

Statement of Norway, delivered by Senior Adviser Janis Kanavin, at the NAP session on 29 November 2017 during the Forum on Business and Human Rights

The Norwegian NAP was launched 2 years ago. We have a tradition of not making more promises than we know we can keep, so I think it is fair to say our Plan is a modest one. It is easily googled on the net – also in English version. Nevertheless, I hope to share some experiences of interest:

There is long term value in a good baseline study to prepare the NAP. We commissioned a gap analysis from an independent institute, which still has value in providing direction and a sense of progress as the NAP for the most part has been realized.

One promise we kept in the NAP was to consider establishing a national guidance center for business and human rights – or for responsible business conduct, with the NCP for the OECD guidelines included. We considered, and failed due to organizational, budgetary and other reasons. Our NCP is pursuing good training and providing guidance in addition to handling special instances. Together with a number of public institutions that provide various grants to business for promotion or private sector development, they are about to launch a portal where business can get a quick read-out of what diligence is required of them in the different grant processes as well as what advisory capacity they can draw on.

The Norwegian Parliament has required our government to establish a forum for coherence for development – including the SDGs. This is underway, but Government reports annually to Parliament on coherence. This year, that report included a chapter on due Human Rights and responsible business diligence. Such diligence is required by law – including public procurement and other measures listed in the NAP – but a simple reminder to all, private or public, to consider salient risks when deciding on a policy, a programme or a project.

Turning to access to remedy which is main focus of this year's Forum, we are fortunate in Norway to have a reasonably well developed set of judicial and non-judicial instruments at our disposal, including a well-functioning and independent NCP. A main focus in our NAP on the third pillar of the UNGP is therefore support for the OHCHR in access to remedy report and strengthening national remedies.

Many Norwegian companies operating abroad bring internal systems of protection for whistle-blowers and securing complaints mechanisms. I am glad to note the role of the state as owner is taken very seriously by the Ministry managing most of these ownerships through a focus not only on how the companies are run but also on how they are led. Training the Board members of various companies in human rights and other due diligence in order to ensure that UNGP and OECD Guidelines are internalized in the companies is an important pre-emptive measure in order to meet the expectation of compliance for all Norwegian businesses abroad.