**UPR of Bahrain – Human Rights Council 13th Session, 21 May 2012**

**Statement by Norway**

Thank you, Mr/Madame President,

Norway welcomes the delegation of Bahrain and the presentation of the national report. We are closely following the ongoing – and worrying – developments in the country. It is of the utmost importance that the recommendations of the BICI Commission are implemented without delay.

While Norway recognises Bahrain’s reform efforts, we recommend that the Government continue the reform process and ensures accountability by investigating all allegations of torture and mistreatment and by prosecuting any individuals found responsible, including senior government officials.

Further, we recommend that Bahrain unconditionally release the individuals who were convicted by special courts, or are awaiting trial, for merely exercising their fundamental rights of expression and assembly.

In particular, we recommend that human rights defenders must be protected and allowed to conduct their work without hindrance, intimidation or harassment.

Norway regrets the lack of independent media in Bahrain, and we recommend that the country strengthen the right to freedom of expression in its new Press Law, as well as allowing foreign media to enter the country and report freely.

Finally, we recommend that Bahrain enact a law providing for full citizenship rights for the children of Bahraini mothers and non-Bahraini fathers.

Thank you.