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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Fourth periodic reports submitted by States parties
under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

Addendum
NORWAY* ** ***

[26 February 2004]

* The third periodic report concerning rights covered by articles 6 to 9 (E/1994/104/Add.3) was considered by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1995 (see E/C.12/1995/SR.34 and 36-37; E/C.12/1995/13).

** The information submitted by Norway in accordance with the guidelines concerning the initial part of reports of States parties is contained in the core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.6).

*** The present document has not been formally edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services and is being circulated as received.

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Paragraph 2 of the guidelines (the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications)

Application and promotion of the diffusion of information on scientific progress

477. The diffusion of information on research and the application of the results of research is important. This was especially emphasised in 1990s research policy, cf. Report No. 36 (1992-93) to the Storting Research for the Community (English summary appended to the third periodic report) and Report No. 39 (1998-99) to the Storting: Research at the beginning of a new era. The latter report emphasizes the fundamental role of research in the knowledge society, as a starting point for social debate and as a contributory factor in the development of our culture and in economic growth. It is important to establish good contact between research and the community by building good networks for liaison with public institutions and organizations, strengthening cooperation with business and industry and ensuring that the diffusion of information

becomes an integral part of research activities. The Report also stresses the importance of research ethics.

478. The *Technology Council* was established in 1999 to promote transparency and public debate on research. The Council's mandate is to initiate technology assessments in all areas of society and disseminate information about the advantages and disadvantages of new technology.

479. Rational organisation of Norwegian research will help to ensure that research is well utilised. The merging of several research councils into the Research Council of Norway in 1992 has contributed to this. The 1993 Report set out the principles for an information strategy that particularly focuses on children and young people. The Research Council of Norway was given a key role in this connection and launched the annual *Research Days*. For one week each year, events are organised all over the country where research is presented to the general public through exhibitions, demonstrations of research projects, seminars, etc., and a special information prize is awarded.

480. The Government has also established a fund for a new international mathematics prize, the *Abel Prize*, which is on a par with the Nobel prizes in other areas and in memory of the Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel. This prize will help to raise the status of mathematics in society as a whole and stimulate the interest of young people in scientific studies.

481. The Research Council of Norway has been given a key role in developing measures to encourage interest in research among schools and pupils. As part of this effort, the Research Council is responsible for a programme entitled *Curious George*. When they become members, school classes receive a magazine in which various research topics are presented and problems described as a basis for work to find solutions. A Curious George Prize is awarded each year. The number of classes taking part is increasing steadily and Curious George is regarded as being a highly successful initiative for young people. A mathematics competition for school pupils has also been introduced, entitled *KappAbel*. In 2003, the Government also launched an *Action Plan for Science Subjects*, which includes measures to promote greater interest in mathematics and science subjects in education and research.

482. Other national competitions for young people include the *Young Researchers* competition, for which annual prizes are awarded at the national level. It is linked to the EU competition for young researchers, which awards prizes at the European level. The competition includes summer camps for young people and local research clubs.

483. Disseminating information through the media is another important means of encouraging interest in research. The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) has for some time broadcast a regular programme on research, entitled *Newton*, which targets young people.

484. One important goal of Government policy is to encourage greater cooperation between research and business and industry. The focus is on innovation, and work is in progress on a national Plan of Action for Innovation. In 2002 a legislative amendment was adopted to enable universities and colleges to take over the right of scientific staff to patent and exploit inventions if they so wish. The goal is to increase the dissemination of information about research results to commercial companies and others.

Environmental research

485. Environmental research still has high priority in Norway. Research in the interface between energy and the environment, and marine research with emphasis on the environment, are priority areas for Norwegian research, as well as basic research in general. Polar research also plays a central role in environmental research.

Research ethics

486. In 1987, regional committees on medical research ethics were established in each health region in Norway. These committees assess all bio-medical research projects involving human beings and recommend or advise against the implementation of such projects. The National Committee for Medical Research Ethics (NEM) is the coordinating and advisory body for the regional committees. NEM also engages in information activities on ethical issues related to the results of new medical research.

487. National committees have also been established for research ethics in science and technology (NENT) and social sciences and humanities (NESH). In the same way as NEM, these committees provide information and advice on ethical issues related to research in their professional areas.

488. Biotechnology is largely regulated by two different Acts: the Act relating to gene technology, which was passed in 1993 and the Act relating to the medical application of biotechnology, which was passed in 1994. The latter Act is currently being revised. A Biotechnology Board has been appointed to provide advice and information on biotechnology to the public at large, the Government and the Storting.

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Paragraph 4 of the guidelines (conservation, development and diffusion of science and culture)

490. Reference is made to the above paragraphs. In 2001, Norway spent NOK 24.5 billion, equivalent to 1.65% of GNP, on research. Although this percentage has declined somewhat in relation to GNP in comparison with previous years, investment in research has increased significantly since 1999. Among other things, a special Research Fund has been established that will help to ensure financing for long-term research. The proportion of research funding covered by business and industry has been increasing in recent years

and accounted for 52% of total investment in research in 2001. The Government aims to reach the average invested in research in the OECD (2.2% of GNP) by 2005.

Paragraph 5 of the guidelines (freedom for scientific research and creative activity)

491. Reference is made to Norway's third periodic report, paragraphs 502-504.

Paragraph 6 of the guidelines (international contacts and cooperation in the scientific and cultural fields)

492. The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs is responsible for Nordic and multilateral cultural cooperation. This includes cooperation within the Nordic Council of Ministers, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the International Network on Cultural Policy and participation in EU culture and media programmes under the EEA Agreement.

493. Official cultural cooperation at the Nordic level is an element of Nordic inter-governmental cooperation. It takes place within the framework of the *Nordic Council of Ministers* and comprises general cultural activities in a broad sense. There is emphasis on artistic activity, child and youth culture, media issues, cooperation in relation to Nordic neighbours, joint Nordic cultural projects abroad, etc. This cooperation is financed from the Nordic Council of Ministers' budget. The Nordic Culture Fund provides support for joint Nordic cultural projects.

494. Through cooperation in UNESCO, Norway contributes towards implementing the goal of promoting cultural diversity, understanding of the role of culture in social development, and international cultural cooperation.

495. Norway is a member of the *International Network on Cultural Policy (INCP)*, which is an informal forum for culture ministers from 53 countries. The main aim of the network is to help ensure that cultural issues are on the international political agenda and promote international cooperation on cultural policy. Issues relating to cultural diversity and globalisation are a focal point of the INCP's activities.

496. Through the EEA Agreement, Norway participates in the EU programmes MEDIA II and Culture 2000 (2000-2004). Culture 2000 gives players in Norwegian cultural life the opportunity to apply for project funds in the same way as players from member states. The MEDIA programme aims to promote the development of the audio-visual industry in the EU and the EEA within the areas of education, development and distribution. The EEA Agreement is also important for work on new media technology.

497. In cooperation on culture and the media in the *Council of Europe*, new information technology and freedom of expression and information are priority areas. Other important areas of focus in cultural cooperation include education for democratic citizenship, conservation of the cultural heritage and analyses for the development of cultural policy in member states. In the media sector, the priority areas are copyright, media diversity, digitalisation and international television broadcasting.

498. The diffusion of information about research is a central element of the work of various organizations of which Norway is a member. The main focus is on the work of the OECD Science Committee and the EU, which both have activities related to the Public Understanding of Science (PUS). Norway takes part in the EU Framework Programme for Research under the EEA Agreement. The diffusion of information about research and dialogue between science and society has a central place in the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (2002-2006) and is part of the action plan. This plan includes measures to promote interest in education among young people and measures to recruit women and promote research ethics. Norway participates actively in following up this plan.

499. Norway's policy includes ensuring broad participation in international research cooperation. In addition to cooperation at the individual level, which takes place through professional networks, meetings, publications and individual study visits, there has been a strong rise in Norway's official participation in organised international research cooperation in the past ten years. Investment in such cooperation almost doubled from 1992 to 2002 (from NOK 880 million to NOK 1,670 million). This increase is primarily due to Norway's participation in the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development. Norway is currently participating in the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (2002-2006). The Framework Programme allows for the participation of non-European countries, including developing countries, and has become the most important international arena for project cooperation for Norwegian researchers. This programme is also important because it increases the mobility of researchers. Norway also participates in the development of a European Research Area, which is more comprehensive than the Framework Programme and concerns measures to strengthen research in Europe in general, among other things through greater European coordination of work on infrastructure, innovation, quality development in research and a gradual opening up of national programmes.

500. Norway also participates in research cooperation through the Nordic Council of Ministers, the OECD and international basic research organizations, such as the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN), the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF) and the International Agency for Research and Cancer (IARC).

501. Nordic research cooperation under the auspices of Nordic Council of Ministers has a regional dimension which is very important for Norway. In the past ten years, the Baltic States have been included in cooperation in various ways. There is focus on efforts to increase mobility and the recruitment of researchers in academic and business life in the Nordic region, and emphasis on developing a Nordic Research Area parallel to the European Research Area (cf. EU).

502. In addition to multinational cooperation, there is emphasis on bilateral cooperation. The Government has developed general strategies for cooperation with certain major countries (including Russia, the USA, Germany and France) in which research is an important element. One important element of bilateral cooperation in this area is to

encourage direct contacts and agreements between research institutions. The number of institutional agreements doubled in the 1990s. They mainly concern cooperation with institutions in developing countries, Central and Eastern Europe, and the USA and Canada.

503. Norway allocates substantial development cooperation funds for development research and for cooperation on research with developing countries. Funding is provided for development research in Norway and for research cooperation between Norwegian institutions and institutions in developing countries. Funding is also provided for further education of students from developing countries, for human resource development and institution-building in the research and higher education sector, and for regional research networks in developing countries.

504. Norwegian research is intended to promote democratisation and social development in partner countries and at the same time strengthen countries' own research. Education and research are generally regarded as being key factors in a country's economic, social and cultural development.

505. Human rights, democratic development and good governance are priority areas in this type of development cooperation. Norway provides comprehensive development assistance for research and higher education. The budget item specifically earmarked for this purpose amounted to NOK 252.5 million in 2002. In addition to this, projects and programmes were financed under other budget items, including country programmes and assistance for research in international institutions, where research and higher education were one of the main elements. In 2002, Norwegian assistance for research and higher education amounted to more than NOK 400 million.

506. In 2002, the largest individual allocation under the budget item for support for research and higher education went to the Programme for Cooperation on Research between Universities in Norway and Research Institutions in the South (the NUFU Programme), which was established at the beginning of the 1990s. The NUFU Programme is regarded as being a highly successful instrument for the development of educational and research institutions. It is now in its third five-year period (2001-2006) and during this period will receive NOK 60 million a year from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget.

507. In the 1990s, Norway also had a special cooperation programme for Central and Eastern Europe. This has now been divided into separate programmes for project cooperation with Russia, candidate members to the EU, and South-Eastern Europe, respectively, which apply for the period 2000-2004. The main goal is to promote sustainable economic and social development in partner countries, with emphasis on institutional cooperation.

508. Apart from this, Norway contributes to research cooperation with developing countries, particularly in the fields of agriculture and health, through UN agencies such as

the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

509. In 2002, an agreement on research cooperation was signed with South Africa. Within the framework of this agreement, a special programme has been established, which will initially run until 2004, for project cooperation in selected areas between research institutions in the two countries. Work is in progress on an agreement on research and technology cooperation with Japan.