



**Introductory remarks by Mr. Torben Weyhe on behalf of the Government of Greenland at
the occasion of the examination by the Committee on the Rights of the Child
Geneva 24 January 2011**

Mrs. Chair, Distinguished members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

On behalf of the Government of Greenland I would like to thank you for the opportunity to report on the status and development of children's rights in Greenland.

The government has taken the former recommendations of the committee into account and implemented new initiatives to improve the areas of concern.

21 June 2009 the Greenlandic people celebrated that the Act on Self-Governance entered into force. The act constitutes that Greenland can take over further responsibility areas from the Danish state at a pace, which Greenland finds beneficial and proper. The people of Greenland are acknowledged as a people pursuant to international law with the right of self-determination.

The Self-Governance agreement will not influence the children's area formally, since this area has been under the competence of the Greenland Home Rule Government. However, the right to extended self-determination includes increased responsibility, politically speaking. If Greenland is to achieve independence and self-sustainability in future, the welfare and education of children must be a first priority.

2 June 2009 the Greenlandic people elected a new government. The new government has placed children and youth on top of the political agenda in Greenland. Consequently, the government has allocated additional 25 million Dkr. on the financial bill in 2010 to implement the initiatives in the 2010 strategy: "A Safe Childhood". Among other things the strategy includes the establishment of a Children's Centre for sexually abused children and a Children's Council including a Children's Spokesman.

In the years to come the government wants to further implement the Convention in Greenland. A newly signed five year cooperation agreement with UNICEF Denmark states that UNICEF will contribute to the revision of the Act on Help to Children and Youth with a view to enhance children's rights in legislation and further promote the Convention in context of the unique Greenlandic conditions.

The government's main objective is to ensure long-term planning in the children and youth area. Thus, the government has initiated a children and youth strategy based on advice from the municipalities, local experts and non-governmental organizations. The strategy will be presented to the Parliament of Greenland in 2011 and will set the goals for improved child welfare in the next 10-15 years.

Today, the national reform of the primary and secondary school is implemented and a reform of the tertiary educations is planned. Furthermore, a coming reorganization of the Health Care System will ease the access to specialized treatment in all Greenland. Prenatal care aimed at vulnerable families has been improved and the child immunisation program has been extended.

In 2009 the government sat up a commission for welfare. 2011 the commission will deliver its final report with recommendations for socioeconomic reforms to level out social and economic inequality in society. The essential task for the commission is to analyze the correlation between economic growth and welfare as a way to develop welfare and possibilities for the Greenlandic people.

I hope the introductory remarks together with the section on Greenland in the report have given you an impression of the children and youth area in Greenland.

On behalf of the Government of Greenland I would like to thank you for your contributions to improve the conditions for children and youth in Greenland. I can assure you that Greenland is fully committed to take any recommendation we may receive from the committee into serious consideration.

Thank you for your attention.