

## Financing for Development. Review of Chapter 4 ODA

### Intervention by Norway

16 April 2008

Thank you, Mr. Co-chair, for giving me the floor. Let me join other delegations in complementing yourself and your colleague for steering us through this review process. I also commend the panelists for their contributions yesterday.

The government of Norway is well aware that development assistance alone cannot lift large groups of people out of poverty. Due attention should be paid to at least three other important factors, all of which are national:

- a well-functioning state that safeguards peace, security and human rights, delivers basic services to the population, and ensures that there are good conditions for healthy economic activity and trade;
- an active business sector; and
- a vibrant civil society, with free media and active pressure groups.

Even so, the level of ODA obviously plays a crucial role – and this is the subject of our discussion today.

The Norwegian Government would like to see donor countries increase their allocations to development cooperation, in line with previous commitments, and with renewed and time-bound commitments. My delegation therefore welcomes announcements that have been made during this discussion, as well as observations by the speakers yesterday about certain positive developments in this regard.

Norway's own objective is to increase our ODA in 2008 by NOK 1.5 billion, equivalent to nearly 300 million USD. This would bring the total for 2008 to 0.98 per cent of our GNI.

Norway's development cooperation work will continue to be guided by the principles of national ownership, alignment with recipient countries' own structures, harmonization among donors, results-based management and mutual accountability.

It should not come as a surprise that Norway is concerned about the *quality* of aid as well as the *effectiveness* in which aid is provided. This brings me to the Paris Declaration and the implementation of the Accra Agenda for Action.

The Declaration contains commitments by developing as well as developed countries. The Norwegian government strongly emphasizes that all countries are responsible for their own development. The effectiveness of development assistance depends primarily on the efforts of political leaders, public institutions, the private sector and civil society in each country. By

supporting these actors in their efforts to promote pro-poor development, Norway is working to ensure that development goes in the right direction.

The international preparations for the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness indicate that we are on the right track - even though advancements are rather slow.

However, several challenges emerge. One of them is to cater for a strengthening and streamlining of the administrative structures of the recipient countries, rather than creating parallel systems in the UN. Secure genuine ownership of the developing countries is another challenge facing us. It is crucial that the donors, the UN included, base their efforts on national plans and strategies. This is particularly important in vulnerable states, where UN and the international financial institutions must work together with the national governments in a tight-knit relationship.

My delegation would also like to see an increased focus on developing open, transparent mechanisms in recipient countries that allow their citizens to better hold their governments and donors to account for the use of aid.

In preparing for Accra, Norway continues to emphasize the *political* aspects of the Paris Declaration. My government would warn against the High Level Forum becoming too focused on technical details.

Mr. Co-chair,

Let me turn to another important aspect of international development: the need to mobilise ODA for equality and the empowerment of women. During the 2008 Commission on the Status of Women, an international panel of experts recommended that the share of ODA for women's empowerment and gender equality should be scaled up to reach 10 per cent of ODA by 2010 and 20 per cent by 2015. These are modest, yet important, ambitions.

Allow me to quote the Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, who in a speech to ECOSOC members in July 2006 stated that "*the greatest gains countries can achieve, economically as well as politically, come with empowering women, ensuring equal opportunity, health care, and increasing the ration of women's active participation in working life*".

The discussion of the recent meeting of the CSW directly addressed the gap between global policies and national-level implementation, as highlighted in the ten-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2005. Clearly, access to resources is a critical element in reducing this gap.

Norway appeals to all stakeholders, when preparing for Doha, to give due attention to gender issues.