



**International Convention on
the Elimination
of all Forms of
Racial Discrimination**

Distr.
GENERAL

CERD/C/SR.1775
5 September 2006

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Sixty-ninth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1775th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 11 August 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. de GOUTTES

CONTENTS

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY
STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (continued)

Seventeenth and eighteenth periodic reports of Norway (continued)

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Any corrections to the records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

GE.06-43703 (E) 150806 050906

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 4) (continued)

Seventeenth and eighteenth periodic reports of Norway (CERD/C/497/Add.1; HRI/CORE/1/Add.6) (continued)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of Norway resumed their places at the Committee table.
2. Mr. CALI TSAY enquired what progress had been made with regard to the revision of the 1978 Reindeer Herding Act. He also wished to know whether specific safeguards were in place to protect grazing rights. He commended the State party on its affirmative action measures, especially the establishment of the bilingual Inner Finnmark District Court in Tana and the formal recognition of the establishment of the Norwegian State on the territory of both the Saami and the Norwegian people.
3. He would be interested to learn of the reasons for choosing Kautokeino as the location for the Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, considering that its remoteness limited accessibility for the general Norwegian public.
4. Mr. ABOUL-NASR asked how many Saami languages existed.
5. Ms. LUDVIGSEN (Norwegian Centre for Human Rights) gave a brief overview of the functions and competencies of the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights.
6. Norway had thus far failed to implement the Committee's recommendation to incorporate the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in the Human Rights Act to give its provisions full legal effect. The Convention was currently being implemented by virtue of the Anti-Discrimination Act. However, the Government had stated that international instruments that were not enunciated in the Human Rights Act were given precedence over domestic law only in "very particular cases". Similarly, despite an express promise made by the new Government in October 2005 to incorporate the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Human Rights Act, it was currently being implemented through the Gender Equality Act.
7. There was no obvious reason for denying the above-mentioned Conventions the same legal status as that enjoyed by other international instruments. The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights therefore strongly encouraged the Norwegian authorities to amend section 2 of the Human Rights Act to remedy those shortcomings.
8. Mr. CHRISTENSEN (Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud) said that his office was mandated to provide legal advice, investigate complaints and cases taken up on its own initiative, and issue relevant decisions. All services were provided free of charge. The institution was further tasked to promote equality through monitoring, reporting and awareness-raising activities and to provide guidance on ethnic diversity to employers.

9. Since its establishment in January 2006, the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud had received an unexpectedly low number of complaints. The main reason might be that minority communities were largely unaware of the Anti-Discrimination Act and its implementation mechanism. Measures would need to be taken to heighten awareness and encourage the population to use the new system.
10. Gaining first-hand experience of the Committee's work by attending its consideration of Norway's periodic report would, he hoped, help identify workable solutions to assist the Ombud's monitoring functions. One option could be to issue an annual report on the implementation of the Convention that included information concerning, for example, cases brought before the Ombud and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal or the response of the judiciary to complaints of racist speech.
11. Thus far no complaints had been received in relation to the so-called "stop and search" practice used by the police. The Ombud had nevertheless approached the police authorities to investigate media reports of discriminatory treatment of persons belonging to ethnic minorities. Both the Oslo police authorities and the Police Directorate had acknowledged the problem, stating that remedial measures had been taken. Nevertheless, any complaints received in relation to such practices would be investigated in order to determine whether the police violated anti-discrimination legislation.
12. Mr. WILLE (Norway) said that the Finnmark Act fully complied with International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, other pertinent international instruments and bilateral agreements concerning fishing in transboundary watercourses. The Act recognized collective and individual land rights of the Saami people, including those acquired by reindeer herders. In response to the criticism voiced by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples and others in respect of the initial draft, and following extensive consultations with the Saami Parliament, the Finnmark County Council and the Storting's Standing Committee on Justice, the bill had been amended to ensure compliance with the above-mentioned instruments.
13. The Act provided for the establishment of the Finnmark Commission to investigate rights of use and ownership of land transferred to the Finnmark Estate. The Commission was envisaged as an independent mechanism which, unlike a court of law, would be competent to investigate cases without the need for a complaint. It would prepare reports on its investigations; the Finnmark Estate would be obliged to provide a written statement concerning the use of the land referred to in the report. Should no settlement be reached on rights in areas investigated by the Commission, the case would be referred to the Uncultivated Land Tribunal for Finnmark.
14. A committee had been set up to discuss the long-standing proposal concerning a Nordic Saami convention. The committee was presided over by the former Chief Justice of Norway and composed of one Saami and one government representative from each of the countries concerned. Its recently published report had been disseminated to the Saami Parliament and relevant government bodies for comments. Once the different stakeholders had defined their position, a meeting would be convened to discuss options for drafting a convention.

15. Norway was proud of being a multicultural, “binational” State established on the territory of two peoples. However, no specific agreements had been concluded in that regard.

16. The Government had agreed to amend the 1978 Reindeer Herding Act. One of the main difficulties for reindeer herders was the shortage of grazing land. A range of affirmative action measures had been taken and annual subsidies were granted to alleviate that community’s economic distress.

17. The Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples had been established in Kautokeino at the express request of the Saami Parliament; its main function was to enhance general knowledge about indigenous peoples. The Centre maintained a comprehensive website and carried out activities throughout Norway and beyond, thus offsetting the remoteness of its location.

18. The Saami language was generally divided into Northern Saami and Southern Saami. However, since Southern Saami was rarely used, references to the Saami language normally concerned Northern Saami.

19. Norwegian legislation restricted the collection of data disaggregated by ethnicity, partly in response to relevant requests by ethnic minorities. However, statistics on immigrant populations, which included information on the country of birth, allowed for limited conclusions concerning the ethnic, linguistic and religious background of any population group. Immigrants accounted for approximately 8.3 per cent of the total population. A distinction was drawn between different generations of immigrants and the nature of their immigrant status according to their place of birth and their parents’ nationality.

20. An estimated 40,000 persons were Saami. However, the only criteria used to establish who belonged to that community were those set forth in the requirements for registration in the Saami electoral register. Statistics on the number of persons belonging to the Saami community were imprecise, because they relied primarily on self-identification. Moreover, many Saami had intermarried with Norwegians. Recognized national minorities included an estimated 800 Jews; 10,000 to 15,000 Kvens; 400 Roma or “Gypsies”; 4,000 Romani people or “Travellers”; and 200 Skogfinns.

21. Ms. BAKKEN (Norway) said that there was ongoing debate about the classification of persons as immigrants for statistical purposes. Opinions diverged, for example, on the generations that should be termed “immigrant”. Data collection was hampered by the absence of a system of self-identification. Immigrants had been categorized as either “Western” and “non-Western”, since the immigrant population was small and individual groups were too insignificant in numbers for any meaningful data collection.

22. Annual surveys were being conducted on Norwegians’ attitude towards immigrants. The 2005 survey had yielded the following results: 7 out of 10 people thought that immigrants made an important contribution to working life in Norway; 5 out of 10 thought that they did not abuse the social welfare system; 5 out of 10 did not consider that immigrants caused insecurity in society; 9 out of 10 would not mind having an immigrant as a neighbour. A study on the living conditions of immigrants was due to be published in 2007.

23. Mr. Thornberry and Mr. Valencia Rodriguez had asked what Norwegians thought “being a Norwegian” meant. The traditional idea that all Norwegians had blonde hair and blue eyes was certainly not true, but all Norwegians were expected to obey the same set of laws, share the same core values and enjoy the same rights and opportunities.

24. Mr. Thornberry and Mr. Pillai had referred with concern to the reports on racism and discrimination described in paragraphs 90 and 92 of the periodic report. A number of measures had been taken in the light of those reports, including to adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Act. In reply to Mr. Pillai’s query regarding the assertion in paragraph 92 of the report that the problems were “particularly linked to individuals who have a negative impact on the everyday life of ethnic minorities”, she commented that the evidence for that statement seemed to be largely anecdotal.

25. Mr. Thornberry had asked about the language lessons which were a prerequisite for obtaining Norwegian citizenship. From September 2005, applicants for citizenship were obliged either to attend 300 hours of instruction in Norwegian language and culture, or to pass an examination in Norwegian or Saami.

26. Mr. Valencia Rodriguez had asked about the citizenship status of an illegitimate child with only one Norwegian parent. A child in that position would have Norwegian nationality, and possibly the nationality of the other parent as well.

27. As Mr. Thornberry had noted, there was no reporting on segregation in Norway. In some suburbs of Oslo, there were large immigrant populations with low incomes and high rates of unemployment. The Government was due to launch an action plan for the integration and inclusion of the immigrant population in the autumn of 2006. More details would be provided in Norway’s next periodic report.

28. The aim of the measures taken to improve employment rates among immigrants (paragraph 209 of the periodic report) was to help immigrants to become self-reliant as soon as possible. Currently employment rates in that group were low, which might be due to discrimination or other factors: employers were still reluctant to employ immigrants, even in posts where their international experience might prove useful. Immigrants, along with disabled people, young people and the long-term unemployed, were given priority in labour market measures, including follow-up measures for those who succeeded in finding a job.

29. Replying to Mr. Kjaerum’s questions about the education of immigrants, she said that the results achieved by young people of immigrant origin in upper secondary school and in higher education were similar to those of ethnic Norwegians. However, they were still underrepresented at the upper secondary school level. A programme focusing on vocational training for young immigrant boys - a group with a high dropout rate - was scheduled for the autumn of 2006.

30. The Introductory Act for newly arrived immigrants from refugee backgrounds (paragraph 36 of the periodic report) had been in force for about two years. Some 50 per cent of the participants had gone on to employment or further learning. The impact of the Act was to be evaluated in the autumn of 2006, and more details would be included in the next periodic report.

31. Ms. RØNNINGEN (Denmark), replying to questions about the new Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, acknowledged the danger that a single office dealing with all forms of discrimination might not have sufficient expertise in specialized areas such as racism. However, a multidisciplinary approach had its advantages, since many cases of discrimination had multiple causes. The Ombud was expected to promote equality and combat discrimination by ruling on complaints, providing information on legal rights and responsibilities to employers and the general public and monitoring discrimination trends. The office was also responsible for monitoring the compliance of Norwegian legislation and administrative practice with the provisions of the Convention.

32. Mr. Thornberry had asked about the use of the term “race” in Norwegian legislation. The Anti-Discrimination Act did not use the term, and the Penal Code (sects. 135a and 349a) and housing legislation had been amended in order to ensure consistency of terminology. The amendment to the legislation on the sale of alcoholic beverages mentioned in paragraph 64 of the report had entered into force in January 2006. If there was more than one incident of discrimination at an establishment which served alcohol, its licence could be withdrawn.

33. Replying to a question from the Chairperson, she said that the Anti-Discrimination Act provided for a shared burden of proof, in the sense that an act of discrimination would be regarded as proved unless the person who had committed the act could show that no discrimination had occurred. That rule was intended to protect the interests of people who had suffered discrimination. There had not been any cases of “situational testing” in Norway - where an official pretended to be an immigrant to see whether discrimination would occur - but she knew of a similar case in Sweden which had led to a conviction.

34. Turning to Mr. Avtonomov’s question about the measures to protect women from domestic violence, she said that under the Immigration Act a foreign woman might be granted a residence permit in her own right if she had “clear reason” to fear violence or abuse from her Norwegian husband. However, no mechanism had yet been adopted to implement that provision. The immigration authorities needed evidence of the risk incurred by the woman, such as evidence of the husband’s conviction for assault, but in some cases other evidence, for instance evidence that the husband’s previous partners had reported him to the police or contacted a battered women’s shelter, might be sufficient.

35. Replying to a question from Mr. Thornberry, she said that the evaluation of the Immigration Appeals Board mentioned in paragraph 34 of the report had concentrated on the operation of the Board rather than on related legislation.

36. Mr. NORDRUM (Norway) replied to questions by Mr. Thornberry and Mr. Valencia Rodriguez about the incorporation of the provisions of the Convention through the Anti-Discrimination Act rather than the Human Rights Act. The Government believed that there were no discrepancies between the Human Rights Act and the Convention: in any case, if a conflict should arise between the two in a particular case, the court would set aside the domestic legislation in favour of the international instrument, in line with the principle of “presumed consistency” between domestic and international legislation. There were no cases where domestic legislation had been upheld over international law, since Norway took its international legal obligations very seriously. Even in the Sjølie case (Communication No. 30/2003, Jewish community of Oslo et al. v. Norway, document CERD/C/67/D/30/2003), the Government had

been criticized for misconstruing the provisions of the Convention rather than for not applying it at all. The legal consequences would accordingly be the same whether the Convention was incorporated through the Anti-Discrimination Act or the Human Rights Act.

37. Replying to Mr. Thornberry's question about the definition of terrorism in the Penal Code, he said that legislators had carefully considered the implications for human rights of the relevant provisions, sections 147a and 147b of the Penal Code. The definition deliberately applied to acts of terrorism, rather than to terrorist groups, in order to reduce the risk of discrimination.

38. There were no legal provisions obliging people either to keep their existing name or to change their name. A law in that respect had been passed in 2003, but it had not changed the existing legal position.

39. Racist organizations had not been formally banned. In the Government's opinion, such a step would add nothing to the existing legal protection. It might even work in the organizations' interests: they were often so loosely structured that they could evade being defined as a racist organization and might thus be able to claim a spurious legitimacy.

40. Section 15 of the Anti-Discrimination Act penalized acts of discrimination or harassment, when carried out jointly by two or more persons. The legislators had made it clear in their travaux préparatoires that they had in mind the ban on racist organizations contained in the Convention. In any case, acts carried out by more than one person were likely to be more serious.

41. Mr. Valencia Rodriguez had asked whether the ban on racist threats and insults in section 135a of the Penal Code extended to the Press and the Internet. In 2003, the concept of "dissemination" of racist messages had been extended to include racist symbols, such as the swastika. Section 17 of the Anti-Discrimination Act amended section 135a of the Penal Code to include communications which could potentially reach a large number of people: it was not necessary to prove that they had actually done so. The new provision applied to posters, radio, television and the Internet.

42. Turning to questions from Mr. Tang and Mr. Pillai relating to article 100 of the Constitution and freedom of opinion, he said that the Sjølie case had shown where to draw the line with regard to freedom of speech. There was a consensus in Norwegian society about the need to protect against racist utterances; the Commission on Freedom of Speech had taken up the issue and article 100 of the Constitution and section 135a of the Penal Code had been amended. Article 100 of the Constitution currently protected freedom of speech but in the context of values such as the search for truth, democracy and the individual's free formation of opinions. Article 100 as amended was in compliance with Norway's international obligations and would provide guidance to the courts in dealing with racist utterances and to legislators in preparing laws relating to issues such as censorship. Article 100 of the Constitution and section 135a of the Penal Code together provided sufficient guarantees under domestic law that racist utterances would be prosecuted.

43. Ms. BAKKEN (Norway) said her Government was not satisfied with the number of recruits of ethnic origin in the police and correctional services. That situation was being

reviewed; an advisory group of police officers of ethnic origin had been formed to discuss the problem and chiefs of police had also been consulted. The police officers had identified problems such as subtle discrimination, exclusion and lack of trust, whereas the chiefs of police had reported difficulties arising from cooperation with ethnic police officers and communication, even though all recruits underwent language testing. The police service had organized a working group to study the problem and one individual had been assigned to work on it full-time. A joint project between the correctional services and the police had been implemented to encourage recruitment of minorities. The possibility of launching a formal research project was also under consideration.

44. In reply to questions by Mr. Valencia Rodriguez and Mr. Pillai about the Internet, she said that the police Internet site focussed on discrimination, drugs, domestic violence and trafficking. The site included a link to information on how to file a complaint about police behaviour but did not tell users that it was also possible to file a complaint with the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud; she had contacted the Police Directorate and that omission would be rectified. In addition, the National Criminal Investigation Service (Kripas) had established a racism hotline in 2004. Approximately 200 calls had been received; only two had been serious enough to warrant investigation and no grounds for criminal prosecution had been found. Access to the hotline was not particularly user-friendly and ways were being studied to improve access. The Service monitored the Internet for racist content.

45. As noted by Mr. Yutzis, the report underscored the problem of recruiting minorities in the correctional services (para. 172). Language skills, especially written skills, had been identified as the main problem. The correctional services had been instructed to reselect applicants with a view to focussing on target groups. She agreed with the Chairperson that the judicial system and police, including at the level of the officers on patrol, must be made aware of racism issues. Resources would be allocated to increase training and the full-time individual assigned to address discrimination issues within the police and correctional services would also be addressing that issue.

46. Ms. ERVIK (Norway), replying to Mr. Thornberry, said that in June 2004 the Romani People's Fund, with a capital of 75 million kroner, had been established to provide compensation to the Romani people for earlier injustices. The annual revenue from the Fund, nearly 4 million kroner, would be used to promote understanding of the Romani and to preserve their culture and language, as well as to fund a centre for providing legal and other assistance to the Romani and other projects. The Fund would be managed by a board, including representatives of the Romani, which would be appointed by the Minister of Labour in consultation with Romani groups.

47. The Fund itself would not provide compensation for individuals but in April 2005 the Parliament had approved a system to make compensation payments. Compensation would be awarded even if the injustice, such as forced sterilization or settlement, had been legal at the time it had occurred; when deciding whether compensation was justified, the situation of the Romani needed to be compared to that of the population as a whole and not to other disadvantaged groups or Romani. If the claimant was unable to supply documentary evidence of the injustice then their personal testimony should suffice. Several claims for compensation based on abuses such as forced sterilization or settlement were currently being processed and compensation would probably be paid before the end of the year.

48. With regard to the question from Mr. Yutzis about programmes to reduce the influence of neo-Nazi groups among young people in the Oslo districts of Nordstrand and Bøler, she said that since the Urban Youth Projects and Exit programmes had been successful, funding had been discontinued. There no longer seemed to be any neo-Nazi activity in the two districts in question. Measures that had contributed to the positive result included: immediate response to racist incidents by the police; assignment of field workers to work with youths; interdisciplinary coordination; patrols by adult volunteers at night; education and employment assistance for youth members of neo-Nazi groups; and organization of parent groups. As a result of the experience gained, local authorities were better qualified to help young people at risk. Her Government would continue to work with local authorities and civil society organizations to monitor the situation closely with a view to taking whatever measures necessary if further incidents occurred.

49. The CHAIRPERSON, speaking in his personal capacity, reiterated the importance of eliminating racism from the police and the justice system. In that regard, he urged the State party to review the Committee's general recommendations XIII on training of law enforcement officials in the protection of human rights and XXXI on the prevention of racial discrimination in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system.

50. Mr. YUTZIS said the State party was wrong to argue that collecting data on and identifying minority and ethnic groups might contribute to racism. That very attitude could be taken to imply that there was some stigma attached to being a member of a minority or ethnic group. He stressed that, on the contrary, in a truly free and tolerant society, no one should fear or hesitate to identify himself with a particular group. He also cautioned against categorizing peoples or groups according to civilization or origin, for example Western and non-Western. At a time of growing globalization and cultural and commercial exchange, interaction among the peoples of the world would continue to increase in spite of the persistence of discriminatory attitudes. He welcomed the State party's commitment to continued vigilance with regard to any recurrence of neo-Nazi activities.

51. He thanked the delegation for the information provided on the current size of the Saami population; the next report should include information on the process applied for the granting of licences for the development of Saami territories and for the sale of land in those territories. He urged the State party to strengthen language training programmes in order to ensure that minority group candidates for positions with the correctional services and police would be able to compete on an equal footing with native Norwegians.

52. Mr. EWOMSAN said that at a time when the global village was truly becoming a reality, the persistence of racism and racial discrimination was a perplexing phenomenon. Legislative measures alone would not suffice to eliminate racism; education and awareness-raising were the keys to promoting a true culture of openness and tolerance among and for the peoples of the world.

53. Mr. SHAHI commended the delegation on the quality of the report and the extent of the information provided, highlighting in particular paragraphs 54 to 61 on the report to the Storting on diversity through inclusion and participation, which provided a sound basis for integration and was proof of enlightened policy-making. He also welcomed the adoption of the Plan of Action to Combat Racism and Discrimination, particularly the measure on the establishment of

special public prosecutors' units to ensure the availability of specialized expertise for cases regarding ethnic discrimination and racially motivated violence or harassment. He also commended the respectful manner in which the Government had responded to the controversy surrounding the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed, the involvement of the immigrant community in that process and the fact that the incident had had no negative repercussions in Norway.

54. Mr. KJAERUM agreed with Mr. Shahi that the policy framework as outlined in paragraphs 54-61 of the periodic report was very interesting and modern. He welcomed the information concerning the integration of ethnic minorities into the police force, noting that it was important when addressing labour market issues not to focus simply on the minority, but also to assess what barriers existed to fuller integration. He wondered whether the experience acquired in the context of the police force could be drawn on in addressing the dropout rate in vocational training schools and universities, as perhaps some of the same barriers to integration were present in the education system as in the labour market.

55. Mr. LINDGREN ALVES also commended the high quality report and replies provided and the regularity with which the State party submitted its reports. Referring to the Human Rights Council's special meeting on the situation in Lebanon, he recalled that the Oslo Accords had been the first serious attempt to solve the question of the Middle East, which, had it yielded the expected results, might have prevented the current crisis.

56. Mr. WILLE (Norway) said that the Government would consider whether the experience acquired in relation to the police school might be applicable in other areas. Regarding the phenomenon of racism, he agreed that the measures adopted should not be purely legislative, and that education was vital in that context. The State would take into consideration Mr. Yutzis' comments on statistics concerning the ethnic composition of the population. Regarding linguistic problems, he pointed out that the introductory language courses were provided in addition to other existing measures. As to the sale of land in Saami territory, pursuant to the Finnmark Act, the Finnmark Estate's board must operate within Norwegian law. There was a close link between the management of the Finnmark Estate and the Building Act. Regarding the protection of reindeer areas, at least one member of the board must have a background in reindeer husbandry.

57. He pointed out that the Government had introduced an improved system for following up concluding observations, which included meetings with NGOs.

58. Mr. THORNBERRY (Country Rapporteur) recalled that structural questions regarding the degree of incorporation of the Convention in Norwegian law appeared to be still a matter of debate in Norway. With regard to the exclusion of the issue of race from Norwegian legislation, the governing concept of the Convention was not race, but racial discrimination on various grounds. The Committee would have to consider further any consequences arising from not fully adhering to the terminology of the Convention. He welcomed the contributions of the Centre for Human Rights and the Ombud, and said the Committee looked forward to receiving reports in due course as to what effect on the race question the new architecture of institutions had produced and whether it had resulted in any reduction of the visibility of the race issue.

59. With regard to statistics, the Government's position on issues of privacy and groups not wishing to be identified had been well explained. The Committee was of the opinion that if quantitative indicators were not acceptable to the State, there was also the possibility of using qualitative indicators, such as the number of speakers of a particular language. The reason the Committee requested certain key statistics was to render the situation more transparent and assist the State in targeting its policies more accurately.

60. Regarding minorities and indigenous peoples, he noted that Norway had been the first country to ratify the ILO Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (No. 169). Other countries could learn from Norway's initiatives in that area. He welcomed the clarification that the principle of self-identification was included among the criteria for Saami. The list of national minorities did not refer to Saami, but he understood that they wished to be regarded as an indigenous people, and hoped that they were not thereby disqualified from benefiting from the norms of the specific instruments on minority rights.

61. On the question of non-citizens, the Chairperson had recommended referring to the Committee's general recommendations on non-citizens and on racial discrimination in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system. Since immigration had tripled since 1980, the country's demographic transformation had been extremely rapid and a relatively young immigrant population posed particular challenges, which apparently were being addressed through a variety of projects.

62. The Committee would reflect further on the Government's position on the question of racist organizations. Many of the statistics referred to attitudes, and it was important to keep abreast of public attitudes, particularly towards immigrant groups. Structural discrimination was often not so much a question of intentional discrimination on the part of individuals, as of public attitudes. Addressing the problem therefore required not just focusing on individuals but finding the appropriate institutional means of combating it.

63. Finally, the question of the changing Norwegian identity, which was of great interest to the Committee, had been discussed, and the idea that identity was not fixed but that there should be one set of laws for all and adherence to core values and opportunities had been noted. Adherence to international standards in the field of human rights could also be considered one of Norway's core values. On the question of globalization and cultural interchange, there were inexorable processes at work which were changing all societies, and in some ways addressing racial discrimination was increasingly a matter of managing change.

64. The CHAIRPERSON thanked the delegation for the comprehensive replies given in the course of the interactive dialogue and the participation of national human rights institutes. He also commended the regularity in the submission of reports, which testified to the country's commitment to upholding the provisions of the Convention.

65. The delegation of Norway withdrew.

The meeting was suspended at 12.50 and resumed at 1 p.m.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS (continued)

Statement to the Human Rights Council by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation in Lebanon

66. The CHAIRPERSON informed the Committee members that the Secretariat would be distributing copies of the statement made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights at that morning's special meeting of the Human Rights Council on the situation in Lebanon, which was particularly important in the light of the Committee's general debate on that issue. The Committee would discuss its position with regard to the statement at the beginning of the afternoon meeting.

67. Mr. YUTZIS suggested that the statement should be read out in public at that afternoon's meeting before the Committee decided how to proceed.

68. Mr. AMIR, after strongly condemning the foiled terrorist attempts against civil aircraft in London, said he had prepared a draft declaration in support of the High Commissioner's statement, which could be adopted following the reading of her statement either in the name of the Chairperson or of the Committee as a whole and transmitted to the Human Rights Council before the end of its special session.

69. Mr. SHAHI supported Mr. Amir's proposal that the Committee should strongly support the call of the High Commissioner for the intervention of the Human Rights Council to impress upon the parties to the conflict the urgent need to comply with their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law, in order to effect an immediate cessation of hostilities and to ensure justice for the victims and accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.