

NORWAY

FOCUS ON HUMAN DIGNITY:
A PLAN OF ACTION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

welfare and health sector, the police and prison services, judges and lawyers must be given a basic knowledge of human rights in order to promote a stronger notion of human dignity and human rights. The Committee considers it important to initiate basic and continued education in this field. Funds must be made available for this purpose and it is natural to strengthen the Norwegian Institute for Human Rights to enable it to provide information to the general public, teach students and commence courses for the continuing education of lawyers.»

Minister of International Development and Human Rights Hilde Frafjord Johnson commented on the Government's call for the preparation of a general plan of action to provide information, instruction and education in the field of human rights during a debate in the Odelsting on 13 April 1999. The minister pointed out that, if this was acceptable to the Storting, the Government would ensure that «measures to provide information, instruction and education in the field of human rights are given a pivotal role in the plan of action to promote human rights which the Government has announced that it intends to present as a white paper to the Storting. In a way, therefore, we intend to combine these two plans of action and present a single document to the Storting, a single plan of action to promote human rights». Thus, this chapter is both an independent plan and a part of the Government's white paper on human rights.

In drawing up the Plan of Action, the Government has evaluated the dissemination of knowledge of human rights in the sectors concerned and the need to implement measures to strengthen efforts in this area. The Government found it natural to expand its approach to include research that will provide a basis for increasing knowledge of and expertise in human rights. Attention was also focused on the need to improve knowledge of human rights in the central government administration. This part of the white paper can therefore be described briefly as a plan of action to increase knowledge of human rights in Norway. To obtain a more coherent picture of efforts to promote human rights within the areas of responsibility of the various ministries, this part should be seen in conjunction with the other chapters of the white paper.

4.5 Information, instruction and education

4.5.1 Introduction

On 13 April 1999, the Odelsting passed an Act relating to efforts to strengthen the status of human rights in Norwegian law (Human Rights Act). In the Standing Committee on Justice's Recommendation No. 51 (1998-99) to the Odelsting, the Government was asked to draw up a «general plan of action to provide information, instruction and education with a view to protecting and promoting human rights in Norway». The Committee stated as follows:

«The Committee emphasises that all education ranging from day-care institutions to primary and lower secondary school and higher education should include an introduction to a general knowledge of human rights. Moreover, persons working in the education sector, the social

a) Relationship between human rights and more general values

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 states that «All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are

endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.» The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is based on the notion that all human beings are equal.

Human rights are universal. All people in all countries have such rights, irrespective of their skin colour, culture, religion, sex, nationality or other factors. Human rights are meant to assure individuals' most fundamental needs and protect citizens against abuses on the part of the state. They govern the relationship between the state and the individual – the rights of the individual in relation to the state, and the state's obligations to the individual (see chapter 3).

The Universal Declaration of Human rights and the human rights conventions prescribe that states have an obligation to promote knowledge and awareness of human rights through education and information. By ratifying the human rights conventions, Norway is obligated under international law to protect and safeguard human rights.

Much of the value-oriented, attitude-building efforts that are carried out at day-care institutions, schools and in other teaching is not directly related to human rights, although indirectly they may be said to reinforce respect for human rights and draw attention to the values on which human rights are based. Nevertheless, it is important that, in addition to explaining what human rights are, instruction in human rights in schools and other types of training can also inspire pupils to focus on the values on which human rights are based.

b) Dissemination of knowledge of human rights in education and training

Knowledge of human rights is a necessary tool in efforts to protect human rights. In this connection, knowledge can be defined as

- the individual's insight into his or her own rights
- the state's insight into the obligations incumbent on the state authorities
- society's knowledge of the actual state of affairs in terms of human rights

The first two kinds of knowledge can be strengthened by means of information, training, education and measures to create awareness of human rights. The third kind can be achieved by means of research, studies and the systematic processing and dissemination of available information.

The Government has carried out a preliminary review and evaluation of the way knowledge of

human rights is disseminated in the educational system today, based on existing statutes and curricula. This review shows that the human rights aspect appears to be safeguarded satisfactorily in legislation and regulations in the field of education. In this connection, the Government points out that the educational system in Norway has undergone sweeping reforms in the 1990s, and that legislation and rules in this area have therefore been substantially revised relatively recently. The reforms have helped to give prominence to the human rights aspect in the general curricula for the various levels of the educational system.

The education authorities at central government, regional and local level have an ongoing responsibility to ensure that the human rights perspective in legislation relating to education and in curricula is followed up by teachers in practice, and to offer relevant refresher courses to teaching personnel. In the university and college sector, where professional freedom is an important principle, the authorities have less opportunity to control the content of educational programmes at the institutions, and the sector is urged to take responsibility itself for promoting increased awareness and knowledge of human rights among students. However, continuing education of the teaching staff of universities and colleges falls within the area of responsibility of the education authorities. Similarly, the competent authorities in the health and social welfare service, the justice sector and the defence sector are responsible for ensuring that the human rights perspective is taken into satisfactory account in the post-graduate training of the professional staff in their respective areas, and for seeing to it that their activities are in accordance with human rights obligations.

In Norway, a number of institutions and non-governmental organisations are involved in information and teaching programmes on human rights. Amnesty International, the UN Association, the Helsinki Committee, the Norwegian Institute for Human Rights, the Norwegian Red Cross, Redd Barna (Save the Children Norway) and UNESCO are among the numerous organisations which have produced information material and arrange courses on human rights. The activities run by these organisations and groups to spread information and increase awareness of human rights help to ensure popular participation in and commitment to human rights (see also Chapter 4.5.3).

The Government works in close cooperation with several of these organisations to meet common goals and challenges in the field of human rights, both in Norway and abroad. Cooperation on

Box 4.3 Goals and measures for increasing knowledge of human rights

The Government regards information, instruction and education as important tools in efforts to protect and promote human rights in Norway. In the years to come, therefore, the Government will seek to strengthen training in the field of human rights in public educational institutions at all levels, and will intensify research on human rights in Norway. The Government will maintain and strengthen state information activities relating to human rights. It also aims to promote increased awareness and knowledge of human rights within the central government administration.

In parallel with this, the Government will support the information activities relating to human rights that are carried out by non-governmental organisations, with a view to reaching the population at large. The media and non-governmental organisations are therefore important partners in efforts to disseminate information to the general public. Efforts must be made to encourage dialogue and participation, and information activities should contribute towards building up knowledge and expertise with a view to inspiring the active involvement of the public at large.

The Government will therefore implement measures to increase the expertise of the teaching staff at teacher training institutions and teachers in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools. Measures will also be carried out to enhance the knowledge of human rights of employees in the central government administration, the defence forces and the legal profession. The Government will take steps to ensure that instruction in human rights is included to a greater extent in continued education for various professional groups, and will evaluate the instruction in human rights that is provided at certain educational institutions. Emphasis is placed on providing information on and promoting sound attitudes towards human rights, and the Government will initiate information campaigns to encourage commitment to and create awareness of human rights among the population at large. The Government places emphasis on research as an important source of knowledge and expertise, and will strengthen the Norwegian Institute for Human Rights.

It is the Government's wish that the measures proposed in this Plan of Action will lead to greater involvement in, knowledge of and insight into human rights issues.

large-scale information campaigns such as the one to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (the Dugnad '98 (Community effort) campaign) and on efforts to increase Norwegian enterprises' knowledge and awareness of human rights has proved to be effective.

4.5.2 Primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education

When instructing pupils about human rights, it is important to emphasise that human rights concern the specific rights of individuals and the state's obligation to respect and protect those rights. It is also important to communicate to pupils the significance of the attitudes and actions of individuals for the protection of human rights in practice. By learning more about human rights, pupils should develop a commitment to respecting the rights of other people.

According to the Education Act, «primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education shall further the equal status and equal rights of all hu-

man beings, intellectual freedom and tolerance, ecological understanding and international co-responsibility.» Thus, there is no explicit mention of human rights in the section defining the object of the Act. However, since it emphasises the principle of equal worth, equal status and intellectual freedom, it is nevertheless interpreted as a reference to human rights.

The principles on which instruction in human rights in schools is based are laid down in the overriding goals in the general, common section of the curricula for primary, lower secondary and secondary education. It is stated here that human rights are part of the fundamental values of the school system. Among other things, it states that «recognition of the equality and inherent dignity of human beings spurs efforts to secure and expand freedom of belief, opinion, speech and action without distinction on the basis of sex, ability to function, race, religion, nationality or status.» The goals are further defined in the form of principles and guidelines for education and in the study programmes for individual subjects in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education.

Regardless of how goals are formulated, the decisive factor will be the extent to which teaching in practice leads to increased awareness and knowledge of human rights among pupils. This can only be achieved if teachers are given sufficient training in human rights, and if teaching material on human rights is included in textbooks and other teaching aids for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education.

In the curricula for primary and lower secondary schools, human rights is a field of knowledge that is addressed in several subjects, while teaching materials on human rights are concentrated particularly in the Social Studies subject. For instance, pupils in the first three years of primary school focus on the rights of the child and learn that all people have the same rights. In Social Studies during the next three years, they take a closer look at human rights conventions and international efforts to promote human rights. At lower secondary school level, pupils broaden their perspective to examine the differences between poor and rich areas of the world in the light of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Other subjects, such as Norwegian and the subject of Christian Knowledge and Religious and Moral Education, are also well suited for work on human rights. According to the curricula, teaching materials in the various subjects should be coordinated. Instruction in human rights may be organised across several subjects and in the form of special topics and projects. It has been proposed that human rights be made a separate subject in primary and lower secondary school. The question has been given careful consideration by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, which is of the opinion that the approach to human rights in education will be broader and more holistic if instruction in human rights is integrated into the various subjects.

In upper secondary education, human rights are covered in the study programmes for Civics, Sociology and History of Political Ideas. In Sociology, for example, pupils learn about the ideas on which the concept of human rights is based, the content of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the role of the UN and other international organisations in implementing human rights.

The measures presented below aim at increasing pupils' knowledge of human rights. As regards greater focus on instruction in human rights in refresher courses for teachers, reference is made to Chapter 4.5.3.

a) Survey of human rights instruction

A focus on human rights is included in several subjects in both primary and lower secondary and upper secondary education. Thus, due attention must be devoted to human rights in school textbooks and other teaching aids, and followed up at the practical level in the classroom and workshop. Until now, Norway has had a state system for textbook approval that has given education authorities a possibility to assure the quality of the content of textbooks, for instance in relation to curricula statements concerning human rights. However, a proposal will be presented to discontinue this approval system. If it is abolished, publishing companies will have a special responsibility to ensure that the human rights aspect will continue to be safeguarded. However, in accordance with a general desire to allow greater leeway for varying approaches at the local level, schools are free to use other teaching aids.

Measures

- The Government intends to ascertain the extent to which the statements concerning human rights in curricula and teaching aids coincide with the way instruction in human rights is carried out in the classroom. The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs will take the initiative for a survey of this nature, which will initially cover upper secondary education. Responsibility for conducting this survey will be delegated to the National Centre for Educational Resources. If the survey reveals that the intentions and policies formulated in the curricula are not followed up in textbooks, teaching aids and teaching in practice, necessary measures will be implemented. One such measure may be to design booklets on human rights and guidelines for teachers, or to encourage interdisciplinary projects which focus on human rights issues. The survey will be carried out in 2000–2001.

Following a reform of compulsory education adopted in 1997, new curricula for the ten years of primary and lower secondary education have been gradually introduced, and were in use at all class levels in the 1999–2000 school year. The reform also included the publication of new textbooks in all subjects. The need for a corresponding survey of primary and lower secondary school will therefore be assessed towards the end of the five-year period.

b) New optional subject in upper secondary education

Democracy and human rights are defined as interdisciplinary topics in the curricula for upper secondary education, and are incorporated into several subjects. In the current school timetables for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education, there is no room, as a rule, to introduce new compulsory subjects without increasing the total number of hours. However, it would be possible to offer a depth study module on human rights as an optional subject.

Many young people today show an active commitment to and genuine interest in social issues in a broad sense. Steps have therefore been taken to develop a new optional course with a view to offering pupils with a particular interest in democracy and human rights a depth study module in this field.

Measures

- The Government aims to ensure that a new optional course is offered on democracy and human rights in all areas of study in upper secondary education. The subject Democracy and Human Rights was developed by The Professor Thorolf Raito Foundation for Human Rights in Bergen at the request of the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs. Knowledge of the human rights conventions will be a core element of this optional subject. A proposal for a study programme for this subject has recently been circulated for consultative comment. Based on the comments received from the consultative bodies, the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs will establish a definitive study programme with a view to being able to offer the subject as from the 2000–2001 school year.

c) The School Network (Skolenettet)

It should be possible to exploit the potential offered by the Internet to increase general knowledge of human rights. Through the National Centre for Educational Resources, the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs has helped to launch an Internet-based service – the School Network – which targets teachers, pupils, parents and other interested persons. The School Network has been introduced as the schools' portal to the Internet, and is part of a plan of action for the period 2000–2003 to promote the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in education.

The School Network is linked to the Nordic and European educational computer network, and offers opportunities for contact and exchanges between schools, pupils and teachers, both nationally and across national borders. So far, the School Network has not been utilised systematically as a tool in instruction on human rights.

Measures

- The Government will commission the National Centre for Educational Resources to establish, develop and edit a website on human rights on the School Network. The website will primarily be oriented towards use in schools, but will also be accessible to the general public. The funds necessary for this project will be made available from the budget of the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs. The website is to be established by 2002.

4.5.3 Higher education/professional training

The basic education for occupational groups such as teachers and pre-school teachers, social welfare and health personnel and lawyers is largely provided by universities and colleges. Under the Act relating to universities and colleges, the Government determines which degrees, vocational training or other educational programmes each institution may offer and the requirements in terms of breadth, scope and specialisation. On the basis of applications from the institutions, the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs decides which subjects and topics each institution may offer. However, no specific requirements may be imposed on institutions as to the teaching content of instruction, the content of research or the content of the artistic and subject-oriented development work. Nor is it common for institutions to be required to offer specific types of training. On the other hand, the ministry may determine national framework plans for certain types of training, and for certain subjects in these plans. The framework plans determine at a general level which main and subordinate topics the training programme shall include. Educational institutions shall themselves establish supplementary subject plans.

In the case of studies that do not have framework plans, the institution itself determines its own study plans. Thus, the Government cannot require institutions which offer studies without a framework plan to incorporate human rights issues into the study plans, it can only urge them to do so. As

far as some parts of the professional training in the justice sector are concerned, on the other hand, the Government has greater leeway to control the content of the studies. Neither the National Police Academy nor the Prison Service's training programme are governed by the Act relating to Universities and Colleges, and both the basic and in-service training of police and prison officers are administered by the Ministry of Justice. Nor are the educational institutions of the Defence Forces governed by the Act relating to Universities and Colleges.

The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs has recently revised a number of the national framework plans after a lengthy process of assessment and consultation. A review of existing framework plans shows that there is focus on the human rights aspect in the plans, although to varying degrees. For instance, all the framework plans for teacher training programmes include an introductory section in which principles of human rights are described as a natural element of the fundamental values on which the teacher training programme is based. The framework plan for teacher training in social studies underscores the rights dimension and requires that students be able to give an account of key legislation relating to the day-to-day lives of children and young people, with particular emphasis on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Students must also be able to discuss human rights and the way they are practised. The framework plan for pre-school teacher training, too, refers to the fact that day-care institutions and schools are based on values linked to democratic principles and human rights. The framework plan for day-care institutions emphasises that the centre must take account of the cultural, religious and value-oriented affiliation of each child and each home. No child shall be or feel that he or she is required to take a stance as regards specific religious views or schools of thought or feel that his or her background is not respected.

As for some studies for which there is no framework plan, the study plans stipulate that instruction in human rights must be included. For instance, human rights are a separate subject in law studies at the Universities of Bergen, Oslo and Tromsø. Courses on human rights are arranged in connection with the foundation course in both public and private law at the University of Oslo, in addition to which human rights have been incorporated as a special subject in law studies. The Institute of Political Science at the University of Oslo offers special courses on human rights. Since autumn 1999, the Norwegian Institute for Human

Rights has offered a one-year Master's course in international human rights for 15 students from all over the world, including five students from Norway. Parts of this course are open to students at the Faculty of Law in Oslo who wish to have instruction in English in international human rights law. In addition to these specialised courses, human rights are integrated into a number of subjects at Norwegian universities and colleges.

a) Teacher training staff

In order to be able to offer broader, better instruction in human rights to primary, lower secondary and upper secondary pupils, it is important to improve teachers' knowledge of human rights. Teachers need to be familiar with the international human rights conventions that have been incorporated into Norwegian law through the Human Rights Act, and they should be offered training in the other core human rights conventions (such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination). Moreover, it is important that teachers become acquainted with teaching methods that can stimulate pupils to become interested and actively involved in promoting human rights. Pupils should be helped to understand the relevance of human rights in both a global and a national context.

Teacher training staff have a pivotal role in providing student teachers with a knowledge of human rights, and thereby indirectly also in the dissemination of knowledge of these issues in schools. As mentioned above, the human rights aspect is included in the framework plans for teacher training programmes, and it is therefore important that teaching staff's knowledge of human rights is kept up-to-date.

Measures

- The Government will ask the Section for Continued Training of Teachers at Network Norway Council (a national advisory body on higher education) to take steps to provide refresher courses for teacher training staff who teach human rights.
- The Government will strengthen the knowledge of human rights of teacher training staff by having the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs give priority to establishing a fellowship in the subject of human rights.

Like other higher education, teacher training must be based on research, and teaching-oriented research and development of relevance for work in schools must therefore be carried out at all teaching training institutions.

b) Upgrading teaching expertise

The Education Act contains provisions regarding the division of responsibility for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education between the ministry, municipalities and county municipalities. According to this, the main responsibility for developing the expertise of teachers lies with the municipalities and county municipalities, which are the teachers' employers. However, the National Education Office in each county is responsible for coordinating necessary measures to improve teaching expertise and provide continued education in cooperation with municipalities and county municipalities on the one hand and universities and colleges on the other. In connection with the implementation of educational reforms in the 1990s (Reform 94 relating to upper secondary education and Reform 97 relating to compulsory education), additional funds have been provided from the fiscal budget to promote continued training to update teaching expertise. It is important that relevant refresher courses are made available so that municipalities and county municipalities are able to fulfil their responsibility in that respect. This training can effectively be provided in the form of Internet-based distance learning courses which teachers can follow by combining work at home and courses.

The Section for Continued Training of Teachers at Network Norway Council plays an important role in developing the skills of primary and secondary school teachers by facilitating and coordinating courses. In 2000 funds from the budget of the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs have been earmarked for developing expertise, and will be allocated by the national education offices in accordance with specified criteria. In connection with the introduction of new primary and lower secondary school curricula, networks of universities and colleges were established with a view to developing teaching expertise. The Network for Developing Expertise in Social Studies plays a key role in the general development of expertise for social studies teachers. It is natural to delegate tasks related to increasing knowledge of human rights to this network. In 2000, guiding plans will be drawn up for developing the expertise of primary school teachers. The plan for social studies

will include a course for credits on human rights. Parts of this expertise development programme will be adapted for upper secondary teachers.

Measures

- The Government has asked the Section for Continued Training of Teachers at Network Norway Council to give priority to courses on human rights in its overall programme of continued education for primary and secondary school teachers as from 2000.
- The Government has asked the Network for Developing Expertise in Social Studies to participate in preparing and coordinating courses on human rights for social studies teachers in 2000. By pooling the ideas and experience of institutions and organisations with expertise in the field of human rights, the Network will help to formulate a coherent strategy for developing expertise in human rights.
- The Government will develop the refresher course that has been offered to teachers for several years by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to further increase its focus on human rights. The course will also be offered to pre-school teachers and day-care institution employees.

c) Police and district police service

Ensuring that society develops in a way that to the greatest possible extent meets the expectations of society and individuals as regards safety and equal treatment is an important priority for the Government. The police and district police service is intended to serve the public, at the same time as it has the right and duty to use physical force if necessary when dealing with citizens. Employees of the service are to serve as models, assistants and enforcers of law and order. Therefore, it is important that persons working in the police and district police service be made aware of and learn more about the requirements of international human rights conventions through instruction and information.

The National Police Academy's basic training programme includes instruction in subjects that are related to human rights issues, such as knowledge of central and local government activities, legal topics such as private law, administrative law, criminal procedure, cultural studies and immigration law, as well as police studies and professional ethics. Increasing attention is being focused on racism in instruction, and students are offered optional subjects in which they learn about other

cultures, and about the importance of understanding cultural differences and legislation in carrying out police duties. The National Police Academy also offers an in-service training course in immigration law and understanding of cultural differences. The course aims at providing a general introduction to the concept of culture, minority policies, ethnicity, discrimination, racism, etc. Consideration has been given to making international law a separate subject at the Police Academy. So far, however, it has been considered most appropriate to incorporate human rights and other areas of international law into the above-mentioned subjects.

Measures

- The Government has appointed a working group in the police and district police service to evaluate measures in relation to Police Academy students and employees of the police and district police service. The working group will evaluate ways of improving their knowledge of the obligations imposed on Norwegian authorities by international human rights conventions, and will present proposals for specific measures in early 2000. The Ministry of Justice has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the measures proposed are implemented without delay. The measures will be carried out on a continuous basis and will be subject to regular evaluation.

d) The Prison Service

Report No. 27 (1997-98) to the Storting regarding Prison and Probation emphasises that the prison and probation service's implementation of penal sanctions must be based on humane values, fair treatment, the recognition of human rights and respect for human dignity. A continuous assessment must be made of whether persons working in the prison service have the necessary knowledge of human rights.

The Prison and Probation Staff Education Centre provides training for prison service employees, and in-service training for employees in the prison and probation service. New prison officers have a year of theoretical studies, divided into four parts. One of the topics taught is ethics and professionalism, which also covers human rights. The subject deals with issues related to human rights, monitoring bodies, and the contents of the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Government's main impression is that the employees in the prison and probation service who are responsible for keeping inmates in custody are very familiar with the content of human rights conventions regarding treatment of prison inmates. It is the Government's opinion that the existing training programmes are adequate, but that it is necessary to continuously increase knowledge of human rights within the prison service.

Measures

- The Government will evaluate the training provided by the Prison and Probation Staff Education Centre with a view to further strengthening instruction in human rights. The evaluation will be completed by the end of 2002.

e) Social welfare and health sector

All training within the nursing and care sector should include instruction in human rights and the values on which the human rights conventions by which Norway is bound are based. The Government is particularly concerned to ensure that the rights of the elderly and persons with disabilities are respected (see Chapter 4.6.7). It is therefore important that employees in the nursing and care sector are aware of the rights of clients, such as the right to make their own decisions, and the right to privacy, family life, personal liberty, safety and the highest possible standard of health.

The framework plans for basic training in health and social welfare subjects stipulate that students shall be given an introduction to human rights and different systems of values and beliefs to enable them to develop a holistic view of human beings and respect for human integrity and rights. Respect for the inviolability of life, respect for the inherent dignity of human beings and solidarity with those who are disadvantaged are the principles on which college studies in health and social welfare subjects are based. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs is also making active efforts to adapt the educational system to ensure that more emphasis is placed in the training programmes on voluntary participation and alternatives to coercion, for instance in connection with the review of the framework plans for health and social welfare training.

The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs has prepared an information packet on new health legislation. In particular, the Act relating to the Rights of Patients and the Act relating to the Organisation and Provision of Mental Health Care contain provi-

sions that concern human rights, primarily those covered by the European Convention on Human Rights. The first statute deals with key patients' rights such as the right to protection against the dissemination of information, while the second regulates the use of coercion and the application of restrictive measures in respect of persons suffering from serious mental disorders. The information packet will be used in the efforts of the ministry and the state supervisory authority to provide information to the health service in connection with the entry into force of the new legislation.

New provisions have also been adopted in the Social Services Act and the Municipal Health Services Act regarding the rights for, limitation of and monitoring of the use of coercion in respect of certain mentally retarded persons. To ensure that the rules are complied with at municipal level, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs has issued a comprehensive circular which has also been sent to the colleges concerned. Before the Act came into force, courses were arranged for persons employed by the county governors, chief county medical officers, specialised health services in county municipalities and county social affairs boards, as well as for municipal employees. To follow up Report No. 26 (1997-98) to the Storting regarding the limitation and supervision of the use of coercion in the provision of services, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs will evaluate the new rules (see chapter 4.6.7), and assess the need for continued education. The rules are provisional and apply until the end of 2001.

Measures

- The Government will consider preparing a model for a course on health and human rights from a public health perspective in connection with the follow-up of Official Norwegian Report 1999:18 *On strengthening municipal public health services* and Official Norwegian Report 1999: 13 *On women's health in Norway*.

4.5.4 Central government administration

In the Government's view, there is a need to strengthen training in human rights within the central government administration, and measures will therefore be implemented to this end. Some of these measures aim at raising the level of knowledge within the public administration in general, while others are particularly targeted towards the defence forces and the administration of justice.

Reference is also made to Chapter 4.3, particularly regarding the establishment of a system of liaison officers for human rights issues in the central government administration.

a) Information and courses

It is important that employees in the central government administration have a knowledge of international human rights and complaint mechanisms in order to prevent human rights violations and promote protection of the rights of individuals. This knowledge, combined with insight into their own field of work, will increase their awareness of human rights obligations in their own sector and is thus important for both management and executive officers. The goal is to ensure that all employees are aware of the existence and relevance of human rights and that certain employees have more detailed knowledge of this field. Since the international protection of human rights is in a constant process of development, building up expertise in the central government administration will be an ongoing task.

Measures

- The Government will prepare an information booklet on human rights, which will be distributed to all central government employees. Part of the booklet will focus on the international protection of human rights and implementation mechanisms, while another part will address issues relevant to specific ministries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will prepare an information booklet in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration, which will have overall responsibility for the measure.
- The Government will increase the awareness of central government employees of their responsibility for protecting human rights in their own sector, by means of seminars arranged for this purpose by Statskonsult. The target group consists of employees who will have special responsibility in the field of human rights or who will be a liaison officer for their own ministry (see Chapter 4.3), or employees who will be working with human rights issues in specific cases, in connection with proposed legislation, international negotiations or the like. Each seminar will last one day and the first one is scheduled to be held in February 2000. The structure and content of the seminar will be defined by the Ministry of Labour and Gov-

ernment Administration in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice. The course will be open to all interested parties, including local government employees.

b) The defence forces

Traditionally, there has been no general instruction in human rights in the defence forces. Whatever training has been given has primarily focused on human rights in war, with emphasis on an introduction to international law of war and humanitarian law.

Within the defence forces' areas of responsibility, however, situations may arise where respect for the rights of the individual may be put to the test, for instance because defence personnel may be obliged to use force in carrying out their missions. The defence forces' growing involvement at international level also makes it necessary to increase knowledge of human rights, particularly because extensive breaches of human rights may be the reason for carrying out international operations in which Norwegian forces participate.

Measures

- The Government intends to strengthen the defence forces' knowledge of human rights. The Ministry of Defence has therefore appointed a working group for human rights in the defence forces, consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Defence, Headquarters Defence Command Norway and the Director General of Military Prosecutions. By the end of 2000, the working group is to make recommendations as to the categories of human rights in which instruction should be provided to defence personnel, which categories of personnel should receive such instruction, and how such instruction can be provided most effectively. On the basis of the working group's recommendations, the Ministry of Defence will take steps to initiate the proposed teaching programmes as from spring 2001.

c) The Ministry of Justice

As a specialised ministry, the Ministry of Justice is responsible for areas in which the protection of human rights is particularly important, such as the administration of criminal justice and the prison and probation service. To some extent, the Ministry must also be able to assist other ministries

when human rights issues arise in connection with legislative work. It is therefore particularly important that employees of the Ministry of Justice have a high level of expertise in human rights.

Measures

- The Government will arrange courses on human rights for all Ministry of Justice employees. The courses will encompass a theoretical introduction to key human rights conventions and a practical section in which relevant human rights issues in the justice sector will be examined. They will focus on problem-solving and will encourage discussion among the participants. The first course will be held in spring 2000, and the ministry will continuously assess the need for new courses.

d) Immigration authorities

The Government wishes to strengthen the human rights expertise of executive officers in the immigration authorities to ensure that cases are dealt with in accordance with the international human rights conventions by which Norway is bound. Asylum law, which is part of immigration law, is based in part on international conventions and international human rights. International human rights provisions have already been incorporated into Norwegian immigration law. The Immigration Act states that the Act «shall be applied in accordance with international rules by which Norway is bound when these are intended to strengthen the position of a foreign national.»

A majority of the executive officers in the Immigration Department of the Ministry of Justice are lawyers. When appointing personnel, great emphasis is placed on their knowledge of refugee law and human rights and/or experience of human rights work. The department participates regularly in international fora where human rights topics are discussed. The Immigration Department of the Ministry of Justice regularly arranges in-house courses on immigration law and asylum law.

In the Directorate of Immigration, too, a majority of the executive officers are lawyers. Every year, the Directorate offers its employees the opportunity to study refugee law at the Institute of Public Law at the University of Oslo. Furthermore, employees attend lectures on human rights arranged by universities or other institutions, and the Directorate itself provides training for its employees in human rights issues that have relevance for their field of work. The Directorate also ar-

ranges courses on immigration law for the police and foreign service missions.

Measures

- The Government will continue the practice of sending employees of the Directorate of Immigration to courses on refugee law at the University of Oslo.
- The Government will hold special courses on human rights for all executive officers and management in the Ministry of Justice's Immigration Department who work with immigration and asylum cases. The aim is to raise the level of knowledge of human rights in the department in general, and of human rights in the field of immigration in particular. The course will consist of a theoretical part and a practical part that is focused specially on the field of immigration. The course will last 1-2 days, and the plan is to hold it once a year. The Ministry of Justice's Immigration Department will evaluate whether the course should also be offered to the Directorate of Immigration.
- The Government will conduct training programmes for employees who process applications for asylum and who interview asylum-seekers. This is being done in connection with the fact that the Directorate of Immigration is taking over responsibility for such interviews from the police on 1 July 2000.
- The programme is based on seven modules, one of which covers issues relating to asylum law, including human rights. The programme will be carried out in spring 2000, after which it will be evaluated. Based on the conclusions of the evaluation, follow-up programmes may be implemented.

4.5.5 Judges

Knowledge of human rights is essential if judges are to be able to take due account of human rights in exercising their judicial functions. From 1998, the Council for Judicial Education, which provides continuing education for Norwegian judges, added a half-day basic introduction to human rights to its beginners course for newly appointed judges. Each year, the Council arranges a two-day course on human rights, as well as a study tour to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Human rights issues are also addressed in all instruction in criminal procedure, including initial training for newly appointed judges and the annual courses on criminal procedure issues.

In 1997 a system of study leave for judges was established. In 1999 two judges took leave to study human rights issues.

Norwegian judges have access to relevant literature through a central purchasing system that is administered by a special committee for professional literature. The committee stays informed of new works that may be of interest to courts of law, including works on human rights, and assesses each work. The committee has ensured that all Norwegian courts have reprints of the Case Law Column of the journal *Mennesker og Rettigheter* (People and Rights), which contains summaries of judgments handed down by the European Court of Human Rights.

The purchasing system for professional literature must be seen in conjunction with the information that is available on the Internet. Decisions and statements from several of the human rights treaty bodies may be accessed on the Internet, where the various conventions and additional protocols may also be found. Some of the Norwegian courts are already linked to the Internet, and the plan is for all Norwegian courts to have access to the Internet by the end of 2001.

Measures

- The Government will see to it that the Council for Judicial Education continues to give priority to training related to human rights. The Ministry of Justice will make human rights a topic in its annual allotment letters to the Council, and through its permanent representative on the Council will continuously ensure that priority is given to training in human rights in continuing education for judges.

4.5.6 Lawyers

The Centre for Continuing Legal Education arranges regular courses on human rights for lawyers. While the courses do not particularly target advocates, a large proportion of the participants are advocates. The centre has established a special committee for international human rights in order to increase its expertise in this field.

The Ministry of Justice has responsibility under the law for Chapter 11 of the Courts of Justice Act which, along with appurtenant regulations, lays down detailed rules for legal advocacy and conditions for becoming an advocate. Pursuant to the Courts of Justice Act, the Ministry has decided that everyone wishing to become an advocate must take a special course in topics of particular signif-

icance for legal advocacy. The Ministry of Justice prescribes rules regarding the content and implementation of the course, while responsibility for the course in all other respects lies with the Centre for Continuing Legal Education.

Measures

- The Government has approached the Centre for Continuing Legal Education with a view to ensuring that the relationship to international human rights conventions and treaty bodies which have particular relevance for the practical aspects of legal advocacy is made a part of the compulsory course for advocates. The centre is in favour of this and will try to include the topic in the course programme as from spring 2000. The Ministry of Justice will later incorporate this topic into the rules for the course.

4.5.7 Knowledge base

a) Research programme on human rights in Norway

Human rights is a field of research in which Norway should aim at being an international leader, in view of its political and general human commitment. Research on human rights is necessary to ensure that Norwegian human rights policy in Norway and abroad is based on a sound academic foundation. Similarly, all information, education and teaching relating to human rights should be as correct, complete and up-to-date as possible. As is the case for teaching at universities and colleges, general instruction in and information on human rights should be grounded in research-based knowledge.

As a field of research, human rights are not linked to a single discipline. However, legal expertise is an important basis for a broader professional approach to research on human rights. At the same time, it is essential to the development of human rights research that other disciplines also have expertise in this field. Only in this way can we ensure that light is shed on problems of a non-legal character. Moreover, human rights concern individuals and groups who are in a vulnerable position, and about whom various disciplines have specialised knowledge. This applies, for instance, to children, refugees, the mentally retarded and religious and ethnic minorities. Human rights expertise must be developed in interaction with a wide range of specialists who are familiar with the conditions relating to these groups.

Human rights research in Norway was given real prominence in the 1980s when the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities (NAVF) established its multidisciplinary human rights programme. However, the programme was particularly oriented towards international conditions, with little focus on the human rights situation in Norway. Up until the present, there has been no complete overview of ongoing research on human rights in Norway. In autumn 1999, the Government therefore commissioned a status report from the Research Council of Norway. The report provides an overview of Norwegian research groups which are engaged in research on human rights in Norway, and the expertise available within the various groups. The report shows that a great deal of valuable research is being carried out on human rights, even if human rights are not always an explicit or expressed topic of such research. The report also identifies issues and topics that have not been satisfactorily covered in research to date, and culminates in recommendations for the preparation of an interdisciplinary research programme on human rights in Norway.

The breadth and diversity of human rights research are both a strength and a weakness. The strength lies in the potential that this area of research offers as a broad knowledge base for national and international human rights policy and administration. The weakness lies in the lack of a concerted, coordinated research programme. A research programme specially devoted to human rights in Norway would remedy this situation and increase research-based knowledge of various aspects of the status of human rights. A programme of this nature would also promote national networking and facilitate recruitment to human rights research.

Measures

- The Government sees a need for increased knowledge of the human rights situation in Norway and is of the opinion that research in this area must be strengthened. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will initiate discussions of the recommendations in the status report prepared by the Research Council of Norway with the specialised ministries concerned, with a view to establishing an interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral research programme on human rights in Norway as from 2001.

b) The Norwegian Institute for Human Rights

A part of the Storting's Standing Committee on Justice's Recommendation No. 51 (1998-99) to the Odelsting regarding the Human Rights Act reads as follows:

«The Committee wishes to emphasise that information, instruction and education are among the most important tools available for protecting and promoting human rights. An effort must be made to build up a centre of specialised expertise in these areas and it is the view of the Committee that it is natural to give this authority to the Institute for Human Rights ... The Committee considers it important that instruction and in-service training be provided in this field. Funds must be made available for this purpose and it is natural to strengthen the Institute for Human Rights to enable it to provide information to the general public, teach students and commence courses for the continuing education of lawyers. The Committee wishes to emphasise the importance of having a university institution that has expertise in this field and that can initiate measures to provide training for and increase the expertise of others.»

The Institute for Human Rights was established in 1987, and was initially organised as a programme under the auspices of the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities (NAVF). Since 1995 it has been a part of the University of Oslo. According to its statutes, the institute is to promote the realisation of human rights through research and studies, teaching, advisory services, information and documentation. The institute is interdisciplinary and focuses on both the national and international human rights situation.

The Institute for Human Rights has recently been the object of an evaluation by a committee of Nordic professors commissioned by the Senate of the University of Oslo. The evaluation concludes that, all things considered, the institute has a sound academic environment with a high level of activity. The main challenge for the institute, in the view of the committee, lies in its skewed funding which consists of a low basic allocation and over 80 per cent external financing in the form of project funding from the Research Council of Norway and commissions from ministries and other bodies. At present, the institute has approximately the same basic allocation (in the form of permanent positions) as it did when it was established in 1987. However, the University of Oslo has given priority to the Institute for Human Rights in the past few

years, and has provided the institute with modern premises in downtown Oslo. It has assigned to the institute a permanent senior researcher, a research fellow and a teaching consultant in a part-time position. Since autumn 1999, the Ministry of Defence has funded a three-year fellowship in humanitarian law at the institute.

It is the Government's opinion that the Institute for Human Rights must be strengthened with a view to securing its knowledge base. The institute constitutes the core of the human rights research community in Norway. To ensure its autonomy as a research institution, the Institute for Human Rights needs to be able to give priority to basic research and the long-term development of expertise. This is also crucial to ensuring that the institute's externally-oriented activities, in the form of advisory services, teaching and information services, are based on a sound theoretical foundation.

The Institute for Human Rights is a key centre for the acquisition of knowledge and expertise in the field of human rights. In this Plan of Action, the Government presents a number of measures designed to strengthen knowledge of human rights in Norway. To supplement these measures, the Government considers it important that the institute promote increased knowledge by raising awareness of and disseminating knowledge of and information on human rights. The Institute for Human Rights possesses knowledge, expertise and experience in the field of human rights from which the public authorities, students and others should benefit even more than they do at present. The Government therefore considers it natural to build up a centre of human rights expertise around the Institute for Human Rights.

Measures

- In the Government's opinion, the Norwegian Institute for Human Rights must play a pivotal role in the acquisition of knowledge on human rights in Norway. The Government considers that the institute needs, as regards increasing its expertise, to pursue a long-term approach, and is aware that its expertise is not utilised optimally due to the small number of its permanent positions and its low basic financing. The Government will therefore seek to secure a gradual increase in the basic allocation to the Institute for Human Rights as from 2000.

Box 4.4 National Institution for Human Rights

Since 1993, the UN General Assembly has recommended that states have a national institution for human rights in accordance with the «Paris principles». Since these principles are flexible recommendations, the mandates and functions of the various countries' national institutions vary significantly. However, the Paris principles emphasise the importance of the institution being independent of the national authorities. The primary task of national institutions is to assist public authorities, non-governmental organisations and individuals with advisory services, reports and information on fields or cases which have human rights aspects. Such an institution should have knowledge of relevant legislation, disseminate information, develop and provide continuing education, carry out studies and prepare reports, monitor human rights issues and compile statistics.

A national institution for human rights is important for strengthening expertise in human rights. The institution must have close contact with relevant groups in its own country and internationally, and should be staffed by persons who have an insight into human rights in general and the human rights situation in their own

country in particular. An example of such an institution is the Danish Centre for Human Rights.

There is no national institution for human rights in Norway, although the current statutes of the Norwegian Institute for Human Rights cover some of the tasks incumbent on a national institution. The Government intends to follow up the request of the UN General Assembly, and is of the opinion that Norway should have a national institution for human rights by 2001. The Government finds it natural to achieve this by granting the Institute for Human Rights the status of a national institution.

Measures

- The Government will make resources available to enable the Norwegian Institute for Human Rights to be granted the status of a national institution for human rights in 2001. In consultation with the ministries and human rights experts, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will examine more closely which tasks should be assigned to a national institution and how this may best be organised.

4.5.8 Information and efforts to promote sound attitudes

a) General measures implemented by the Government

The Government sees a need to focus more strongly on human rights in its own information activities. Various human rights issues, Norwegian human rights policy and a view of human rights from a development perspective should feature more prominently in ministries' information activities in the years ahead. The Government will also make up-to-date information on various human rights issues available on the Internet on a regular basis. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs drew up a special plan for information activities in the field of human rights. As part of this plan, an annual report was prepared on Norwegian efforts to promote human rights. A similar report will be published each year.

As part of its 1998 commemoration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education,

Research and Church Affairs launched a special information campaign for schools. In a joint letter to schools, the Minister of Education, Research and Church Affairs and the Minister of International Development and Human Rights urged teachers and pupils to make a particular effort to promote human rights during the anniversary year. The letter was accompanied by a folder for teachers containing a list of educational material and teaching aids in the field of human rights. This folder still has relevance, even though the anniversary year is over, and is a useful tool for instruction in human rights in schools. In connection with the 50th anniversary, the Government also provided support for the *Dugnad '98* (Community Effort) campaign, which was a joint effort by a number of non-governmental organisations. The campaign reached its peak on the anniversary day, 10 December 1998, when several seminars were held on human rights.

Interest in human rights issues has been on the rise in the past few years in the media and among the population at large. Libraries, non-governmental organisations and private and public informa-

tion agencies are receiving a growing number of requests for information material and lectures on human rights issues. The Government considers it important to maintain and stimulate this interest in human rights and to make the topic and related problems more accessible and interesting to a broad range of target groups. The Government will therefore encourage the use of culture and new technology in information activities, and will support the development of new methods and approaches.

Measures

- Every three years the Government will carry out a campaign focused on a specific human rights topic with a view to generating interest in and raising awareness of human rights. The first campaign will take place in 2002, and will largely be based on the cooperation and experience gained in connection with Dugnad '98. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for coordinating these efforts.
- In cooperation with external institutions and organisations, the Government will invite manufacturing firms to develop information products relating to human rights involving the use of new technology and audio-visual tools. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will enter into cooperation on the production of television programmes for children and young people, featuring Internet contact between young people in Norway and in other countries of the world.
- The Government will emphasise continuing education and measures to increase expertise in human rights for teachers, journalists and librarians in order to strengthen long-term information activities and promote the dissemination of knowledge of human rights throughout Norwegian society (see also chapter 4.5.3). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will offer an annual in-service training course on human rights and other international topics. In cooperation with the Institute of Journalism, the ministry will also offer an annual course and study tour for journalists on human rights and other international issues.
- The Government wishes to increase expertise in international human rights issues at colleges specialising in media studies in Norway and in prioritised partner countries, and contribute towards strengthening civil sector institutions in the south. The Government will therefore provide funding from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for institutional cooperation

and exchange programmes relating to human rights issues. Such cooperation is expected to promote better instruction in and greater emphasis on human rights issues in general at the colleges concerned. Cooperation will include trainee schemes for Norwegian and foreign researchers, journalists and journalism students.

b) Culture as a tool

Culture reaches people in a different way from the approaches ordinarily used in public information activities, which usually make a point of providing clear, accurate and precise information. Using culture as a tool to disseminate information and promote sound attitudes may be an effective way of communicating a new understanding of a case or topic, and entering into a dialogue with target groups not ordinarily reached through more traditional means of communication.

In media policy, the Government basically aims at securing freedom of expression as a prerequisite for a dynamic democracy (see Chapter 4.6.13). The press plays a particularly important role in promoting exchanges of opinion and debate. If the press focuses more attention on human rights in Norway, exposing any breaches that might occur, this could have the effect of raising the awareness of the population in general – and the public authorities in particular – of human rights issues.

Film is another important means of presenting culture and aspects of society. However, there have been few films, either fiction films or documentaries, that deal with the human rights situation in Norway. Commending films that portray and illustrate human rights issues is a way of encouraging the artistic or documentary presentation of the overall issue of human rights on film.

Measures

- The Government will establish a human rights award for journalists. This award will be presented to journalists who have focused particular attention on human rights issues in Norway. The award will consist of NOK 100,000 and a special plaque, and will be presented once a year, provided that there are qualified candidates. The award ceremony will take place in connection with the annual meeting of one of the journalist unions. The award winners will be selected by an independent jury. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs will draw up statutes containing guidelines for the composition of the jury and the selection

of the award winner. The award will be presented for the first time in 2000.

- The Government will establish a human rights award for the film sector. The award will be presented to short films – fiction or documentary – that focus particular attention on human rights issues in Norway. The award will consist of NOK 50,000 and will be presented every other year, provided that there are worthy candidates. The award winners will be selected by an independent jury. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs will draw up statutes containing guidelines for the composition of the jury and the selection of the award winner. The award will be presented for the first time in 2000.

c) Database on censorship and freedom of expression

The Library of Alexandria in ancient Egypt was a unique centre for the exchange of knowledge, thoughts and ideas. UNESCO and the Egyptian authorities have undertaken a joint project to revive the library, which is scheduled to be completed in 2000. The new Library of Alexandria is expected to develop into a leading international centre of information and documentation in the field of human rights.

At present, no library in the world has a complete, international overview of censored books and newspapers. Moreover, documentation on breaches of the right of freedom of expression supplied by human rights organisations is not often accessible to the public through libraries. A comprehensive, up-to-date and generally accessible database on censorship, including bibliographical information on literature on freedom of expression, would therefore increase knowledge of and facilitate further research on human rights and freedom of expression. A database on censorship and freedom of expression will benefit Norwegians working in the field of human rights by making available knowledge for use in teaching and information activities, and as a basis for research.

Measures

- At the official inauguration of the Library of Alexandria in Egypt in 2000, the Government will present the library with a database on censorship and freedom of expression. The database will comprise a historical overview of books and newspapers dating from 1900 which have been censored by state agencies, limited to censorship of a political, religious or moral

nature. The database will also include bibliographical information on published literature on freedom of expression. The Government will provide funding for the database from the budget of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, while responsibility for developing the database has been assigned to the Norwegian Forum for Freedom of Expression, under the supervision of the Norwegian National Library.

d) Information for and on indigenous peoples

In the past twenty years, international law relating to indigenous peoples has emerged as a special area of international human rights obligations. At present, there is only one international convention that deals exclusively with indigenous peoples, ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous Peoples and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries of 27 June 1989 which replaces Convention 107 of 1957. However, it is clear that the general provisions governing minorities in the international covenants on human rights also apply to the rights of indigenous peoples, such as the right to maintain their own language and practise their culture. As far as Norway is concerned, reference is made to Article 110a of the Constitution of Norway and Official Norwegian Report 1984:18 *Legal rights of the Sami people*.

Both the Sami Act (Act of 1987 No. 56) and international treaties to which Norway has acceded, including ILO Convention 169 and the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages, impose certain obligations on the Government as regards providing services to the Sami people in Sami and informing society at large about Sami culture. There is a need to find out more about how such bilingual services function and how they can be improved. Reference is also made to Chapter 4.6.2 and Box 4.6.

Measures

- The Government has commissioned the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) in Alta to carry out a survey of the way the population views the bilingual service provided by agencies that have close contact with the general public, such as doctors' offices, social welfare offices, local employment offices and tax offices. The results of the survey are expected to provide information on where resources should be allocated in efforts related to information and language. The survey will be completed in early 2000, and will then be

followed up by the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development in cooperation with other relevant ministries.

- The Government has initiated a survey of the need for more knowledge of the way the provision of information by central government authorities to and about the Sami people functions, and how the provision of such information should be organised in future. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development will be responsible for implementing and following up the survey, which is due to be completed in early 2000. The Ministry of Labour and Government Administration works in close cooperation with the Sameting (the Sami parliament).

e) Information activities carried out by non-governmental organisations

Efforts have been made for many decades in Norway to provide information on and promote sound attitudes towards human rights. The bulk of these efforts has long been carried out by institutions and non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty International, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, the Norwegian Institute for Human Rights, the Norwegian Red Cross, Norwegian People's Aid and Redd Barna (Save the Children Norway). These organisations arrange courses for a wide range of groups, hold seminars on human rights and produce information and teaching material on human rights. Many other organisations also provide information on human rights, including the Antiracist Centre, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Norwegian Church Aid, the Norwegian Peace Centre in Gausdal, the Norwegian Forum for Freedom of Expression and the Norwegian Organisation for Asylum Seekers. The Norwegian Human Rights House in Oslo and the Professor Thorolf Rafto Foundation for Human Rights in Bergen foster contact and cooperation between various institutions which arrange courses and provide information on human rights.

Human rights issues have also been an important part of the information activities carried out by the UN Association of Norway, specially those targeting schools and teachers. The UN Association will be one of several natural partners with which colleges and universities will be cooperating on increasing the expertise of teachers within the framework of this Plan of Action. In the county of Trøndelag, cooperation has already been established between the College of Sor-Trøndelag and the UN Association. For many years, moreover, the UN Association has been commissioned by the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs to head a special working group for instruction in human rights, with participants from the Norwegian UNESCO Commission, teachers' unions, the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, several human rights organisations, and other organisations.

Several religious and belief communities, including the Church of Norway Council on Foreign Relations and the Norwegian Humanist Association, are also engaged in active efforts to disseminate information on human rights. Moreover, the Commissioner for Children and the other ombudsmen play a key role in providing information on and promoting sound attitudes towards human rights. The newly established Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination also plays a prominent part in this work.

Many folk high schools now offer courses in human rights. This is the case, for instance, at the Nansen School (the Norwegian Humanistic Academy), which was nominated by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs as the Norwegian candidate for the UNESCO Prize 1998 for Peace Education for its seminar on democracy, human rights and peaceful conflict resolution.

The Red Cross Nordic United World College in Fjaler is one of a total of nine UWC schools all over the world which accepts pupils from Norway every year. Common to all these schools is their desire to promote understanding and peace between the peoples of the world, including respect for human rights. The United World College in Fjaler offers an optional subject in human rights for its final-year pupils, and in the past three years has arranged a summer school programme which includes a one-week course on human rights for about 100 pupils from all over the world.

Measures

- The Government will provide more funding for information activities in the field of human rights for which various organisations and institutions seek support. The Government also encourages and supports local initiatives and joint projects implemented by schools, congregations and organisations throughout Norway aimed at raising awareness of human rights. Funds have been allocated from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for programmes for visits and exchanges between local communities in Norway and similar communities in other countries around the world. Experience has shown that such cooperation can mobilise

communities which have not traditionally been involved in efforts to promote human rights, and the use of exchange programmes will inspire many people to take a more active interest in the content of information campaigns. In view of their background and experience of different areas of the world, refugees and immigrants are an important resource in this connection.