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QUESTION FOR UN WORKING GROUP ON ARBITRARY DETENTION

Delivered by Rachel Brett, Quaker UN Office, Geneva, on Monday 10 March 2008

Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers) welcomes the annual report of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (A/HRC/7/4 of 10 January 2008), as well as the report of its Missions to Norway (A/HRC/7/4/Add.2 of 11 October 2007) and to Angola (A/HRC/7/4/Add.4 of 29 February 2008).

We appreciate the Working Group's continued focus on the overuse of detention in relation to asylum-seekers and others crossing borders, as well as the attention to detention in the context of counter-terrorism measures and states of emergency, and to those particularly susceptible to sexual abuse in detention, and strongly endorse the Working Group's reminder that juveniles should be separated from adult detainees, and female from male detainees. In this context, we would like to draw attention to the *Handbook on Women in Prisons* being published jointly by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the Quaker UN Office, Geneva.

The Working Group recommends that the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights organise a seminar with the participation of all stakeholders for an in-depth and urgent deliberation to seek effective alternatives to detention for asylum seekers and illegal immigrants. We would appreciate more information about what the outcome of such a seminar might be.

Thank you, Mr President.