moreover, women are at greater risk from their husbands, fathers and other male relatives than they are from men they do not know. Violence against women also has serious consequences for the lives and welfare of children. It increases the probability that violent behaviour will be transferred to the next generation. It creates a vicious circle. Sons often copy their fathers' violent behaviour.

Both women and men contribute to perpetuating gender discrimination. It is women who carry out FGM, but the tradition has deep roots in families and local communities. FGM is practised in 30 countries in Africa, and in some countries in Asia and the Middle East. FGM also takes place in some immigrant communities in rich countries. In 2006, WHO estimated that some three million girls fall victim to this practice every year. This means that more than 8 200 girls are mutilated every day. WHO has also estimated that there are between 130 and 140 million girls and young women worldwide who are living with the effects of this practice. Considerable progress has been made over the last 10 – 20 years in gaining recognition, both at international level and in the countries involved, for the fact that FGM is unacceptable. Nevertheless, the scope of the problem is more or less the same as it was 10 years ago in some of the worst affected countries. Boys are also circumcised, but the consequences of male circumcision cannot be compared to the serious effects of FGM.

The Government regards FGM as an expression of the social injustice and suppression many girls and women are subject to in communities where the practice occurs. FGM is a way of gaining control of girls' and women's sexuality. The fight against FGM is thus a fight for human rights, gender equality, human dignity and integrity. Local women, men and leaders who have the courage to challenge long-standing traditions must spearhead the efforts to combat FGM. Norway must provide moral and economic support. This is a huge task that we must approach with great humility. We are convinced that it is both right and possible to eradicate FGM. But it will be a long process, not a short-term project. Our own efforts are to be stepped up. We will support our partners and carry out sensitive advocacy work. Norway and the organisations we cooperate with can provide resources, expertise and new ideas for the fight against FGM.

Box 3.14 Mobilising Sudanese women

In the same week that the parties in the civil war in Sudan signed the peace agreement in 2005, a conference, Sudanese Women and the Peace Process: Priorities and Recommendations for Women's Inclusion and Empowerment, was held in Oslo on the role of women in building peace in the country. The participants were women from Southern Sudan. The objective was to identify women's own priorities in the efforts to build lasting peace and discuss what the role of the international community should be. The conference was initiated by the Ministry and arranged and facilitated by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. UNIFEM also took part.

The conference was useful. The Sudanese women made it clear that they would like a symposium to be arranged in parallel to the Donors' Conference on Sudan where women from North and Southern Sudan could discuss issues relating to gender and gender equality in the country. They also expressed a clear wish that Norway should exert pressure on the Sudanese parties to include women in the official delegations. Norway did so, but in the first instance this target was not achieved.

The Symposium on Women's Rights and Leadership in Post-conflict Sudan that was duly held in connection with the Donors' Conference in Oslo in April 2005 was a success. Some 50 women from North and Southern Sudan took part, in addition to representatives from the UN system.

The main objective was to bring these women together so that they could identify ways of promoting women's rights and leadership, and gain recognition of women's rights and needs from the Donors' Conference. The Sudanese women drew up a document setting out their joint priorities, which included the need for security, amendments to legislation, economic support and health services. The two Vice Presidents of Sudan took part in the concluding session of the symposium, and committed themselves to promoting women's rights. The women also had the opportunity to read out their joint priorities at the Donors' Conference. Never before has a conference of this type put such strong focus on the needs and capacity of women. As a result of the efforts of the women themselves, Norwegian pressure and intense media coverage, several of these women were finally included in the formal delegations. According to UNIFEM, this has set a precedent for the participation of women in future donor conferences and has set a new benchmark for the inclusion of women's rights and gender equality on the agenda. The conference was a milestone for UNIFEM itself; it was the first time the Fund had the opportunity to send a separate delegation and take part in a donor conference with full rights.

Human trafficking is the second largest form of organised crime in the world. The UN estimates that the total income from human trafficking amounts to some NOK 40 billion, and that around four million women and children become victims of trafficking every year. The victims live in slave-like conditions. They include men as well as women and children, and they are exploited by means of violence, threats, the use of force and degradation. Victims are forced to beg, or to work as prostitutes or forced labourers, often in private households. The trade in human organs is another grotesque example of exploitation.

The ILO maintains that around 12 million people worldwide are trapped in forced labour or have been subject to what is known as social dumping.

Some 2.4 million of these are estimated to be victims of human trafficking. Most of these end up in western industrialised countries where there is a high demand for cheap labour coupled with restrictive immigration policies, and criminal groups can make huge profits from human trafficking. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable. The OSCE has estimated that at least 500 000 girls and women are sold into prostitution in Europe every year.

The Government will seek to combat the increasingly extensive trafficking in persons. The Government's policy platform stakes out the course for these efforts, which focus on the underlying causes of human trafficking, such as poverty, conflicts, social exclusion and marginalisation. These affect women in particular and make them

vulnerable to recruitment by traffickers. The fight against human trafficking is part of the Government's increased focus on development policy. The projects supported seek to give victims the opportunity to lead a decent life, free from coercion and exploitation.

In order to fight human trafficking, it is essential to limit recruitment and demand, provide assistance and protection to victims, increase the numbers of perpetrators that are exposed and prosecuted, and improve knowledge and cross-sector cooperation. Better international cooperation and frameworks are also necessary. Political and diplomatic initiatives in the international arena will be among Norway's main priorities.

The Government will:

- contribute to combating violence against women;
- help to ensure effective prosecution of perpetrators of all forms of violence against women;
- play both a leading and a supporting role in the fight against female genital mutilation;
- take part in efforts to combat forced marriage; and
- give clear support to the fight against human trafficking at the international level.

3.6 Women are to have an equal role in peace and reconciliation efforts

A common feature of most violent conflicts today is that the civilian population is subjected to gross and often systematic abuse. Women and children make up most of the civilian population, and they are particularly severely affected. Their everyday lives are brutalised through the lawlessness that

characterises conflict situations and many post-conflict situations. Systematic rape is widespread. Large numbers of children are abducted in many conflict areas. Boys are forced to become soldiers, and girls are forced to become «soldiers wives» or sex slaves.

Women tend not to be included in decision-making processes in connection with conflict resolution and peace settlements. They are usually excluded from all forums – local, national and international – where decisions on peace and security are taken.

War and conflict affect women, men, boys and girls in different ways. The Norwegian Government's *Action Plan for the Implementation of UN*

Box 3.16 How we work in practice

Relevant measures include carrying out analyses to make it possible for the needs of girls and women to be taken into account during post-conflict reconstruction and in connection with demobilisation and reintegration. We will direct attention to ensuring opportunities for children to attend school even during times of war and conflict. We will also implement extensive measures to combat violence in the family and the local community. Emphasis is also to be given to women's needs in connection with security sector reform.

Norway has contributed to strengthening the UN's Peacebuilding Support Office through providing expertise on gender equality issues. In connection with its responsibility as Chair of the UN Peacebuilding Commission's work in Burundi, Norway has taken steps to facilitate the active participation of women's groups in the peacebuilding process. Norway requires that the humanitarian organisations, other NGOs, church networks and other faith-based organisations that it supports make active and focused efforts to safeguard the rights of women and children before, during and after conflicts.

Our partners

Key partners in this work include several UN organisations, such as UNHCR, UNIFEM and UNICEF, in addition to NATO and civil society.

Box 3.15 Rape is a war crime

«Impunity for perpetrators and insufficient response to the needs of survivors are morally reprehensible and unacceptable. Sexual violence in conflict, particularly rape, should be named for what it is: not a private act or the unfortunate misbehaviour of a renegade soldier, but aggression, torture, war crime and genocide.»

Rachel Mayanja, UN Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, 24 October 2007.

Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security is to serve as a guide for all Norwegian conflict prevention and peace-building efforts. Norway will integrate this perspective into the planning, implementation and evaluation of Norwegian conflict prevention and peace and reconciliation work.

Women's initiatives for peace and reconciliation are to be recognised and followed up. The needs and interests of girls and women are to be safeguarded during armed conflicts and humanitarian crises. In order to create a good and equitable foundation for peace, democracy and development, it is absolutely necessary to utilise the experience, knowledge and resources of both sexes.

The Government will:

- seek to ensure that women's expertise and capacity are fully utilised in conflict prevention and peace and reconstruction processes;
- seek to ensure the protection of women and children in armed conflicts;

- combat the use of sexual violence and rape as weapons of war and armed conflicts; and
- exercise zero tolerance for sexual abuse on the part of international peacekeeping forces, aid workers and humanitarian relief workers.

3.7 Women and men are to participate on equal terms in efforts to combat climate change, environmental degradation and humanitarian crises

Adaptation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction are central to efforts to address climate change and ensure sustainable management of resources. It is the poorest countries that will be hardest hit by climate change and that have the least capacity for adaptation. Adaptation is an integral part and a natural extension of the development cooperation that has aimed to reduce vulnerability. Women often have extensive knowledge of local natural resources, food security and strategies for preventing and reducing vulnerability to

Box 3.17 Sexual abuse as a weapon of war in Eastern Congo

Tens of thousands of people have fled their homes in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The humanitarian situation is critical. The lack of protection for civilians is the most pressing humanitarian problem, especially in Eastern Congo, where a culture of sexual and gender-based violence has developed. Rape and other forms of abuse of women and children are common, and are being used as a weapon by all armed groups. Obstetric fistula is common among women who have been subjected to these crimes. Rape causes serious trauma. Families and local communities are destroyed. The failure of the legal system and the fact that the perpetrators of these crimes enjoy impunity further exacerbates this problem in Eastern Congo.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Christian Relief Network (CRN) are two of several humanitarian organisations that receive support from Norway for humanitarian efforts among internally displaced persons (IDPs) in DR Congo. CRN seeks to identify, advise, evacuate, treat and rehabilitate rape victims in IDP camps. It carries out this work through a local network of churches that

is extensively involved in health projects in the country. It has used Norwegian funds to support a dedicated fistula department at the local hospital and to provide emergency equipment for pregnant women and women who give birth in IDP camps.

The Norwegian Refugee Council concentrates on internally displaced persons in the camps around Goma. The majority of IDPs are women and children. In its work on camp management, NRC has carried out analyses and taken into consideration the needs and roles of both men and women. For example, it is necessary to know who is the head of the family in connection with distribution of food and emergency relief supplies. NRC ensures that both men and women are given training in camp management, and that they are equally represented in the administration of camps. Special protection measures are implemented for women and children, including separate sanitation facilities. The security situation is being evaluated with a view to preventing violence against women and children. Having access to water and schools within walking distance is also important.

Box 3.18 How we work in practice

Important measures to strengthen the role, empowerment and rights of women with regard to natural resources management and adaptation to climate change include carrying out analyses and collecting information about the situation of women in vulnerable areas. Furthermore it is important to ensure women's property and user rights to land, and to focus on capacity-building and education to strengthen women's position in decision-making processes. In order to improve the position of women in disaster risk reduction efforts, it is important to ensure that information on traditional strategies for survival and food security is systematically gathered from women. It is also important to promote support and credit schemes for women affected by natural disasters.

Our partners

Important partners in these efforts are NGOs in Norway and in our partner countries, UNEP and UNDP.

extreme weather events such as droughts, floods and landslides. This knowledge should be utilised when developing climate adaptation strategies. At the same time, women are among the groups that are particularly vulnerable to climate change, partly because they often have the main responsibility for food production, water and fuel for the family. Women therefore have an important role to play in reducing vulnerability and addressing the effects of natural disasters and climate change, and their participation will be vital.

As a result of climate change, the number and scale of humanitarian disasters will increase. Women are important actors, and should be involved in efforts to reduce risk and make local communities more resilient, at all levels. Women

have acquired experience in dealing with extreme weather situations such as droughts and floods. In many situations, women's traditional knowledge of food security and emergency preparedness will be decisive for reducing vulnerability to the effects of climate change. Women must therefore participate more fully than they do today in work related to climate change, the environment, and humanitarian disasters.

Disasters tend to affect women more severely than men. A simple statistic from the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 illustrates this point. Between 70 % and 80 % of those who died as a result of the tsunami were women. One of the reasons for this disproportionate figure is the low status of women and the lack of gender equality in the societies affected. The greater vulnerability of women is also due to social norms. Women and children tend to spend more time than men indoors, in poorly constructed homes. In some societies, tradition forbids women to leave home unless they are accompanied by a man, even when a disaster strikes. In societies where women's rights and freedom of movement are limited, a higher proportion of women and children will die in disasters.

The Government will:

- promote women's influence within natural resources management and adaptation to climate change;
- seek to ensure that women's needs are met in emergency situations; and
- seek to ensure that women's knowledge and resources are utilised in humanitarian crises.

*The Ministry of Foreign Affairs**h e r e b y r e c o m m e n d s :*

That the Recommendation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning On Equal Terms: Women's rights and gender equality in international development policy dated 18 January 2008 should be submitted to the Norwegian Parliament, Stortinget.

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