**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Chair, distinguished representatives and participants, SPT members,, NPM colleagues,

I want to start out my intervention with a word of gratitude.

Not a week has gone by since we established the Norwegian NPM in 2014 under the auspices of the Norwegian Parliamentary Ombudsman when I do not send warm regards to the founding mothers of the OPCAT.

They have given us a mandate with powers, effective tools and flexibility.

I will, briefly, mention **a few strategic choices**, some achievements and some challenges ahead.

Firstly, being part of the Parliamentary Ombudsman has given us independence and authority – two key assets for legitimacy vis-a-vis detainees and for putting strength behind our recommendations vis-a-vis places and state authorities.

Secondly, we chose to build an interdisciplinary team, presently consisting of lawyers, a psychologist and social scientists with competence within sociology, criminology and communication. This gives us a variety of competences and methodologies to draw from.

Thirdly, we have chosen to further strengthen the implementation of OPCAT art 18 through an advisory committee of civil society groups and academia, and by using external experts to specific visits.

Fourthly, we have, so far, decided to choose quality over quantity in our visit methodology. What does this mean?

We do in-depth visits, mostly 3 days – depending on the size of the place. During visits we maintain a holistic but also flexible approach both in terms of thematic focus and methodology. When, for instance, we found troubling practices at a psychiatric hospital some months ago, we decided to study more thoroughly the institutional culture of the place, increasing the numbers of employee and patients interviews as well as to go back and make a full visit of a night shift.

From the onset we have made comprehensive visit reports that are always published, for transparency as well as legitimacy. The visit reports also constitute a solid platform for follow-up.

Prioritizing quality over quantity is hard as it means we are doing fewer visits. However, to do prevention properly it is our strong view that we should also have capacity to give lectures, to do training and outreach activities, etc.

**A very quick scan over some of our achievements;**

Following NPM recommendations the Directorate of Correctional Services has instructed all prisons to make sure that prisoners are never left naked in a security cell, and to avoid humiliating procedures when doing body searches. A pending draft new regulation on the use of isolation in prisons also includes several NPM recommendations. Similarly, the Police Directorate in its new national regulation on police arrests has included a significant number of the NPM recommendations, including on body searches and suicide prevention.

A unique feature of the OPCAT is the ability for the NPM to work across sectors. When we started our visits to the hospitals we were surprised to find that patients routinely where given less information about decisions on the use of coercive measures than prisoners, thus diminishing patients legal guarantees. As a consequence of NPM visits to hospitals the Directorate of Health issued a national directive on the right of patients to routinely receive the written grounds for decisions on the use of coercive measures, as well as strengthened routines for the health inspectorates.

**Some of the challenges ahead**;

Immunity, confidentiality and the detention of prisoners abroad are a few of the challenges where we as NPM have received invaluable assistance from SPT in the form of advisory opinions.

Capacity will remain a challenge. We will probably never be able to visit all places regularly. Thus, we think of our role as catalysts, as someone who creates ripples on water. Transparency and outreach should always supplement visits as our working mode. OPCAT gives us this flexibility.

I started out by expressing gratitude and enthusiasm about the OPCAT. In my view, the OPCAT with its triangular partnership of states, SPT and NPMs has proven a tremendous tool for prevention of torture and ill-treatment.

However, monitoring places of detention takes its toll on personnel. I want to finalize by reminding us that we also need to make sure we are able to take care of NPM personnel carrying out a vital part of the OPCAT to avoid monitoring fatigue and ensure a continued fight against torture and ill-treatment that is both local and global.

Thank you.