



# NORWAY

**General Assembly**  
62nd Session

**Third Committee**

**Item 66 a & b: Promotion and protection of the rights of children**

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## STATEMENT

By

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**New York, 18 October 2007**

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Mr Chairman,

This year is a landmark year with several opportunities to advance the implementation of the rights of the child. It marks the 18th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Furthermore it marks 5 years since the entry into force of the two Optional Protocols to the CRC on the involvement of Children in armed conflict and the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. Also we have before us the Machel study 10 year strategic review on children and conflict in a changing world as well as the first progress report on the follow up to the groundbreaking UN study on Violence against children. In a few weeks the UN will convene commemorative high-level plenary meetings on the follow up to the outcome of the special session on Children in 2002. All of this provides the UN system, regional organisations, governments, civil society and children and young persons themselves to reflect upon achievements and challenges relating to child rights concerns.

There have indeed been significant improvements for children's survival, well being and development world wide - all which are central to the Convention of the Rights of the Child. But progress is not even when it comes to the prospects of achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals that directly and indirectly relate to children. Main hindrances should be documented and inform policies and programs to guide the way forward.

Too many children world wide are without birth registration, are subject to social exclusion, and abuse and extreme forms of exploitation. Children affected by armed conflict are among the many millions that are denied access to health services and education. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister of Norway an international partnership of governments, the UN and the private sector actors now works strategically towards reaching the MDGs 4, 5 and 6. Norway is also actively engaged in the Education for All process and will host the High Level Group Meeting in cooperation with UNESCO and founding agencies in 2008. Children are killed and maimed due to landmines and cluster munitions even long after conflicts have ceased. Earlier this year Norway initiated an international process aiming at banning cluster munitions which have unacceptable humanitarian consequences. This will not least benefit children and young persons living in situations affected by conflict.

Mr Chairman,

Renewed resolve is needed to close the gaps between the norms of the CRC and related instruments and their implementation. Impunity must not be allowed to prevail. This is not least vital with respect to systematic acts of sexual violence against girls committed in armed conflict. The Secretary General's report on the Girl Child deserves our utmost attention. The findings of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, of the many other treaty bodies, special procedures and in the reports to the most recent Commission on the Status of Women highlight multiple forms of discrimination and practices that disproportionately affect girls. In this regard due attention should be paid to the recommendations of the UN study on violence against children calling on states to address all forms of gender discrimination as part of a comprehensive violence prevention strategy.

Mr Chairman,

The Convention on the rights of the Child has inspired governments world wide to take legal, administrative and other measures to secure the rights of the child and to promote the principle of the best interest of the child. In order for the CRC to truly impact on children's lives governments should, however, go beyond ratification. The CRC should be incorporated into national legislation for child protection. In Norway this is done through the Human Rights Act and the CRC also prevails in case of conflict with other national legislation. Thus the CRC is a living instrument.

Mr Chairman,

Thanks to the initiative of the Committee on the Rights of the Child the two landmark UN studies notably the Machel Study on Children and armed Conflict that came in 1996 and the UN Study on violence against children, lead by Professor Pinheiro and launched in 2006 have provided the

international community with crucial analysis and tools to build a world safe from violence and fit for children and young persons.

The extent and nature of violence against children as depicted in the World report on Violence against Children presented by Professor Pinheiro and the ways forward as recommended in the report, deserve worldwide urgent attention and follow up action. Norway favours a strong mandate for an independent high level advocate to lead the international efforts in close cooperation with key organisations, agencies and funds and programs such as UNICEF, WHO and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and ILO and drawing on their capacities as well as civil society and the continued involvement of children and young persons.

Yesterday the very powerful launch of the Machel Study 10 year strategic review of children and conflict in a changing world took place. Norway indeed welcomes the Machel study and the first part of the 10-year strategic review and wishes to be a strategic partner in the follow up. The wishes of the young persons who themselves have lived in conflict zones, as expressed in the Youth report, "Will you Listen", are concrete and implement able. They must be an integral part of the follow up of 10 Year strategic review and young persons should continue to be involved in this process.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Norway would like to make a few observations relating to the forthcoming commemorative + 5 meeting to the Special session of the General Assembly on children. In our view the agenda and the proposed roundtables should provide prominent attention to the protection of child rights and address child protection concerns in an integrated and strategic manner.

The meeting may in particular add value to the protection of child rights by addressing ways of promoting child participation and how to empower the duty holders, the children and young persons, in line with a central principle of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Participation of children is not only the right to be heard, to be seen and to be taken seriously; it is the right to be informed and to have the possibility to influence. Evidence from our own part of the world suggests that progress in implementing the right to participation is slow. There is a gap between theory and practice. Yet child participation is key to successful implementation of the many other rights of the child such as education, health and protection from violence abuse and exploitation – all which are all key elements of the Declaration and Plan of Action, "A World Fit for Children".

In preparing for the commemorative + 5 December meetings Norway suggests that member states and the UN system devote special attention to experiences and implementation of effective participation in various contexts. This would contribute to making 2007 a landmark year for child rights and child protection.

Thank you.