

ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO BHUTAN-Add.2

THE NETHERLANDS

- The newly adopted Civil Society Act aims to provide a regulatory framework. The CRC (OHCHR compilation, para 33) sees the risk that these rules unduly restrict the establishment of civil society organisations. How will the Government of Bhutan guarantee that this new regulatory framework will foster such a diverse and dense landscape of civil society organisations rather than restrict it? Will the Government to that end seek cooperation with the UN system in Bhutan, as recommended by CRC?
- The situation of Bhutanese refugees in camps in Eastern Nepal is of continued concern to the Netherlands. While acknowledging that a growing number of refugees have been permitted to leave Nepal in order to resettle in third countries among which The Netherlands, the Royal Government of Bhutan may want to focus on those wishing to return to Bhutan and, in particular at this juncture, on addressing a few cases with compelling humanitarian concerns. Would the Government be willing to further liaise with UNHCR to address these cases of compelling humanitarian concerns as soon as possible? The Government refers in its report to a bilateral process between Bhutan and Nepal to arrive at a lasting solution. Considering the humanitarian urgency and the pace at which the resettlement to third countries is proceeding, has a date been set in the near future for a round of negotiation between the governments of Nepal and Bhutan?
- CEDAW recalled its previous recommendation on the situation of ethnic Nepalese women (Lhotshampa) who lost their Bhutanese citizenship following the enactment of the 1958 Citizenship Act, and expressed its continued concern at the impact that this may have on women acquiring citizenship based on their marital status and passing their citizenship to children born outside of the country, as well as children with non-national fathers, in particular those under 15 years of age, whose rights, including to education and access to health care, may be limited. Is the Royal Government of Bhutan aware of these disparities? If so, does it aim to adopt measures to eliminate disparities in the enjoyment of rights experienced by people of Nepalese ethnic origin?
- In its report the Royal Government of Bhutan refers to its efforts to advance the position of women and combat domestic violence. The establishment of a Women and Child Protection Unit in Thimphu deserves special mentioning and the Netherlands hopes that the ambition to have similar units in the other major towns will be met, preferably before the self-imposed deadline of 2013 (national report, para 124). Acknowledging that legislative processes are difficult to predict, when does the Government intend to have the domestic violence bill adopted (as currently is being drafted, national report para 49)?
