



ROYAL MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Attn: UN Independent Expert on the Question of Human Rights
and Extreme Poverty
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Your ref.:

Our ref.:
10/07827

Date:
31 January 2011

Questionnaire on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty

Dear Ms Magdalena Sepulveda,

Further to your most recent questionnaire on human rights and extreme poverty. In this letter you will find the response we have been able to prepare within the limited time available.

No 2 What percentage, if any, of expenditure reductions are being or will be directed at social expenditures, including education, health, social security, housing, water and sanitation?

There have been no expenditure reductions on social security. There are no plans for such reductions. The social-policy reform agenda has not changed as such due to the international financial crisis. 'The NAV reform', which merged the Public employment services (PES) and the National Insurance Service at national level and included the municipalities' social offices at local level, has been carried out in the period 2006 – 2010, as originally planned. However, the substantial increase in unemployment in the middle of the reform in the late 2008 and early 2009 was a challenge to the NAV administration. As a response, the government increased the NAV administrative expenditure in order to strengthen the organisational reform.

No 3 Please describe all actual or purposed reductions in expenditure on specific social protection programmes, including any reduction of benefits or member of beneficiaries.

There are no actual or purposed reductions in expenditure on any social protection programmes. See answer to question 2.

No 4 Please describe all actual or purposed reductions in expenditure on the wage bill, including any cap or cut in wages of public health and education sector workers.

There are no actual or purposed reductions in expenditures on the wage bill in public sector.

No 5 *Have current economic recovery policies taken into account developments in unemployment, food prices and social inequalities?*

One of the main purposes of the economic policies through the global economic crisis has been to facilitate high employment, to keep unemployment rates low and to further develop a sustainable welfare system. Food prices have been relatively stable compared to other European countries. See also answer to question 7.

No 7 *What is the assessment of the current scopes of the most vulnerable groups (particularly women, children, older people and persons with disabilities) to social goods, services and assistance, which are essential to their enjoyment of human rights? To what extent is their inadequate access attributable to the reductions in social expenditure? Please provide major findings.*

As there have been no expenditure reductions, the most vulnerable have the rights and the same standard of living as before the economic crisis. We refer to Norway's fifth periodic report on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, Article 9 Right to social security, answer 27 to 29 and Article 11 Right to an adequate standard of living, answer 43.

Yours sincerely

Halvor Sætre
Deputy Director General

Copy:
The Permanent Norwegian Mission to the UN in Geneva
Ministry of Labour