



Article from Ministry of the Environment

Organisations provided input for high-level environmental conference

Published 15 January 2021

Civil society, the business sector and municipalities have an important role in the efforts for sustainable development. State Secretary Eva Svedling invited organisations and networks that are involved in this issue from different perspectives to a discussion on the focus of the Stockholm+50 high-level conference. One suggestion from the consultation was that Stockholm+50 should be action-oriented and highlight the conditions for, and obstacles to, implementing global goals.

The world is in the midst of global biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and climate change. These crises affect all of us living now. In a speech on the state of the planet, the UN Secretary-General has expressed the view that humanity is waging a war against nature and that we are already seeing the consequences of this. Our relationship with nature needs to change.

Thanks to various conventions, the countries of the world are working together to reduce emissions and negative environmental impacts, but in order to achieve the international environmental and climate goals, ambitions must increase sharply. The Government wants to increase dialogue and cooperation by organising a global high-level conference in Stockholm, 50 years after the first environmental conference took place in Stockholm in 1972.

Ms Svedling and Ambassador Johanna Lissinger Peitz invited organisations that are active in areas such as the environment, business, development assistance and indigenous peoples to include their input in the planning and focus of the conference.

Stockholm+50 will contribute to redefining our relationship with nature and support a green recovery from the pandemic, with a focus on the transition to sustainable consumption and production, nature-based solutions and the role of young people in the transition. The ambition is for the meeting to result in concrete measures during the 2020s, which the UN has called the Decade of Action, but also beyond 2030.

The participants were positive about the conference's planned focus on sustainable consumption and production and nature-based solutions, as measures in this area are central to preventing biodiversity loss and climate change. During the consultation, various suggestions for the focus of Stockholm+50 were presented, and some examples are described here. Stockholm+50 should be action-oriented and highlight conditions and obstacles to implementing global goals. A focus on the circular economy and economic measurement methods was highlighted as important, as was the question of how investments can affect the relationship with nature. The business sector has an important role and businesses can contribute in various ways to sustainable development. Stockholm+50 could therefore contribute to long-term regulatory frameworks and technical development.

Many of the organisations emphasised the importance of reaching out widely and including various sectors and organisations in the preparation and implementation, not least indigenous peoples who can contribute traditional knowledge and a holistic perspective in relation to nature. The perspectives of young people and young adults must be taken into account and it is important to ensure that their participation is meaningful. Through both physical and digital platforms for the conference, more people can be included. Many organisations emphasised the importance of a just, equitable and inclusive transition.

The Ministry of the Environment will take on board the views and proposals that emerged during the meeting to see how they can contribute to the continued work on the Stockholm+50 high-level conference. Sweden will continue to seek views from various actors, including internationally.

The following organisations participated in the meeting:

- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
- Greenpeace
- Friends of the Earth Sweden
- Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
- ChemSec – the International Chemical Secretariat
- 2022 Initiative Foundation
- National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations
- Fältbiologerna (‘Field Biologists’)
- National Union of the Swedish Sami People
- United Nations Association of Sweden
- Oxfam Sweden
- CONCORD Sweden
- Haga Initiative
- Confederation of Swedish Enterprise
- Swedish Consumers’ Association
- Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions
- End Ecocide
- Swedish Red Cross
- Wateraid
- Olof Palme International Center
- Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation



Article from Ministry of the Environment

Youth organisations gave the Government input on climate policy, consumption and a high-level environmental meeting

Published 15 December 2020

Sweden's young people are deeply committed to the issue of climate change. In recognition of their commitment, Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin met with representatives of ten youth climate organisations on 25 November to discuss climate ambitions and objectives for the high-level meeting Stockholm+50 from a young person's perspective.

We are living in the midst of climate change. It is we human beings who bear the responsibility. The issue of climate change is no longer a distant problem for future generations. Pursuing an active climate policy is a question of solidarity with future generations, with all people throughout the world, and with the ecological system.

Sweden's young people are strongly committed to the issue of climate change. The youth climate movement has repeatedly urged the Government and the Ministry of the Environment to make use of their valuable perspectives and experiences when formulating Sweden's climate policy. As a step towards addressing climate challenges, Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin, State Secretary Eva Svedling and Ministry of the Environment staff met with representatives of ten Swedish youth climate organisations in a digital forum to discuss Sweden's climate efforts and

objectives for the high-level meeting Stockholm+50 from a young person's perspective.

The questions for the meeting were what ambitious climate policy means at national, regional and global level, and what sustainable production and consumption within our planetary boundaries means. The input from the youth organisations to the Government and the Ministry of the Environment was clear: world leaders' actions to combat global warming are inadequate and too slow. It is time to reprioritise from short-term economic growth to long-term well-being for everyone, and to take greater account of indigenous peoples' collective knowledge – climate transition cannot come at their expense. It is the responsibility of the world's politicians, not the individual or consumer, to reverse the negative trend and secure the climate transition.

The Ministry of the Environment will share the views, ideas and concerns expressed during the meeting with colleagues at the Government Offices in the next stage of the process. The input will also be incorporated into Sweden's planning for the high-level conference Stockholm+50.

In preparation for the youth council on climate change, the Ministry of the Environment coordinated closely with NOD (national body for dialogue and consultation between the Government and civil society) and maintained a dialogue with the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations.

The organisations that participated in the meeting were Fältbiologerna (Nature and Youth Sweden), Global Shapers, Climate Students Sweden, the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations, PUSH Sweden, Sáminuorra, Guides and Scouts of Sweden, Svenska Kyrkans Unga (Church of Sweden Youth), we_change and WWF Sweden Youth. The youth representatives taking part in Sweden's delegation to the UN climate negotiations played an active role before and during the meeting.



Article from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden is scaling up its efforts to leave no one behind

Published 10 July 2020

‘Leave no one behind’ (LNOB) is an overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda. It is both a prerequisite and goal for sustainable development, and should permeate all our efforts to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The operationalisation of this principle has never before been reviewed at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF). This year, Sweden outlines how it is scaling up its efforts to deliver on the LNOB principle, in a report that focuses in particular on future generations and seven main messages to realise the LNOB principle by 2030:

1. Realising human rights and gender equality
2. Strengthening empowerment and participation
3. Advancing the transition towards resource-efficient, resilient and climate-neutral economies
4. Promoting multidimensional poverty reduction
5. Promoting social dialogue and decent work
6. Progressively realising universal social protection
7. Improving data and monitoring

Marginalised groups particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic

The importance of delivering on this principle has been illustrated by the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Everyone is affected, but the crisis is disproportionately affecting people in vulnerable situations.

Women, men and people from different minority groups are affected in different ways. Particularly at risk are people who are older, sick or disabled, people living in poverty and marginalisation, and people who have limited access to health care services and water, sanitation and hygiene. Some women and children, as well as LGBTI people, are isolated at home and subjected to domestic violence. Small businesses and groups with precarious or informal employment contracts are experiencing severe economic uncertainty.

The 2030 Agenda offers a framework for building more inclusive, sustainable and resilient societies equipped to respond to pandemics, climate change and other global challenges. The 17 SDGs must be realised for all, everywhere – including for future generations.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Social distancing and markedly reduced travel in Sweden

Published 18 June 2020 Updated 18 June 2020

Swedes are largely following the government agencies' advice and recommendations. This has been shown through surveys and data concerning movement patterns. Now travel within Sweden is permitted again – but if the guidelines are not followed, the Government is prepared to take measures.

More than eight in ten Swedes are keeping a greater distance from others than they normally would. Just as many are avoiding shaking hands and are washing their hands more often than usual. Over 60 per cent are taking part in social activities outside the home to a lesser extent and are avoiding public places where there are lots of people. This is clear from a survey on behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic conducted by analysis company Kantar Sifo on behalf of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. In other words, Swedes are largely following the advice and recommendations issued by the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

Travel decreased by over 40 per cent

The travel advice of the Public Health Agency of Sweden has also been heeded. When the Agency advised against non-essential domestic travel at the end of March, travel in the Stockholm region decreased by over 40 per cent. Data on movement patterns from telecom company Telia's mobile network shows that, in Sweden as a whole, travel decreased by more than 20 per cent. Since 13 May, when the advice was changed to permit travel corresponding to one to two hours by car from home, travel in the country has gradually increased again.

According to the Public Health Agency of Sweden, it is not travel per se that spreads the virus, it is personal hygiene and social contact. Now that fewer Swedes are receiving care in hospital and tracing and testing have got under way, as of 13 June it is permitted for people with no symptoms to travel freely within Sweden.

“Common sense, a large portion of responsibility and caution are required. The vast majority have demonstrated this so far, and it still applies,” says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

New restrictions may be issued

A number of restrictions remain in place. These include the ban on visits to homes for older people, the ban on gatherings of more than 50 people and the rules concerning crowding in restaurants, bars and cafés. Businesses that do not follow the regulations may be closed after an inspection; so far, this has happened on some ten occasions in Stockholm and Gothenburg. The tourism and hospitality industry is also covered by the guidelines on crowding. The situation remains serious and if the curve indicating the number of seriously ill people turns upwards again, new restrictions may be issued.

“Although some restrictions are lifted, this does not mean that life can return to normal. Important restrictions will remain. It is important to hang on, otherwise the spread of infection might take off. We all need to continue to take great personal responsibility,” Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin says.

“If it turns out that this doesn’t work, we’re prepared to take measures and tighten the recommendations,” says Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment

Government to establish a Ministerial Working Group on Climate Policy

Published 12 June 2020

The Government's goal is for Sweden to be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. To achieve this, all policy areas must pull in the same direction and the issue of climate change must be integrated into all relevant policy areas. For this reason, the Government has decided to form a ministerial working group on climate policy.

– Climate change is the defining issue of our time and it cannot be solved if we're stuck in a silo mentality. All relevant policy areas must contribute to the transition of society as a whole, says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The purpose of the ministerial working group is to strengthen the Government's work to achieve the climate objectives and to implement the climate policy action plan. The working group will hold regular meetings chaired by the Prime Minister. In addition to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Environment and Climate, the group will include six other ministers whose areas are crucial to the climate transition: the Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation, the Minister for Infrastructure, the Minister for Energy and Digital Development, the Minister for Rural Affairs and the Minister for Financial Markets and Housing.

The Ministerial Working Group on Climate Policy will have a central role in efforts to drive the transition and pursue the green recovery.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Employment, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Infrastructure

Several Ministers participated in commemorating Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January

Published 30 January 2020

On Holocaust Remembrance Day January 27 several representatives from the Swedish Government participated in memorial services to honour the victims of the Holocaust and to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven attended a memorial ceremony at Auschwitz-Birkenau to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation. The memorial service began in Auschwitz and ended with a candle lighting ceremony in Birkenau.

Minister for Education Anna Ekström spoke at a memorial service arranged by the Council of Roma representatives in Malmö and then at a memorial service arranged by the Jewish Community of Malmö in the Synagogue of Malmö.

Minister for Home Affairs Mikael Damberg spoke at a ceremony arranged by The Living History Forum at Raoul Wallenberg's Square and then at the memorial ceremony in the Great Synagogue of Stockholm. Minister for Environment and Deputy Prime and Climate Isabella Lövin, Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson and Minister for Financial Markets and Housing Per Bolund also participated at the ceremony in the Great Synagogue.

Minister for Culture and Democracy Amanda Lind visited the Jewish Community of Gothenburg and spoke at the memorial ceremony in the evening.

Minister for Gender Equality, with responsibility for anti-discrimination and anti-segregation Åsa Lindhagen spoke at the memorial ceremony at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

Further Minister for Energy and Digital Development Anders Ygeman and Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson participated in a memorial service at the The Royal Dramatic Theatre.



Article from Ministry of the Environment

Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin received Belarusian Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection

Published 23 May 2019

Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin received the Belarusian Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Andrei Khudyk on 22 May 2019. Mr Khudyk and the Belarusian delegation visited Stockholm and Borlänge to study Swedish waste management experience and discuss sustainable development.

Isabella Lövin and Andrei Khudyk discussed the Sustainable Development Goals, reducing CO₂ emissions and improving the Baltic Sea environment.

Both ministers concluded that Sweden and Belarus have good cooperation in the environmental area. This is implemented through Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) support to development projects in Belarus, cooperation on radiation protection, the Eastern Partnership, the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environmental Partnership (E5P) and other instruments. The ministers welcomed the resumption of Sida's presence in Belarus and hoped that this would strengthen the conditions for cooperation on the Sustainable Development Goals in the Baltic Sea region.

Ms Lövin hoped that Belarus could benefit from Sweden's experiences and underlined that high environmental standards and broad and inclusive

cooperation with environmental organisations, local populations and the business community have been particularly important for Sweden's environmental successes.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of the Environment

Speeding up climate action and improving people's everyday lives by greening the economy

Published 07 May 2019

Listen to Minister for Environment and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin talk about her areas of responsibility, her priorities and the challenges awaiting during this electoral period.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality - Hosts' summary and reflections

Published 20 June 2018

The Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality was held on 15–17 April 2018 and gathered more than 700 participants from over 100 countries and a multitude of sectors and functions. The discussions covered a broad range of areas and focused on concrete methods and tools to enhance gender equality and the full enjoyment of rights, representation and resources for all women and girls.

The hallmark of the Forum was co-creation. This included:

- A broad nomination process in which CSOs and other partners joined the Swedish Foreign Service, the Swedish Institute, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) in suggesting participants.
- A co-owned agenda inspired by the participants themselves and what they reported as being the greatest challenges to gender equality.
- A collaborative process in which partners, collaborators and participants developed and organised seminars together and in close dialogue with the Swedish Institute.

Results

- A unique Forum constituting a global and vibrant manifestation and mobilisation for gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights

by all women and girls.

- A powerhouse of inspiration co-created by, and further invigorating, a multitude of gender champions from all over the world.
- A total of 29 interactive seminars and roundtable discussions that were co-organised with participants and – thus – contributed to substance, methods and partnerships.
- A platform for non-stop sharing of experiences and best practices, both within and across sectors, policy areas and regions.
- A wealth of new and further developed initiatives, commitments and partnerships focused on areas such as creating awareness, legislative change and capacity building, involving countries from all over the world.
- A number of launches of new tools, such as a 'Women, Business and the Law' report from the World Bank Group.
- A Call to Action to counter the shrinking space and to increase support for women human rights defenders, drafted and presented by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation with partners and other women's rights activists.
- A broad communicative reach. During the week of the Forum alone the hashtag #GenderEqualWorld reached almost 3 million people, trending in countries such as Australia, India, the US and the UK, and also achieving huge reach in countries such as Brazil, Canada, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, France, Iraq, Poland and Turkey.
- A wide range of articles and news broadcasts in traditional media around the globe.
- A distinct contribution and push for the efforts to implement the SDGs as well as CEDAW and other relevant conventions, resolutions and agreements.
- A starting point for discussions in new constellations, including in the form of a first cross-sectoral Feminist Think Space held back-to-back with the Forum and co-hosted by UN Women and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and cofacilitated by UN Women and Sida.

Next steps

- Building on the momentum and capitalising on the results of the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality, Tunisia will host the conference Tunis Forum on Gender Equality in 2019.
- Participants are pursuing a number of other initiatives linked to and/or inspired by the Forum.
- Participants can continue to register initiatives, commitments and partnerships resulting from or connected to the Forum on the Forum

website: <http://genderequalworld.com/initiatives/>.

- The Swedish Institute will post documentation from all the seminars and roundtables on the website. Together with other outcomes of the Forum, the documentation will serve as a library of best practices and a platform for continued networking.
- The Swedish Institute will develop a tool kit so that Swedish embassies and other stakeholders can take the Forum and its outcomes further in their respective context.
- Sweden commits to implementing the 2018 action plan for feminist foreign policy and launching a handbook on how to conduct a feminist foreign policy. Sida will operationalise the new global development cooperation strategy for gender equality.
- Sweden will present the documentation and results of the Forum to UN Women, as well as cooperate with UN Women and other partners on following up the Forum, including by disseminating and drawing on the best practices and experiences shared.
- Sweden will continue the dialogue with partners interested in arranging events inspired by and following up the Forum.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Safer world for women and girls in focus at European Development Days

Published 20 June 2018

The European Development Days is a development forum that the European Commission has organised since 2006. This year's theme was gender equality under the thread 'Women and Girls at the Forefront of Sustainable Development'.

Carin Jämtin spoke about women in decision-making positions

Director-General of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) Carin Jämtin took part in two panel discussions. One dealt with how we can increase the number of women in decision-making positions, and the other how men can be agents of change. Other participants on the first panel included First Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans and Gambia's Minister of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment Isatou Touray.

The topics discussed by the panel included ways in which we can involve and support young women with the aim of getting more women in managerial positions and on governing boards.

During the panel discussion, Ms Jämtin spoke about the need for different types of leadership. One way we can help more women enter the labour market is to create education and job opportunities for girls and young women. Others include a fairer distribution of work in the home between women and men, and giving men the opportunity to take parental leave.

- We need more women in the labour market, and one way is to support women's leadership. A good start towards increasing women's leadership is to teach our sons to be gender-equal men.

Responsibility for staff in humanitarian operations

Ambassador Mikael Lindvall, Representative of Sweden in the Political and Security Committee, took part in a discussion on transparency and responsibility for staff in humanitarian operations. The panellists discussed how we can work proactively to prevent abuses at workplaces.

A recurring theme during the panel discussions was that the recent abuses have resulted in both debate and an insight that new systems are needed, with better feedback and training, so that in the long term, a culture is created in which zero tolerance of all kinds of abuses is the norm.

Ambassador Lindvall emphasised the importance of having staff on site for the people working in the field and creating a good dialogue. Maintaining a dialogue and a local presence makes it easier to uncover corruption and signs of abuse more quickly.

- No institutions are free from abuse. We are all a part of the problem and we must all be part of the solution.

Also on the panel were Oxfam International's Executive Director Winnie Byanyima and Director-General of the European Commission's DG Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Monique Pariat.

Activists and ministers took part

The European Development Days attracts several thousand participants including heads of state and government, the UN Deputy Secretary-General, ministers, officials, activists, journalists and many more. The forum is a platform for dialogue and the exchange of experiences to move work on development issues forward.



Article from Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden to host Stockholm Tax Conference – an international conference on tax capacity-building, 30–31 May

Published 22 May 2018

Efficient and effective tax administration is fundamental to the long-term financing of a functioning society, poverty reduction and the achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Sweden has therefore invited representatives of governments in 160 countries, agencies, international and regional organisations, civil society and the business sector to exchange experiences of tax capacity-building. The Stockholm Tax Conference will be held on 30–31 May.

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Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin will host the conference, which is being held by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Swedish Tax Agency at Stockholm Waterfront Congress Centre. The conference will help

to support tax capacity-building in low and middle income countries and is part of the Government's 12-point programme to combat tax evasion, tax avoidance and money laundering.

Some 500 participants are expected to take part in the conference. During the conference, good examples will be highlighted on subjects such as government and business partnerships, transparency in tax systems, how digitalisation and civil society can promote capacity-building, and implementation of the Addis Tax Initiative, which will involve Sweden doubling funds for tax capacity-building by 2020. Speakers at the conference will include former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, Benin's Minister of Economy and Finance, Romuald Wadagni, Navid Hanif from the UN, James A. Brumby from the World Bank, and Felix Fernandez Shaw from the European Commission.

Using international financing for development efforts (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) as the starting point, the conference will be an important complement to international institutions' work and initiatives in the area of tax. These include the Platform for Collaboration on Tax conference in February 2018, the Financing for Development Forum in April 2018, and the UN summit on SDG financing in September 2018.

More information about the conference and the programme are available on the conference website at www.stockholmtaxconference2018.se.

Follow the dialogue on social media. We will be tweeting under the hashtags #sthlmtaxconf and #tax4dev.

Date: 30–31 May

Venue: Stockholm Waterfront Congress Centre

#sthlmtaxconf

#tax4dev



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Joining forces to strengthen global gender equality efforts

Published 23 April 2018

More than 700 gender equality advocates from more than 100 countries gathered at the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality to exchange experiences and mobilise efforts for global gender equality. The participants included key figures from civil society organisations, business, academia and politics. They all have the same goal: a gender-equal world.

The Forum took place at a decisive point in time. While gender equality is progressing in many places, many of the participants highlighted the fact that gender inequality and discrimination of women and girls are among the greatest human rights challenges of our time. Efforts to promote women's and girls' rights, representation and access to resources therefore require concerted action. It requires cooperation between gender equality advocates and decision-makers, and between men and women.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström began her speech with a special welcome to the men, stressing that gender equality is not a women's issue – it concerns peace, security, development and democracy. To illustrate the path to gender equality, she quoted Mahatma Gandhi:

"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win. I sense that we are winning," she said.

More statistics needed

To tackle the issue of gender equality, the right conditions are required. Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and

Climate and Deputy Prime Minister, highlighted identifying gender inequality as an area requiring considerable improvement.

"What you don't know about, you don't care about. We need more statistics on gender equality in the world to move forward. That will give even better opportunities to work for increased gender equality," she said.

"Gender equality is smart economics"

Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde made the point that gender equality is not only wise and right, it is also smart economics.

"Women who participate in the labour market have more power over their own lives. This strengthens the whole of society. Shutting women out of economic activity is probably the world's greatest waste of opportunity and talent," said Ms Linde.

The Forum delegates are now urged to submit concrete examples of commitments, initiatives and cooperation to continue supporting and inspiring each other in their efforts to increase gender equality.



Article from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

New strategy to raise ambition regarding global efforts for environmental sustainability

Published 13 March 2018

Reduced emissions, increased resilience to climate change, and more sustainable management of water, ecosystems and natural resources. These are some of the goals aimed for in development efforts. In March 2018, the Government decided on the new strategy for Sweden's global development cooperation in the areas of environmental sustainability, sustainable climate and ocean, and sustainable use of natural resources. The strategy applies for the five years 2018–2020.

"Climate change is the defining issue of our time. Our blue planet has a fever. Those affected most are those with fewest resources, and this is why development cooperation in this area is extremely important," says Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate.

The goal of Swedish international development cooperation is to create opportunities for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression, and to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. The new strategy also aims to – within Swedish development cooperation focused on a sustainable environment, climate and ocean, and on the sustainable use of natural resources – contribute to development of the global normative framework, global policy and methods, as well as strengthened capacity among organisations and institutions.

The strategy will steer the global efforts of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in three areas: climatically sustainable development, environmentally sustainable development and sustainable use of natural resources, and sustainable ocean and water resources. The 10 goals for operations set by the Government include reduced climate emissions and increased resilience to climate change, increased access to renewable energy, strengthened protection and sustainable management of ecosystems and natural resources, and sustainable management of water and ocean, with reduced pollution and littering.

Climatically sustainable development

This area concerns, among other things, preventing climate change and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants. It also concerns sustainable energy systems, and contributing to reduced vulnerability of people who live in poverty, and to increased resilience to handle climate change and natural disasters. A new area in this strategy, compared with previous years, is that a focus on the ocean is included.

"I am delighted that Sweden, through this strategy, also continues to highlight the importance of ocean issues," says Ms Lövin. "For many small island nations, climate change is an immediate existential threat."

There is a major need for adaptation to ongoing and future climate change, and it is particularly important to build resilience in the least developed countries, in small island nations and for the most vulnerable population groups.

Environmentally sustainable development and sustainable use of natural resources

This area concerns, among other things, sustainable management and sustainable use of land-based ecosystems, biodiversity and species, natural resources, including agriculture and forestry, and ecosystem services. It also covers an aspiration to achieve environmentally sustainable cities, sustainable production and consumption patterns, preventive control of chemicals, and ensure that more people who live in poverty gain access to sustainable renewable energy at an affordable cost.

Increased access to sustainable and modern energy services is key to poverty reduction. And it is necessary to transition to sustainable consumption and

production of goods and services to reduce the negative impact on the climate, the environment and human health.

Sustainable ocean and water resources

This area concerns cleaner water and ocean, reduced emissions of pollutants and reduced littering. It also covers biodiversity and sustainable management and use of marine, coastal and freshwater ecosystems.

"Water is a fundamental prerequisite for all life on Earth, and therefore also a condition for human health and well-being. Marine-based industries therefore need to take economic, social and environmental sustainability as their starting point," says Ms Lövin.

Long-term sustainable water use, with functioning ecosystems and ecosystem services that can clean and buffer access to water, requires integrated and transparent water management both within and between countries. Cross-border cooperation on water can also contribute to preventing conflicts.

Sweden's development cooperation shall always be based on and characterised by a rights perspective and poor people's perspectives on development, and this also applies to this strategy. By contributing to the strategy's goals, activities can support low- and middle-income countries accession and implementing commitments under international environmental conventions and agreements. Increased knowledge, access to information, dialogue and participation that promotes equality and gender equality are cross-cutting themes that contribute to the development of global policy and methods, as well as capacity-building. Increased participation in decision-making processes, access to justice and transparency also promote environmentally sustainable development and contribute moreover to preventing conflicts.

Fact box – strategy for a sustainable environment, climate and ocean, and sustainable use of natural resources

- The strategy has a total budget of SEK 6.5 billion.
- The strategy applies for five years: 2018–2022.
- The strategy is to be particularly based on a number of the Global Goals in the 2030 Agenda and, within the framework of activities, contribute to achieving these. The Global Goals in question are:

- Clean water and sanitation (Goal 6)
- Affordable and clean energy (Goal 7)
- Sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11)
- Responsible consumption and production (Goal 12)
- Climate action (Goal 13)
- Life below water (Goal 14)
- Life on land (Goal 15)

- Synergies between the different areas of the strategy must be harnessed.
- The strategy will be followed up according to the principles and processes stated in the Government guidelines for strategies in Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian aid.
- Reporting is to be conducted with reference to how activities contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.



Article from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

New strategy to increase the level of ambition regarding global efforts on the environment, climate and oceans

Published 09 March 2018

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Climate-resilient sustainable development

This area concerns, among other things, preventing climate change and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants. It also concerns sustainable energy systems, and contributing to reduced vulnerability of people who live in poverty, and to increased resilience to handle climate change and natural disasters. A new area in this strategy, compared with previous years, is that a focus on oceans is included.

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Environmentally sustainable development and sustainable use of natural resources

This area concerns, among other things, sustainable management and sustainable use of land-based ecosystems, biodiversity and species, natural resources, including agriculture and forestry, and ecosystem services. It also covers an aspiration to achieve environmentally sustainable cities, sustainable production and consumption patterns, preventive chemicals controls, and ensure that more people who live in poverty gain access to sustainable renewable energy at a reasonable cost.

Increased access to sustainable and modern energy services is a key to poverty reduction. And it is necessary to transition to sustainable

consumption and production of goods and services to reduce the negative impact on the climate, the environment and human health.

Sustainable oceans and water resources

This area concerns cleaner water and oceans, reduced emissions of pollutants and reduced littering. It also covers biodiversity and sustainable management and use of marine, coastal and freshwater ecosystems.

"Water is a fundamental prerequisite for all life on Earth, and therefore also a condition for human health and well-being. Marine-based industries therefore need to take economic, social and environmental sustainability as their starting point," says Ms Lövin.

Long-term sustainable water use, with functioning ecosystems and ecosystem services that can clean and buffer access to water, requires integrated and transparent water management both within and between states. Cross-border cooperation on water can also contribute to preventing conflicts.

Sweden's development cooperation must always be based on and characterised by a rights perspective and poor people's perspectives on development, and this also applies to this strategy. By contributing to the strategy's goals, activities can support low- and middle-income countries joining and implementing commitments under the framework of international environmental conventions and agreements. Increased knowledge, access to information, dialogue and participation that promotes equality and gender equality are constant themes that contribute to global policy and methods development and capacity-building. Increased participation in decision-making processes and access to legal examination and transparency also promote environmentally sustainable development and contribute moreover to preventing conflicts.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

“Sweden must continue to lead the way on climate action”

Published 12 December 2017

The One Planet Summit begins in Paris on 12 December, and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, Isabella Lövin will be there. Below she talks about the summit and a new Swedish climate initiative.

The One Planet Summit begins in Paris on 12 December. What kind of summit is it?

The summit is an initiative of French President Emmanuel Macron, and its aim is to speed up the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The summit will focus on the financing of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the impact of climate change, particularly in developing countries. President Macron's initiative came shortly after the United States withdrew from the Paris Agreement and drastically cut its share of funding to international climate action. In light of this, it is vital that other countries increase their contributions. For this Government, it goes without saying that Sweden must continue to lead the way on climate action.

What are your expectations of the summit?

The situation is extremely serious. Climate change is happening here and now, and research shows we have very little time to act. Nevertheless, the growing will among many countries to also take action makes me hopeful. The starting point of the summit is the need to speed up our efforts to fight climate change and to work together. There is incredible strength in this. I hope and believe that we will hear about a number of hope-inspiring initiatives from participating countries.

How many countries will take part in the summit?

Some 130 countries are expected to take part, and around 50 heads of state or government.

Which issues will you highlight in particular?

This summit is largely about cooperation and creating new partnerships and initiatives, which is why I will share examples of successful climate action under way in Sweden. This includes our pioneering climate act that enters into force in January, our ambitious climate objectives and how various actors are now deeply engaged in greening Sweden to enable us to be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. One exciting area in this regard is our Green Industry Leap budget initiative, which provides central government support to transition to fossil-free industry in Sweden. Sweden could be the first country to produce steel without using coal, a development that seemed inconceivable just a few years ago. I believe we have much to gain by seeing the opportunities involved in transitioning to a sustainable society.

Many countries are expected to launch new initiatives during the summit. What will Sweden contribute?

Since the major focus is on financing, we will highlight the Stockholm Sustainable Finance Centre that was launched a week ago. This is a knowledge centre led by the Stockholm School of Economics and the Stockholm Environment Institute, and co-financed by the Government. The Centre will help build expertise and capacity for sustainable investments by financial market actors, not least in developing countries. Sweden has extensive knowledge in this area, which we naturally want to share.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Swedish Government's climate initiatives – three years into the electoral period

Published 13 October 2017

Sweden is to become one of the world's first fossil-free welfare nations, and the Government is now implementing the largest initiatives on climate and the environment in modern times.

Three years into the Government's electoral period, its initiatives have resulted in the introduction of a climate policy framework, a changeover in the transport sector from fossil fuels to sustainable fuels and electrification, and major investments being made in renewable energy and energy efficiency. Through the Climate Leap, the Government has invested SEK 2 billion, thus far, in regional and local initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Investments are being made in charging stations, biogas plants, railway maintenance and energy efficiency. Support to solar and wind power is being increased, and the goal is 100 per cent renewable electricity production. The Government has made the greatest investments ever in climate and the environment. The investments in climate and the environment in the 2018 Budget Bill mean a doubling of the previous Government's climate and environment budget bill for 2014.

Sweden is also pursuing climate action in the European Union and provides a uniquely large contribution to the UN Green Climate Fund.

Sweden is taking the lead internationally for climate and our climate policy is now ranked overall best in the EU.

Some of the Government's investments in climate so

far

- • **A climate policy framework**

Sweden has adopted a climate act and clear climate goals, which means that we are now at the forefront of global climate efforts. The objective is for Sweden to have no net emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere by 2045, and thereafter achieve negative emissions. Emissions from transport will be reduced by 70 per cent by 2030. The Climate Act will enter into force on 1 January 2018.

Read more about the Climate Policy Framework.

- **A climate policy council**

Sweden has decided to establish a climate policy council tasked with assisting the Government by providing an independent assessment of how the overall policy presented by the Government is compatible with the climate goals. The council is included in a government bill on a climate policy framework, together with new climate goals and a climate act.

The climate issue is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity, and to meet this challenge, our climate policy must be in order. The climate policy council will be an interdisciplinary and independent expert body with broad expertise that can examine and assess whether the overall policy presented by the Government is compatible with the climate goals.

- **Renewable energy**

A cross-party agreement on energy policy, for the first time in Sweden's history, with a goal of 100 per cent renewable electricity by 2040.

Initiatives to achieve 100 per cent renewable energy are made through support to solar cells and energy storage, and investments in energy-efficiency measures in housing.

The agreement will also lead to an extension of electricity certificate systems and a new goal by 2030, in agreement with the Norwegian Government.

Read more on the agreement on Swedish energy policy.

- **The Climate Leap**

The Climate Leap will strengthen local and regional climate efforts through support to climate investments, for instance in a town, municipality,

company, school, or county. Via the Climate Leap, more than 1 000 local climate investments have been made in infrastructure for charging electric cars, investments in renewable fuels such as biogas, and other local initiatives to reduce emissions. This includes co-financing via the Climate Leap of 9 200 charging points for electric vehicles.

- **Strategy for sustainable consumption**

A repair contribution has been introduced for items such as clothing, shoes and bicycles.

Read more on 'Sweden nominated for international award for reuse initiative'

- **New national environmental objectives coordinator for business**
- **Increased climate financing**

Sweden has increased support to help society adapt to climate change. With its contribution of SEK 4 billion to the UN Green Climate Fund, Sweden is the largest donor per capita in the world.

- **The position of consumers on the electricity market will be strengthened**

The position of the consumer on the electricity market will be strengthened, for example by making it easier to select hourly metering of electricity.

- **A fossil-free Sweden**

The Fossil-free Sweden initiative brings together companies, municipalities and organisations that will help make Sweden one of the world's first fossil-free welfare nations. Read more about Fossil-free Sweden.

- **Sustainable growth and reduced climate impact from transport and travel**

Collaboration between public actors, the business world and universities and other higher education institutions will ensure the future growth, employment and climate of industry. Below are some of the initiatives to support this:

- A decision on a bonus malus – a bonus for people who buy cars with low emissions levels, and tax increases for vehicles with high emissions levels.
- A decision on fuel conversion for the transport sector that aims at 50 per

cent biofuel by 2030 and a system of penalties for vehicles (bonus-malus).

- A decision on an aviation tax, so aviation can contribute to the climate effort by taking responsibility for its own environmental costs.
- A decision on support for feasibility studies, planning studies and investments in industry to reduce the large emissions in connection with industrial incineration and processes. The Government has launched the Green Industry Leap as a long-term initiative to prepare Swedish industry for the future. SEK 300 million per year between 2018–2040 will be invested to support Swedish industry in the transition towards zero net emissions of greenhouse gases.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ocean Conference unites world

Published 13 June 2017

The Ocean Conference, co-chaired by Sweden and Fiji, concluded after an intensive week at the United Nations in New York. On 9 June, the countries of the world agreed on the Call for Action, confirming the political momentum that has been established to save the oceans.

"For the first time, the full range of ocean issues was raised at the UN General Assembly. It has moved from being an area for marine and fisheries experts to one that concerns everyone's survival, not least small island nations and the least-developed countries. The silo mentality that has been the curse of the oceans is finally beginning to erode. All the political engagement that has been mobilised is one of the most important outcomes of the conference. Now we must be sure to move it forward," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin, who co-chaired the Ocean Conference with Prime Minister of Fiji Frank Bainimarama.

The Ocean Conference focused on solutions and was a forum for all relevant stakeholders. It resulted in more than 1 300 voluntary commitments from countries, companies, organisations and other stakeholders concerning everything from reducing plastics in the oceans to stopping illegal fishing and strengthening the protection of marine environments.

"This week was the starting point for the hard work ahead of us to reverse the negative trend in the oceans. The participants leave here with to-do lists that they will start to check off on Monday. There is also broad support for a coordinating force within the UN system to secure living oceans, which I discussed with UN Secretary-General António Guterres," says Ms Lövin.

Sweden registered a total of 26 voluntary commitments during the week, mainly within three priority areas: marine litter, ocean and climate, and a sustainable blue economy. The Swedish delegation included Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog, Minister for Rural Affairs Sven-Erik Bucht and State Secretary Mattias Landgren, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation. Crown Princess Victoria also participated during the week.

Kenya and Portugal announced that they are prepared to take up the baton from Sweden and Fiji and organise a follow-up conference in 2020. From the outset, Sweden has worked to enable the holding of follow-up conferences until 2030 in order to maintain political pressure and facilitate the implementation of the Global Goal on living oceans, Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda. A decision on the next conference must first be approved by UN Member States.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

New policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian aid

Published 12 May 2017

In December 2016, the Government adopted a new policy framework outlining the direction of Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The policy framework has now been translated into English.

The parameters for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian aid are laid down in the policy framework. The English translation will make it easier for missions abroad and other actors to work with and implement the framework.

The purpose of the policy framework is to have a knowledge-based, broadly supported framework adapted to the new global development agenda that for the first time clearly links international work on poverty reduction to the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. At the same time, Sweden wants to go beyond the 2030 Agenda in a number of areas, such as gender equality, democracy and human rights.

"We must respond to the major changes taking place in our world, and our work has to be adapted to the new global development agenda. The 2030 Agenda actually offers fantastic opportunities to combat poverty and create sustainable development. Sweden should be at the forefront in this regard and advance international efforts," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

When an increasing proportion of extremely poor people live in conflict-affected and fragile countries, it is important that the focus is placed on long-

term efforts for peaceful and inclusive societies. The need for a bridge between long-term development cooperation and humanitarian aid is made clear in the framework. The synergies must be strengthened and the transition made more efficient, while keeping the unique humanitarian mandate firmly in place.

The Government highlights three new perspectives that will permeate development cooperation: the conflict, gender equality and environment and climate perspectives. Poor people's perspective of development and the rights perspective should also continue to be integrated in decision-making and in the planning, implementation and follow-up of activities, together with the three new perspectives.

The partner countries' ownership and a mutual responsibility is crucial to the implementation of development cooperation. To be efficient and able to deliver results, the policy must take its cue from the local context and needs.

The policy framework guides all Swedish development cooperation – bilaterally, regionally, thematically, in multilateral organisations and in European Union development cooperation.

"Together with the partner countries, civil society and companies, and through the EU and multilateral organisations, we will advance poverty reduction and sustainable development. We will contribute to innovative thinking and change, and we will really make a difference for people living in poverty," says Ms Lövin.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden co-organisier of conference on women's rights throughout the world

Published 01 March 2017

On 2 March, an international conference entitled 'She Decides' will be held in Brussels. The conference is being co-organised by Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark. "She Decides is taking a stand for women's rights, in particular their obvious right to decide over their own bodies," says Sweden's Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

She Decides aims to increase support for sexual health and family planning worldwide. The initiative is a response to the US President's reinstatement of the Mexico City Policy, banning financial support to foreign organisations that provide access to safe abortion or information about abortion, even if they do so with funds other than those provided by the US. Women's human rights, especially their sexual and reproductive health and rights, have very important implications for every woman's and girl's own health, socio-economic situation and personal development.

"We will mobilise political and financial support and show that there is a counterweight to the worrying developments we are seeing in the US and in other parts of the world," says Ms Lövin.

All funds will go to organisations that provide information about family planning and sexual health, including safe abortion, and/or provide related services. Funds will go to organisations that are affected by the Mexico City

Policy.

The main goals are to:

- keep health clinics open
- continue providing a full range of sexual and reproductive health services to clients
- continue advocating for law reforms to reduce the number of unsafe abortions

Government representatives from some 50 countries around the world will be invited to the conference, along with intergovernmental organisations, civil society and private actors. Participants will talk about practical efforts for women's health and rights, including access to safe abortions. Women and girls will bear witness to the crucial impact this has had on their lives.

Governments are called upon to support the She Decides initiative, both financially and politically. Since the launch of the initiative, many countries have already reacted in a positive way. Canada, Cape Verde, Finland and Luxemburg have already joined the initiative. Over 230 NGO's from 65 different countries have signed a petition, applauding the She Decides initiative and encouraging other allies to support She Decides.

Sweden welcomes additional support for the She Decides initiative via <http://www.shedecides.eu>

Read more about how support for sexual health and family planning can change lives at Swedish Foreign Policy News.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin opens The Ocean Conference preparatory meeting in New York

Published 15 February 2017 Updated 15 February 2017

On 15 February 2017, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin opened The Ocean Conference preparatory meeting at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The Ocean Conference will be held on 5–9 June and, in its capacity as co-President together with Fiji, Sweden aims to incentivise stakeholders to form ambitious voluntary commitments to step up work on sustainable oceans, which are crucial to both combating poverty and promoting economic development.

Two years ago, Sweden and Fiji sowed the seeds for a unique conference to save the global marine environment. The critical situation that included acidification, littering, emissions and overfishing required a new approach. This resulted in the Ocean Conference – the first of its kind to focus solely on one goal of the UN development agenda. Ms Lövin opened The Ocean Conference preparatory meeting together with Fiji's Minister for Fisheries Semi Koroilavesau and UN General Assembly President Peter Thomson.

"Saving our oceans requires global leadership now. The situation is urgent. The trend we are seeing with overfishing, emissions and littering means that unless we do something by 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the oceans," says Ms Lövin.

Sweden and Fiji want to mobilise and accelerate engagement on sustainable

ocean management and development to strengthen sustainable development in the most vulnerable countries and regions. The sustainable oceans, seas and marine resources goal is central to the entire UN development agenda and is closely linked to other goals, such as combating poverty, food security, combating climate change, sustainable production and consumption, and supply of clean water and sanitation for all.

"Oceans are of vital importance to our survival and that of the entire planet. They are a crucial source of protein for the world's poorest people. Failing to save the oceans will lead to widespread global insecurity," says Ms Lövin.

The Ocean Conference in June will be an important platform for all stakeholders – civil and knowledge society, the business community and Member States – to show their strong engagement and pledge concrete voluntary commitments to step up work on implementing Sustainable Development Goal 14 on sustainable oceans, seas and marine resources. Since the deadline for several of the targets is either 2020 or 2025, finding effective and innovative solutions is even more urgent. This kind of broad global mobilisation will give the international community a coherent overview of how far countries as a whole have come towards achieving the goal, and at the same time identify where major efforts are needed.

"We want all countries to present their action plans and identify where measures are needed so that our oceans are sustainable by 2030, as the development agenda prescribes and as they have all agreed to," says Ms Lövin.

For Sweden, three areas in particular are prioritised:

- Marine littering is a growing problem in Sweden and around the world, and the situation is particularly worrying when it comes to plastics that originate from land based sources but end up in the ocean and are there degraded to microplastics.
- Sustainable fishing is another area Sweden is focusing on. Overfishing and illicit fishing are emptying the oceans of life. Some 90 per cent of marine fish stocks are overfished or fished to their limit (WWF).
- The third priority area is to clarify the link between climate and ocean management issues. This winter, the temperature in the Arctic has been 20 degrees higher than normal. The marine environment is extremely sensitive to higher temperatures, and there is a now risk that the entire Arctic ecosystem – from plankton to polar bears – will collapse.

Sweden particularly wants to highlight the challenges facing the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries, regions and populations. This applies especially to the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS).

An overarching aim of these priorities – and for the preservation of marine biodiversity – is to also stop climate change and restore and protect coastal ecosystems. Developing regional seas cooperation is also a fundamental requirement for achieving sustainable oceans.

The preparatory meeting in New York gives thousands of leaders from civil and knowledge society, the business community, foundations and Member States a chance to meet to discuss these issues. The agenda also includes discussions on the content of an intergovernmental political declaration on sustainable oceans, and also which themes should be the basis for the partnership dialogues that will be held during the Conference in June. The dialogues are to lead to broad, concrete recommendations on commitments and partnerships to achieve the goal on sustainable oceans.

"Implementing the 2030 Agenda requires everyone's involvement. This includes the business sector, organisations and private persons. Everyone can take part and make changes at different levels," says Ms Lövin.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Preparations in New York ahead of the Ocean Conference

Published 13 February 2017 Updated 13 February 2017

On 15–16 February, development issues and the oceans will be in focus in New York. Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin will take part in the preparations for the largest UN conference that Sweden is helping organise since the Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972. An important part of the efforts to save the world's oceans will be based on voluntary commitments from Member States, civil society and the business sector.

"Saving our oceans requires global leadership. The trend we now see with overfishing, emissions and littering means that by 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the oceans," says Ms Lövin.

The marine environment is fundamental to poverty reduction, food security and economic development for hundreds of millions of people. At the same time, the trends are very negative.

The preparatory meeting in New York will be a first step on the road leading up to the Ocean Conference, which will be held in New York on 5–9 June 2017, co-hosted by Sweden and Fiji. The aim of the UN conference is to support efforts to save the world's oceans and achieve the Sustainable Development Goal on oceans, seas and marine resources – Goal 14 of the UN 2030 Agenda. All countries must take resolute action to achieve this goal. It is important to mobilise the engagement of all stakeholders in society in these efforts.

The idea is that partnership dialogues between governments, businesses, civil society and the knowledge society will create innovative solutions and voluntary commitments aimed at tackling major common challenges. The pollution of oceans, unsustainable fishing and the effects of climate change are some of the areas that will be addressed. The opportunities that the sustainable use of the ocean's resources can contribute to fighting poverty and achieving food security will also be given considerable scope.

The conference is intended to lead to an intergovernmental political declaration, a 'Call for Action', to advance efforts towards sustainable oceans. Member States and other stakeholders are also expected to present their plans within the framework of the implementation of Goal 14. These voluntary and ambitious commitments will be collected in a list that will be another important part of the conference's outcomes.



New strategy for humanitarian aid

Published 01 February 2017 Updated 02 February 2017

In situations of armed conflict, natural disasters and other disaster situations, humanitarian aid is one of the most effective and tangible means of saving lives and alleviating the suffering of the women, men, girls and boys affected. In January 2017, the Government adopted a new strategy for Sweden's humanitarian aid via the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for the period 2017–2020.

Over the last ten years, global humanitarian needs have increased considerably, above all as a result of conflicts that are difficult to resolve and have often led to protracted refugee situations. Recurring crises also occur in the wake of extreme weather events, such as drought and flooding, which risk further increasing the needs in the long term. The UN estimates that over 128 million people will be in need of humanitarian support in 2017, which is the highest figure ever. Particularly vulnerable are the more than 65 million refugees. The trend is for refugee situations to become more protracted. According to the UNHCR's definition, 6.7 million people are estimated to be living in protracted refugee situations (and 5.2 million Palestine refugees are included in the UNRWA's mandate). On average, a protracted refugee situation lasts for 26 years.

The overall objective of Swedish humanitarian aid is to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity for the benefit of people in need who have been, or are at risk of becoming, affected by armed conflicts, natural disasters or other disaster situations. Humanitarian aid is about helping people in acute distress on the basis of humanitarian needs and humanitarian principles. The humanitarian principles are humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality. Long-term development cooperation is about

helping people lift themselves out of poverty and oppression through support for long-term measures. Sweden's humanitarian aid is based on global humanitarian needs and the humanitarian principles, as well as international humanitarian law, international refugee law, human rights, legal instruments with a bearing on disasters, and accepted international practice in this area. In addition, humanitarian aid is steered by the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD).

To reduce future humanitarian needs, it is important that we deal with the root causes of crises, highlight preventive measures and strengthen people's and societies' resilience (resilience, ability to recover and adapt) to crises and disasters. The number of development actors working on strengthening the resilience of individuals and societies and working in humanitarian contexts must increase so as to promote long-term solutions to recurrent and protracted crises. Sweden is working for greater collaboration between humanitarian aid and long-term development assistance.

Sweden's total humanitarian aid

Sweden has long been an important actor in humanitarian aid and was the seventh largest bilateral donor in the world in 2016, providing approximately 2.7 per cent of global humanitarian support. Sweden's total humanitarian aid rose from SEK 3.3 billion in 2005 to over SEK 5 billion in 2016. Sweden's humanitarian financing is allocated by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the form of core support (unearmarked support to various humanitarian organisations' activities, based on the organisations' needs assessments) and by Sida in the form of country and region-based support. For 2017, the humanitarian appropriation totals SEK 5.8 billion, of which SEK 3.1 billion will be allocated via Sida and SEK 2.7 billion via the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

At the beginning of this year, Sida is allocating more than SEK 2.1 billion of its humanitarian appropriation. Almost SEK 1 billion of the appropriation will be kept by Sida as a reserve in the event of sudden or aggravated crises.

At the beginning of this year, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is allocating over SEK 2.6 billion to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN World Food Programme (WFP), the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Committee of the Red Cross

(ICRC) and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

Sweden is the single largest donor of unearmarked core support to the humanitarian UN bodies. For example, in 2016, Sweden was the largest donor of unearmarked support to UNHCR, WFP, CERF and UNISDR. This support enables rapid and flexible measures for the women, men, girls and boys most in need of help. Unearmarked core support also contributes to predictability and coordination. The country and region-based support paid by Sida enables flexible use and increases capacity to meet humanitarian needs in a fast and cost-effective manner.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for the overall coordination of Sweden's humanitarian aid and for Swedish policy vis-à-vis humanitarian organisations, and gives unearmarked core support to these organisations. Sida finances international humanitarian contributions within the framework of UN appeals and contributes to the implementation of Sweden's humanitarian policy. The policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian aid states the Government's direction for humanitarian aid.

New strategy for Sweden's humanitarian aid via Sida

In January 2017, a new strategy was adopted for Sweden's humanitarian aid via Sida for the period 2017–2020.

To save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity for people affected by crises, Sweden provides support to contributions made up of material aid and protective measures. To achieve the overall objective within the framework of the strategy, Sida is expected to contribute to:

- needs-based, fast and effective humanitarian response;
- increased protection for people affected by crises and increased respect for international humanitarian law and the humanitarian principles;
- increased influence for people affected by crises;
- greater capacity and efficiency in the humanitarian system; and
- the systematic mainstreaming of gender equality, conflict sensitivity and resilience in humanitarian aid.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Major Swedish engagement in the UN Ocean Conference

Published 18 January 2017 Updated 18 January 2017

On 11 January, Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin hosted Swedish stakeholders with an interest in oceans at an information meeting about the UN Ocean Conference, due to be held in New York on 5–9 June. There were over one hundred representatives of companies, the knowledge society, civil society and government agencies present – all with the joint agenda of working to save our oceans.

Sustainable oceans essential for global development

The 2030 Agenda is a global agenda for sustainable development, in which Goal 14 on sustainable oceans plays a key role. Ms Lövin emphasised that the marine environment is fundamental to poverty reduction, food security and economic development for hundreds of millions of people. At the same time, there is a strong negative trend.

"If we do not break the current trend, in 2050 there will be as much plastic in the oceans as there are fish. Measures have to be taken quickly and resolutely. This is why Sweden and Fiji have taken the initiative to host the UN's first major ocean conference," said Ms Lövin.

Goal 14 covers a broad range of marine issues, such as sustainable fishing, marine littering, ocean acidification and a sustainable blue economy. This was also clearly reflected in the broad participation in the meeting, moderated by Johan Kuylenstierna, Executive Director of the Stockholm Environment Institute.

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management and other Swedish government agencies presented their roles in Sweden's work on Goal 14 and the conference, as did the World Maritime University in Malmö, which is the only UN body located in Sweden. The strong academic presence highlighted how far Swedish-led research has come in the marine environment area, as well as the importance of linking this research to a broader development perspective.

Partnerships and cooperation are a success factor

The Ocean Conference will build long-term, innovative and concrete partnerships between states, civil society, the private sector, the knowledge society and other stakeholders. This is why broad participation from all areas of society is important, at local, regional, national and global level.

"The oceans are our world bank. There is major economic potential to be protected in our marine environment," said Mattias Rust from the WWF.

Swedish companies represented at the meeting also highlighted how innovative solutions are contributing to sustainable marine management.

Register for the Ocean Conference by 22 January 2017



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Launch of SIPRI report on climate and security

Published 02 January 2017 Updated 02 January 2017

On 15 December, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin inaugurated a seminar during which a new report on the links between climate and security was presented. On behalf of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has produced a study on these issues entitled "Climate-related security risks: Towards an Integrated Approach".

Climate change has an impact on many areas, on societies and people's everyday lives. Apart from the consequences for the environment and people's livelihoods, risks that threaten people's security can be one of the negative effects of climate change.

Poor countries with weak institutions are particularly vulnerable. The risks include worsened supplies of water or food, which can trigger or aggravate conflicts of various kinds. Worsened coastal environments or rising sea levels can mean that possibilities of earning an income are limited and the risk of conflicts increases. Migration as a result of climate change can lead to conflicts. Moreover, all of these risks are interlinked and can aggravate each other.

It is important to include climate-related risks in work against conflicts and for peaceful societies, otherwise there is a risk of overlooking important factors that contribute to conflicts breaking out. Sweden is working to ensure that the climate perspective is included in a more systematic way when preparing measures to prevent conflicts or promote peace. This applies to

measures implemented by Sweden through expert agencies as well as at international level.

The ability of the UN system to analyse risks systematically and from a climate perspective – and thus also improve the basis on which decisions are made – must be strengthened, and Sweden will pursue this aim during its membership of the UN Security Council.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

#FirstGeneration Global Goals Forum – focus on young people and joint efforts for a better world

Published 10 October 2016 Updated 10 October 2016

More than 300 engaged young people, teachers, inspirers and representatives of civil society and the business sector gathered on 5 October for the #FirstGeneration GlobalGoals Forum in Stockholm. Optimism for the future permeated the entire day, which focused on young people and the UN Global Goals.

Swedish YouTube star and presenter Clara Henry was the moderator for the day, and a large number of inspiring young people from all over the world took part in the programme. The Forum was opened by Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér, and the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Ahlendawi, sent a video message.

"Young people are not just the beneficiaries of the Global Goals, but rather they hold the key to their success. This is why I am especially encouraged by the #FirstGeneration campaign's focus on teachers and educators. Teachers have a unique opportunity to instil the importance of sustainability from a young age and to cultivate and enable the younger generation to serve as change-makers."

The day's activities offered many inspiring and educational moments. The audience were given food for thought in an interactive quiz, and Staffan Landin raised awareness of sustainable development. Audience members also had a chance to hold Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog and representatives from businesses including IKEA and E.ON to account in a

Global Goals grill, arranged by We_change. The #FirstGeneration Award was also presented for the first time. State Secretary Ulrika Modéer and Mats Djurberg, Secretary-General of the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO, presented the award to educators and inspirational figures from 17 countries, in recognition of their efforts to inspire and engage young people on issues to do with fair and sustainable development, peace and climate change. Following the award, Swedish-Sami hip-hop artist Maxida Märak performed a Sami joik. The Forum concluded with a video message from Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin. Her message was clear – global challenges require global solutions.

"We need role models around the world if the Global Goals are to become reality. Global challenges need global solutions. I'm sure you will continue your work to find these solutions together."

The Forum was held on World Teachers' Day, 5 October, as a fitting date to highlight the important role of educators and others in inspiring and engaging young people on issues to do with a just and sustainable future. The event, which was held at Norra Latin, an old school, went viral both nationally and internationally, with the hashtag #FirstGeneration trending on Twitter with more than 13 000 tweets.

The Swedish initiative #FirstGeneration aims to encourage young people to engage in the UN Global Goals for sustainable development. It is for this reason that the initiative particularly highlights educators and inspirers as those with an important role in engaging the young. The #FirstGeneration Global Goals Forum gave recognition to individuals around the world who, in their day-to-day work and in various ways, inspire young people on issues to do with fair and sustainable development. The educators and inspirers who were invited to the Forum were selected in collaboration between Swedish embassies and local partners including UN Women, the UNDP, UNESCO and various universities. Along with their young attachés in Stockholm, these educators and inspirers now form a network to exchange knowledge and ideas for a better world.

[Click here to watch #FirstGeneration Global Goals Forum \(Youtube\)](#)



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Donor conference for Afghanistan: “Sweden’s support to the Afghan people remains firm”

Published 04 October 2016 Updated 04 October 2016

On 4–5 October a major donor conference for Afghanistan will be held in Brussels, and many countries are expected to confirm their continued support to the reconstruction of the country. At the same time, the Afghan government will present what has been achieved in terms of the reforms it committed to implementing and show how this work is being pursued. Sweden’s long-term commitment until 2024 makes Swedish aid to Afghanistan unique.

"My message during the conference will be clear. Sweden's support to the people of Afghanistan remains firm. The situation in the country is worrying and we will continue to work hard for democratic and peaceful development. Women's participation in society and in peacebuilding is crucial if the country is to manage to lift itself out of poverty, war and violence," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

Afghanistan is one of the world's poorest countries. Almost 40 per cent of the country's population lives below the international poverty line and it is primarily women and children in rural areas who are the most vulnerable. International aid has been absolutely essential for the progress made over the past 15 years, and the continued support of the international community is a prerequisite for continued reconstruction efforts.

Afghanistan is currently the largest recipient country of Swedish aid. Together with other donors, an active dialogue is held with the Afghan government on the importance of implementing long-term reforms to strengthen the Afghan state institutions, reduce corruption, enable free democratic elections and improve legal security and human rights. Economic reforms are crucial if Afghanistan is to reduce its dependence on aid in the long term.

In Brussels, the international community is expected to report on plans for continued aid at the same or close to the same levels up to 2020. Sweden will confirm its long-term commitment that extends until 2024.

Women's rights important for Sweden's development cooperation in Afghanistan

The aim of Sweden's development cooperation in Afghanistan is to contribute to democratic, peaceful and sustainable development with long-term economic growth that benefits people living in poverty. Gender equality and women's rights are at the core of Sweden's development cooperation with Afghanistan. For sustainable and peaceful development to be possible, both women and men must be involved in societal developments.

Many women in Afghanistan are in a very vulnerable situation. Literacy among women is at around 18 per cent, one of the lowest levels worldwide. Women generally have poorer access to medical care than men. Forced marriage of young girls is common, as is domestic violence against women. In public, women experience an everyday life fraught with threats and violence, and women's participation in societal developments is far from self-evident.

Despite this, the situation of women in Afghanistan has slowly improved. As one of the largest and most long-term international donors to Afghanistan, Sweden has contributed to improvements in many areas.

- **Education is a key area.** Swedish aid has helped – not least through the long-term and successful work of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan – to increase the number of children attending school from 1 million in 2001 to 8.2 million today. It is pleasing to note that 40 per cent of them are girls. Schools run by the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan have almost 70 000 children attending and 62 per cent of them are girls. In 2014, around 700 teachers were trained, 300 of them women. The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan also trains women

teachers – a prerequisite to get more girls to be able to go to school.

- **Reduced maternal mortality and reproductive health.** Every year, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan programme trains new midwives and women teachers, which has resulted in safer deliveries and more girls attending school. In recent years, maternal mortality has fallen from 1 600 per 100 000 births to approximately 400. Sweden also supports Marie Stopes International, an organisation that helps to improve knowledge about reproductive health and family planning, and better access to clinics and services.
- **Protection against violence and discrimination.** To achieve greater gender equality, Sweden is cooperating through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency with UN Women and Women for Afghan Women (WAW). Through this cooperation we have helped ensure protection in the form of women's refuges established in some twenty provinces. They offer legal assistance and rehabilitation. WAW provides guidance and protection to women and girls subjected to gender-based violence. Sweden has also been a driving force behind the full implementation of the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which is to protect women and girls against gender-based violence.
- **Political representation.** Sweden's aid has also helped increase women's awareness of their rights and women's participation in politics and society as a whole. The proportion of women on traditional village councils, known as shuras, is currently almost one third, and Afghanistan has 27 per cent female representation in parliament.
- **Women's participation in peace processes.** Promoting women's participation in future peace and reconciliation processes in Afghanistan is vital. The Swedish mediation network for women is an important resource for dialogue and mediation projects. The Folke Bernadotte Academy runs mediation training, to which Afghan women have been invited. Sweden is a driving force behind efforts to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, both in relation to the Afghan government and within the international advisory initiative Resolute Support Mission.

Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan has made major progress in the education and health sectors, infrastructure, economic development and rebuilding political and administrative institutions, which were largely destroyed during decades of war. The Afghan government's reform agenda is ambitious. Despite this progress, Afghanistan still has a long way to go.

Like the rest of development cooperation, it will take time to improve gender

equality, education and health, reduce violence against women and increase women's participation in peace efforts. It is important to have a long-term perspective. This is reflected in the commitment Sweden has made and stands by.



Article from Ministry of the Environment

Summary of the Government's budget initiatives in the areas of environment, climate and energy

Published 29 September 2016 Updated 29 September 2016

In the Budget Bill for 2017, the Government is strengthening efforts towards a toxin-free everyday environment, a fossil-free welfare society and renewable energy. Sweden will be a pioneer on climate issues, and we will step up the pace to achieve the environmental objectives. This requires increased knowledge, new technological solutions and clear targets along the way.

Historic environment and climate budget

Since the Government took office in 2014, the appropriation to expenditure area 20, General environmental protection and nature conservation, has increased by 73 per cent, excluding environmental research. The Budget Bill for 2017 is the largest environment and climate budget ever presented in Sweden.

The Government's investments for the climate total SEK 12.9 billion for the period 2017–2020. The Climate Leap will be reinforced and extended through an investment of SEK 1.6 billion to continue to support regional and local initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In total, the Climate Leap encompasses more than SEK 3.5 billion for the period 2015–2020.

The urban environment agreements will be reinforced with an additional SEK 750 million for 2017–2018, and will encompass a total of SEK 2.75 billion by 2018. As of next year, it will also be possible to apply for

investment support for cycling infrastructure.

As part of efforts to reduce the total amount of carbon dioxide in the EU Emissions Trading System, the Government proposes a scheme to purchase and cancel emissions allowances, at a cost of approximately SEK 300 million per year from 2018 to 2040.

Knowledge-enhancing and preventive initiatives to adapt society to climate change continue. The appropriation for climate adaptation will be reinforced by SEK 10 million per year in 2017 and 2018, SEK 70 million in 2019 and SEK 120 million in 2020.

Research to meet social challenges

Strong environmental research is crucial to tackling climate and environmental challenges. It is proposed in the budget that the resources for climate and environmental research be reinforced to the tune of SEK 752.5 million in 2017–2020. The climate research appropriations to the Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning will almost double by 2018. The research initiatives will be described in greater detail in the research policy bill that the Government intends to present before the end of 2016.

A special energy research bill will also be presented before the end of the year. It contains guidelines and initiatives for prioritised and more intensely focused measures in the energy area. In the Budget Bill, the Government proposes that the resources for energy research be reinforced by a total of SEK 620 million in 2017–2020.

Fossil-free travel and transport for the climate and environment

In the area of transport, the super green car rebate will be extended by one year to 2017. The autumn amending budget boosts the rebate by SEK 180 million in 2016, and the Government is investing SEK 700 million for 2017. The scheme is being extended pending a 'bonus-malus' system whereby the purchase of more environmentally friendly vehicles is rewarded via a bonus, while vehicles that emit high levels of carbon dioxide are subject to higher vehicle tax.

The Government also wants to make it easier for consumers to make

informed and environmentally friendly fuel choices, and will therefore look into the possibility of making it obligatory to provide information on the environmental impact of fuels.

The Government continues efforts for a toxin-free everyday environment

The Budget Bill for 2017 outlines a range of initiatives in the area of chemicals to achieve the environmental objective on a toxin-free everyday environment, with a particular focus on children and young people. The Government's proposed initiatives total SEK 375 million up to 2020. The Swedish Chemicals Agency is tasked with charting hazardous substances in people's everyday environments. Funds will also be allocated to establishing a centre to help businesses substitute hazardous substances in products and goods.

More protected marine areas

The Government has previously undertaken major initiatives to protect valuable natural environments, including marine areas. To meet the interim objective of protecting ten per cent of Sweden's marine areas by 2020, the Government believes that the pace of these efforts needs to accelerate. The appropriation for measures in marine and aquatic environments in 2017 is therefore reinforced in the budget by SEK 15 million.

In the autumn amending budget, the Government also restores SEK 250 million to protecting valuable natural environments. This means that initiatives for valuable forests, for example, can be implemented according to the original timetable.

Hydro-electric power with modern environmental requirements

Hydro-electric power plays a key role in Sweden's electricity supply. The physical impacts of hydro-electric plants on watercourses have serious consequences for ecosystems and biodiversity. The Government is therefore investing SEK 25 million in water-related operations in 2017, and increasing the investment to SEK 30 million annually from 2018.

100 per cent renewable energy by 2040

The Government's ambition is for Sweden to become one of the world's first fossil-free welfare nations. Solar panels are a renewable energy technology that is beneficial from a climate perspective. The Government will therefore continue to encourage the expansion of solar power. The funds allocated to investment support for solar power in 2017 are eight times higher than in 2015.

The expansion of renewable energy places demands on the electricity grid and on the government agencies responsible for this area. The Government intends to increase the appropriation to the Swedish Energy Markets Inspectorate by SEK 10 million annually to cover the Inspectorate's work on network concessions, for example.

The Budget Bill for 2017 is based on an agreement between the government parties and the Left Party.



Article from Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

#FirstGeneration in New York

Published 14 June 2016 Updated 14 June 2016

As part of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs's public diplomacy campaign #FirstGeneration, on 9 June the Swedish Consulate-General in New York held a seminar and panel discussion on the theme of engaging young people in the work on the UN Global Goals.

The event took place at the Swedish-owned design firm Trollbäck + Company in SoHo, and the panellists included Sweden's Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin and Minister for Education Gustav Fridolin, and representatives of various UN bodies and non-profit organisations.

Following a welcoming address by Consul-General Leif Pagrotsky, the event got under way with a presentation by Jakob Trollbäck of his company's work to produce the graphic profile for the UN Global Goals.

Communicating the Global Goals, Jakob Trollbäck founder at Trollbäck+Company

This was followed by two panel discussions: 'From Words to Actions - Implementing the 2030 Agenda' and 'Empowering and Engaging Young People in Global Sustainable Development'. In addition to the Swedish ministers, the panellists included Magdy Martínéz Solimán, Assistant Secretary-General of the UN and Director of the UNDP Bureau for Policy and Programme Support; Marie Paule Roudil, Director of the UNESCO Liaison Office in New York; Zara Rapoport, Head of the Plan International UN Liaison Office in New York; Ahmed Alhendawi, UN Envoy on Youth; Coco Killingsworth, Deputy Director of Global Kids; Katie Isaak Ginsberg, founder and Executive Director of the Children's Environmental Literacy

Foundation; and Domenic Smith, President of AIESEC United States.

Panel 1: From words to Action – Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Panel 2: Empowering and Engaging Young people in Global Development

The discussions were moderated by Lance Gould from the Huffington Post.

The audience included representatives of teachers' organisations, after-school programmes, universities and various organisations with links to the UN.



Article from Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ministry for Foreign Affairs international campaign in support of the Global Goals

Published 09 June 2016 Updated 09 June 2016

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has launched #FirstGeneration, an international campaign in collaboration with international and local actors. The campaign is intended to strengthen international efforts on the 2030 Agenda and help ensure that new and younger target groups take on the challenges linked to the UN's Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

Almost half of the world's population is under the age of 25. The key to a sustainable future will be determined by our ability to transform knowledge into engagement among young pupils and students. The campaign is intended to generate engagement in, strengthen communication on and broaden popular support for the 2030 Agenda and the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

#FirstGeneration is part of public diplomacy efforts by the MFA and Swedish embassies around the world. By working together with other actors, Sweden can have a positive influence on the work of other countries. Sweden's ambition is to remain an international role model and be a driving force in the global efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and achieve the UN's Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

Campaigning via networks

The #FirstGeneration campaign is being run in both digital and analogue form via a series of activities and collaboration between the Swedish MFA, Sweden's embassies and consulates abroad and local and international actors. Activities around the world will highlight the Global Goals, and young people will be the focus. Teachers, educators and activists who can influence and inspire young people in the area of sustainable development are the true heroes.

"We believe in the power of networks, and that together with other actors we can engage and draw attention to young people and teachers, educators and activists around the world. Our joint networks offer us the opportunity to reach out to and influence much larger numbers of people. Many actors are hugely engaged in helping to achieve the Global Goals," says Miriam Mannbro, project leader for the #FirstGeneration campaign.

In addition to activities and initiatives being implemented by some 30 Swedish embassies in collaboration with local actors, two major events will be held in 2016. In June, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin and Minister for Education Gustav Fridolin will take part in a seminar in New York. The focus of the seminar will be young people's engagement and the important role of teachers and educators in inspiring young people. Other participants will include representatives of UNESCO, the UNDP and AIESEC, the world's largest student organisation. #FirstGeneration will culminate in Stockholm on 5 October, which is World Teachers' Day and falls just after the first anniversary of the adoption of the UN's Global Goals for Sustainable Development. Some 20 teachers and activists from around the world will be invited to Stockholm, where they will be celebrated for their contributions to engagement among young people.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

A world in humanitarian crisis: Can we reverse the trend of ever-growing humanitarian needs?

Published 23 May 2016 Updated 23 May 2016

Article by the Nordic Development Ministers on the World Humanitarian Summit May 23-24 2016.

On May 23-24 the Secretary General of the United Nations has convened the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul. The Summit has been preceded by consultations by a wide range of stakeholders from governments to local aid organizations. We recognize the need to address the global humanitarian situation. We are witnessing an unsustainable trend where an increasing number of people are dependent on humanitarian aid and deprived of a life in dignity. We can only bring about change through international cooperation and through our common efforts.

The humanitarian support provided by the Nordic countries has over the years helped millions of victims of natural and man-made disasters. Last year this support amounted to 1.18 billion USD/1.05 billion euros which make the Nordic countries one of the biggest providers of humanitarian aid in the world. We will continue our assistance to those most in need based on the principles of humanitarian aid: independence, impartiality, neutrality and humanity. At the same time we need to find new ways of reducing needs; it is not justifiable to keep people dependent on emergency aid for decades with no prospect of a better tomorrow. We have seen the consequences of this in a particularly dramatic way over the past year in Asia, Africa, and also in Europe, including in our own countries. The Summit must send a strong signal calling for political leadership in resolving crises. Today 80% of humanitarian needs are due to man-made conflicts and they can only be resolved through political means.

The United Nations only manages to cover some two thirds of the annual humanitarian needs. The support base urgently needs to be broadened and deepened. For the aid organizations multiannual, non-earmarked contributions are a way of increasing flexibility and rapid response in unforeseen situations and for the forgotten humanitarian crises that do not break the news. A better response is not only about increasing funding, it is also about effectiveness and accountability. We are committed to making the humanitarian aid we finance reach more people in a more effective way that takes into account local needs and local actors. We firmly believe that women can and should play a more prominent role in planning and carrying out aid activities, that people with special needs must be taken better into account, and that the private sector has an important role in finding innovative and more efficient way of helping people in situations on emergency. We also need to bridge the gap between humanitarian and long term development aid.

Emergencies cannot be eliminated, but their negative effects can be substantially mitigated by increasing the resilience of societies, particularly in areas prone to earthquakes, floods and other forms of natural disasters. This is a task for national planning and must be taken into account at all levels in all countries. We stand ready to support these efforts in our cooperation with developing countries.

The current situation where 60 million people are refugees is not acceptable. Still, we refuse to give in. Never before have so many people in need been receiving humanitarian aid. Thousands of aid workers all over the world are doing a tremendous work every single day – often in difficult and dangerous situation. They all deserve our support and recognition and we can all help in our own way, regardless of who we are and where we are. This is our responsibility and this is a sign of our respect for fundamental human values.

Isabella Lövin,
Minister for International Development Cooperation

Kristian Jensen,
Foreign Minister of Denmark

Lenita Toivakka,
Minister for International Trade and Development of Finland

Lilja Dögg Alfredsdóttir,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland

Börge Brende,
Foreign Minister of Norway



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin meets Aung San Suu Kyi

Published 04 May 2016 Updated 04 May 2016

Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin has visited Myanmar to strengthen relations with the new Government. Important steps towards democracy have been taken in recent years but many challenges remain. Ms Lövin visited Yangon and Naypyidaw, the country's capital, for talks with government representatives, members of parliament and civil society representatives.

"Sweden supports the country's democratisation process and its peace and poverty reduction efforts. It is important for us to talk to decision-makers and other actors about the ongoing democratisation process and how we can deepen our cooperation with Myanmar," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

Ms Lövin also travelled to Rakhine State in western Myanmar for talks on how the situation of the Rohingya Muslim minority can be improved. Sweden has a clear position on issues such as on sexual and reproductive health and rights, media freedom and women's rights in Myanmar. Sweden's aid strategy for Myanmar is due to be reviewed and the Minister's trip is an important part of this work. Sweden's current strategy is for the period 2013–2017 and will provide a maximum SEK 750 million in total.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin visits Nepal one year on from earthquake

Published 28 April 2016 Updated 28 April 2016

On the anniversary of the devastating earthquake in Nepal, Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin is visiting the country to follow up relief efforts.

One year ago, on 25 April, Nepal was struck by a devastating earthquake, which was followed by another quake two weeks later. Almost 9 000 people lost their lives and the earthquake destroyed over 800 000 homes, schools and official buildings. Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin is now in Nepal to follow up on the humanitarian operation following the disaster.

"The terrible earthquake affected hundreds of thousands of people. Now it is important to learn lessons so that we can see how the effects of similar disasters can be mitigated and how relief efforts can become even better. These lessons are important ahead of the international humanitarian summit in May," says Ms Lövin.

Ms Lövin is meeting Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli and Finance Minister Bishnu Prasad Paudel, as well as the national reconstruction committee, to discuss reconstruction. Ms Lövin is also meeting representatives of IM Swedish Development Partner and of local civil society organisations. Sweden's support to Nepal amounted to over SEK 90 million last year, including through the World Food Programme, the

International Committee of the Red Cross and IM Swedish Development
Partner.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Today is International Women's Day

Published 08 March 2016 Updated 08 March 2016

Equality between women and men is a fundamental aim of Swedish foreign policy. Ensuring that women and girls can enjoy their fundamental human rights is both an obligation within the framework of our international commitments, and a prerequisite for reaching Sweden's broader foreign policy goals on peace, and security and sustainable development.

The situation in the world calls for a feminist foreign policy that aims to strengthen women's rights, representation and access to resources.

On international women's day, join us in drawing attention to the #3rs of gender equality.

Rights

The human rights of women and girls are violated all over the world. The full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls must become a reality, including by combating all forms of violence and discrimination that restrict their freedom of action.

Representation

Women are still under-represented in influential positions in all areas of society and in all processes. Women's equal participation and influence in decision-making processes must be promoted at all levels and in all areas of society, including all stages of peace processes and peacebuilding. Research

shows that inclusive peace processes pave the way for a greater number of possible solutions that become better established and are more sustainable.

Resources

Women and girls often lack social or economic rights, including access to and control of economic resources, quality education, land, inheritance rights, productive work and equal pay. Women and men must have the same power to shape their societies and their lives. Resources must be distributed differently to promote equal rights and opportunities for all. In global terms, a larger proportion of aid must go to promoting gender equality and women's rights.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for International Development Cooperation visits Tonga, Fiji and Kiribati

Published 17 February 2016 Updated 21 February 2016

Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin is in the Pacific Region to visit island nations whose populations are among the most affected by climate change. The purpose of these visits is to determine how Sweden can best help these extremely vulnerable countries and is part of the Government's commitments at the climate change conference in Paris.

Ms Lövin is the first Swedish minister to visit the Pacific Region. She will travel to Tonga, Fiji and Kiribati. Ahead of the conference in Paris, the Government worked closely with the small island nations and now work is entering a new phase to implement the commitments. Sweden is the largest per capita donor to the Green Climate Fund, which will help developing countries adapt their societies to be better equipped to handle the effects of climate change, and in the transition to renewable energy.

"I will listen, learn and see how Sweden best can help these countries' populations, whose future is literally in jeopardy. For these people, there is nothing abstract about climate change. It is very real and happening now. They are paying the price for rich countries' emissions. We have an obligation to help them," says Ms Lövin.

In Tonga, Ms Lövin took part in a ministerial meeting with heads of government and representatives from Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia, where a follow-up from Paris, access to climate financing and sustainable oceans were on the agenda. Participants noted that climate change as well as

sustainable oceans are central to the region, where the greatest resource is precisely the oceans.

Ms Lövin will also visit projects that focus on curbing coastal erosion to save villages so that the inhabitants can continue living there. The Government will also adopt a new regional aid strategy for Asia which will include the Pacific Region for the first time. To get better insight into the Pacific Region, Ms Lövin will also meet, in addition to government representatives, representatives of a number of regional organisations such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the Pacific Islands Forum, the Pacific Islands Development Forum, the UNDP and the Women's Crisis Centre.

Together with Fiji and small island nations, Sweden has also taken the lead to save the world's oceans and maintain political pressure to achieve the UN's new Sustainable Development Goals on sustainable oceans. This is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals on which the UN Member States agreed in 2015. As part of these efforts, a UN-led high-level conference will be held in Fiji in 2017.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Feminist energy policy for the climate

Published 08 December 2015 Updated 08 December 2015

If we are to tackle the challenge of climate change, both women and men must be involved. In many low income countries, women must devote many hours each day to carrying wood and fetching water.

We must therefore invest more in small-scale production of renewable energy such as sun and wind, which can easily be installed even in small villages far out in the countryside. This will contribute to reduced emissions and simplify everyday life for these women.

This was Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin's main message when she spoke today at the climate change conference in Paris at a side event that focused on 'Women and Sustainable Energy'.

In connection with the Paris climate conference, the Swedish Government has announced that it is giving an additional SEK 15 million to the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, and an additional SEK 20 million to the World Bank's programme to increase support to renewable energy in low income countries.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani visits Sweden

Published 04 December 2015 Updated 08 December 2015

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven today met Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani. In connection with the meeting, it was announced that negotiations will begin on an agreement concerning migration issues and readmission of those Afghans whose asylum applications in Sweden have been rejected. More than 30 000 Afghans have come to Sweden this year, of whom more than 20 000 are unaccompanied minors.

The Swedish measures in Afghanistan are long-term and have focused on political, diplomatic, police, military and aid-related areas, covering both humanitarian support and development cooperation. Afghanistan is one of the largest recipients of Swedish aid. Sweden has announced an aid package of up to SEK 8.5 billion for the period 2015–2024. A significant part of our aid focuses on improving the situation of women and children.

During the visit, Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin and President Ghani signed a cooperation agreement on aid. This is the first time that Sweden has signed an agreement of this kind with Afghanistan. The agreement affirms Sweden's aid commitments and deepens the countries' relations. It means that there will be regular, structured follow-up meetings at political level on aid and development in the country, which will complement the ongoing dialogue. Swedish aid is long-term and contributes to creating jobs, helping more children attend school, strengthening women's rights, fighting corruption and strengthening democratic institutions.

The difficult security situation in Afghanistan was also discussed. Since 2002, close to 10 000 Swedes have helped try to improve the security situation in the provinces that were part of the Swedish military area of responsibility in Northern Afghanistan. Today, the Afghan security forces have assumed responsibility for security throughout the country, which is an important step towards Afghan ownership and leadership. The Government recently presented a bill on an extension of the Swedish training mission in 2016.

President Ghani also held bilateral talks with Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. The talks were followed by a lunch hosted by Ms Wallström. Ms Wallström began by thanking Mr Ghani for coming to Stockholm and pointed out that this year marks 75 years of diplomatic relations between Sweden and Afghanistan. Topics discussed during the lunch included foreign, security and defence issues. The agenda also included development policy, economy and social issues, and the topical migration issues.

Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér also took part on behalf of the Government.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for women and girls in a crisis-prone world

Published 04 December 2015 Updated 04 December 2015

Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation, opened a seminar in Stockholm on 3 December about SRHR in humanitarian situations. Ms Lövin emphasised that conflict and natural disasters affect women, men, girls and boys in different ways.

When a crisis strikes, women and girls are disproportionately disadvantaged, and less prepared or empowered to survive and recover.

"Women's rights are not a soft issue, they are a matter of life and death. Yet far too often, they are neglected by humanitarian actors. As the world's fifth largest donor country of disaster relief, Sweden bears a special responsibility," said Ms Lövin.

The importance of ensuring access to SRHR for women and girls in humanitarian situations was highlighted. Refugees now spend an average of 20 years away from home. Linking humanitarian and development actions together through increased collaboration was identified as a core element in achieving sustainable solutions. Promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls are critical priorities for the Swedish Government that will be pursued at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May 2016, as well as during Sweden's incoming chairmanship of Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies.

At the seminar, UNFPA launched their State of World Population report "Shelter from the storm – A transformative agenda for women and girls in a

crisis-prone world". Astrid Börjeson (Doctors without Borders) shared her field experience from working with displaced woman and girls. Agnes Björn (Plan Sweden) stressed why SRHR is important for children's rights organisations and young girls' need of protection in humanitarian situations. Finally, Madeleine Lundberg, Swedish Red Cross, spoke about gender-based violence in disasters.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin visited Afghanistan

Published 25 November 2015 Updated 26 November 2015

Minister for International Development Cooperation
Isabella Lövin has just returned from a visit to Afghanistan to celebrate 75 years of diplomatic relations and discuss developments in the country and Swedish support. Ms Lövin met President Ghani, several ministers, parliamentarians and civil society organisations.

Afghanistan is one of the largest recipients of Swedish aid. The country finds itself in a difficult situation, with a coalition government that has recently taken office while peace talks have been put on hold and the security situation worsens. The increasing number of unaccompanied refugee children coming to Sweden was one of the issues on the agenda, as were Swedish support to peacebuilding and statebuilding, and women's rights.

“There is an opportunity to reverse the worrying trend and Sweden is ready to give its support. The new government has expressed the clear intention of securing peace and fighting the corruption that is threatening development in the country. Young people must be able to feel confidence in the future again,” says Ms Lövin.

“I am proud of Swedish aid to Afghanistan. It's making a difference and helping to strengthen women's rights. The situation of women is crucial for development in the country. Women's active participation in peace work, in the labour market and in politics is key to sustainable democratic development,” says Ms Lövin.

Besides Kabul, Ms Lövin also visited Mazar-e-Sharif, where she met the Swedish contingent and the governor and looked at activities financed by Swedish aid, including a school run by the Swedish Committee for

Afghanistan.

Sweden's aid strategy for Afghanistan applies for the period 2014–2019 and amounts to SEK 4.87 billion. The focus is on institution-building, human rights (including gender equality), education, economic development and employment.

Swedish aid has contributed to a major increase in the number of children enrolled in school from around 900 000 in 2001 to almost 8 million today. In 2001 only a few girls were enrolled, but today they account for almost 40 per cent, and the number of women teachers is increasing, although a great number more are needed. Sweden is contributing to better education through its support to UNICEF, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, UNESCO and the World Bank.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin led meeting on peacebuilding

Published 05 November 2015 Updated 05 November 2015

How will countries affected by conflict be able to implement the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? This is one of the items on the agenda as the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding met in Paris 4 November, under the leadership of Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

A decision will be taken during today's meeting on the continued work of the International Dialogue. How countries affected by conflict will be able to implement the new SDGs is one important item to be addressed at the meeting, attended by representatives from conflict-affected countries, international development partners and civil society.

“Efforts to prevent wars and conflicts are more important than ever. The number of wars is rising and according to forecasts, poverty will be increasingly concentrated in conflict-affected countries. The International Dialogue is an important tool for strengthening peacebuilding efforts,” says Ms Lövin.

Ms Lövin is co-Chair of the International Dialogue, whose work is based on five peacebuilding and statebuilding goals, known as the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. The New Deal, adopted in Busan in 2011, is an agreement between fragile and conflict-affected states, international development partners and civil society organisations to improve support to fragile and conflict-affected states. An evaluation of the New Deal will also be presented at the steering group meeting.

The International Dialogue holds a global meeting at ministerial level once a year. Ms Lövin will announce at today's meeting that the next ministerial meeting will take place in Stockholm in April 2016.

More information on the International Dialogue:

The Government on the International Dialogue

The International Dialogue



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden supporting people who are fleeing

Published 22 October 2015 Updated 22 October 2015

Over 60 million people are currently displaced around the world. This is the highest number since the Second World War. People are fleeing to Europe mainly from Syria, where the civil war is now in its fourth year. Almost 8 million Syrians are currently displaced in their own country and more than 4 million have fled from Syria. This corresponds to half of the Syrian population.

To help these people who are fleeing from war and violence, many people have been getting involved collecting basic necessities and offering assistance. At the same time, Sweden is supporting people fleeing from war and unrest. Since the war started in Syria, Sweden has contributed almost SEK 1.6 billion in humanitarian support. During last year alone, Sweden gave more than SEK 500 million to help people caught up in the Syrian crisis.

Alongside this emergency support to people in distress, Sweden is also supporting the UN bodies operating in Syria and its neighbouring countries through non-earmarked funding – what is known as core support. Sweden is the largest donor of core support to the UNHCR. Sweden is also the largest donor to UN Women (2014), which strengthens women's rights in the world both in peace time and times of war and disaster.

Last year, Swedish aid amounted to over SEK 38 370 000 000 – or SEK 11 per person and day. Sweden is the fifth largest aid donor (2014) when it comes to providing support for people in acute distress, known as humanitarian aid.

Sweden is not going to reduce its commitment, but the EU needs to do more. To improve the EU's refugee policy, Sweden is pursuing 10 standpoints. These include the EU needing to have a more active foreign and aid policy to help people on the ground, and that the EU needs to drastically increase the number of quota refugees.

The Government's ten standpoints to reform the EU's refugee policy



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Implementing the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development, A call to action

Published 26 September 2015 Updated 14 October 2016

The world must get off to a flying start in realizing the new ambitious and transformative sustainable development agenda.

We, the presidents and prime ministers of Brazil, Colombia, Germany, Liberia, South Africa, Sweden, Tanzania, Timor-Leste and Tunisia, have come together today in an initiative aimed at supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We believe that the effective and universal implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires efforts at all levels, and across all sectors. Government's efforts alone will not suffice. But we are committed to lead by example and we pledge to do our share.

We will work actively during the coming months to rally support for the implementation of the Agenda. We will promote the sharing of experiences and best practices and a continuous engagement at the highest political level around the world.

The 2030 Agenda is an agenda of the people, by the people and for the people. We therefore invite all stakeholders, governments, parliamentarians, civil society, business sector, labor unions and academia to join us in calling for action. We need sustained engagement, dedication and leadership at all levels to achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development in all its dimensions by 2030.

We will make it our joint mission to ensure that no one is left behind!



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden taking responsibility to implement the UN global goals for sustainability

Published 25 September 2015 Updated 25 September 2015

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson and Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin are attending the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York. On 25–27 September, the new global Sustainable Development Goals will be adopted by all UN Member States.

“Sweden will take a leading role also in implementing the new UN Sustainable Development Goals. Poverty reduction, environmental and climate action, and peacebuilding go hand-in-hand. Sweden will lead the way with a coherent policy that takes into account the perspective of poor people, human rights and planetary boundaries. Efforts to achieve the global Sustainable Development Goals in Sweden are starting now,” says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

During the summit, the Prime Minister will deliver a speech, attend meetings, seminars and roundtable discussions, and have bilateral talks with the heads of government of other countries.

“These global goals are needed for the countries of the world to work together to stop and prevent conflicts and refugee crises. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without peace, security and respect for

human rights. The global goals give us fifteen years of opportunities for a better world,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

“It is extremely positive that the world is now agreed on the importance of sustainable development. An ambitious climate agreement in Paris this December is our first opportunity to show what this means in practice. All countries have a responsibility to contribute to climate change adaptation. By taking responsibility at home, Sweden is taking the lead and showing that adaptation is both possible and profitable,” says Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson.

From a Swedish perspective, it is important to underline three dimensions of sustainability – economic, social and environmental. The rights perspective, including freedom from discrimination, and gender equality in particular, is a top priority, as are employment and the goal of decent work for all.

“In unsettled times in which the challenges faced by the world can sometimes seem insurmountable, the fact that the countries of the world have now come together and shown that change in a positive direction is possible inspires hope and confidence, as does the fact that we stand united in the battle against poverty, repression and climate change,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

In connection with the summit, a large number of charity events and a music gala – the Global Citizen Festival – will take place in Central Park in New York. The festival will focus on inequalities in the world and access to clean water and sanitation.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government decides on core support to multilateral organisations for 2015

Published 03 September 2015 Updated 03 September 2015

Today the Swedish Government decided on core support for fifteen UN bodies, active in fields including assistance to people in distress, promotion of women's rights and reducing child mortality worldwide.

Unlike earmarked support, core support enables multilateral organisations to distribute resources flexibly according to existing needs, as the contributions are channelled directly into the organisations' budgets. Core support is a prerequisite for maintaining an effective organisation. It gives organisations greater flexibility and enables them to plan their activities over the long term, while being able to respond rapidly in the event of a crisis. Distressed and desperate people should not have to wait for each individual donor's analysis, grant management and, in the worst case, policy decisions before the response can be set in motion. Sweden's support enables immediate assistance for women, men, girls and boys who, in many cases, are fighting for their lives. As the largest donor of organisational support to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) we have helped it provide rapid and vital protection and assistance to people in places ranging from Ukraine and Iraq to the Philippines, South Sudan and Ethiopia.

Sweden's support to and involvement in multilateral organisations also gives us access to decision-makers in virtually every country in the world and the opportunity to influence the shape of strategies and work plans.

The role of core support in a feminist foreign policy

With its feminist foreign policy, and as a champion of women's rights

throughout the world, Sweden's support to multilateral organisations also represents an important opportunity to pursue issues of women's rights and economic empowerment.

UN Women, in which Sweden plays a very central role, is responsible for coordinating the UN bodies' work on gender equality and is a key body in gender equality efforts in the UN. UN Women has also played a very active part in producing the new sustainable development goals, and has advocated successfully, alongside Sweden, for a separate goal on gender equality.

Sweden is also the largest donor of core support to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), which works to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights, focusing on women, girls and young people.

Sweden has also contributed to the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) now taking a modern approach to gender equality efforts, with men and boys also included in the implementation.

Sweden can make a real difference in gender equality

Support to women in war and conflict

Women and girls make up approximately half of the 59.5 million forcibly displaced people in the world. They are particularly vulnerable as they flee, when the risk of falling victim to sexual and gender-based violence increases, as has been the case during the worsening crises in Iraq and South Sudan in the last year.

The UNHCR takes an integrated approach to gender equality issues in its regular activities including setting up refugee camps, providing training and distributing food, as well as through specific initiatives to combat sexual and gender-based violence. In 2014, Sweden was the fourth largest bilateral donor to the UNHCR, and we also provide targeted support via Sida for the implementation of the UNHCR strategy to combat sexual and gender-based violence.

Conflicts and natural disasters reinforce existing inequalities between men and women. Vulnerable groups, including women and girls, become increasingly exposed. Sweden has worked proactively to counter this in various contexts, such as via the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which has a coordinating role and builds capacity in the humanitarian system with the help of gender advisers.

Furthermore, in 2015–2016 Sweden will take on the leadership of the Call to Action on Protecting Girls and Women in Emergencies, an initiative that is in line with Sweden's high profile in both humanitarian assistance and gender equality.

Towards seventeen new global sustainable development goals

In September this year, the UN General Assembly is due to adopt seventeen new global sustainable development goals (SDGs). These are to replace the eight Millennium Development Goals. Core support is, of course, not only important for the SDGs; it has also played a key role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Core support has helped ensure that the multilateral organisations have been able to focus on the Millennium Development Goals according to their comparative advantages.

Major challenges remain, but through Sweden's active engagement on the boards of these organisations and via our representations throughout the world, we have a good insight into activities, and the possibility to ensure that funds really are used as agreed. We will also continue to conduct a dialogue on key issues with these organisations, with the aim of achieving change and results that are in line with Sweden's feminist foreign policy.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin attends World Economic Forum Africa

Published 04 June 2015 Updated 04 June 2015

Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin is in South Africa attending the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Ms Lövin had the opportunity to meet Archbishop Desmond Tutu and discuss developments in South Africa and in the region. The Archbishop sends his warmest wishes to the people of Sweden and expresses his gratitude for Sweden's support in the fight against apartheid and in the ongoing work for democratic development in South Africa.

Thursday 4 June, Ms Lövin took part in a panel on blue economy – on how the oceans can be administered and used sustainably to promote development. Ms Lövin also discussed actions by the international community with regard to Ebola.

Another question for discussion during the WEF will be how Africa's energy potential can be paired with climate challenges. Sweden is investing a great deal in sustainable energy development in Africa, via for instance Power Africa. Climate and the environment will be a priority issue in the upcoming regional aid strategy for Africa.

“More than 600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa have no electricity, a lack that affects their lives and their possibilities to lift themselves out of poverty. This is an immense challenge, and at the same time, there is great potential to invest in small-scale renewable alternatives that reach rural areas. Sweden can play a role here,” says Ms Lövin.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is hosting the Stockholm Forum on Security and Development 2015

Published 13 May 2015 Updated 19 May 2015

On 12-13 May, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, together with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), is co-hosting the international conference Stockholm Forum on Security and Development. The conference will deal with the link between peace, security and development cooperation and will be held at the Münchenbryggeriet Conference Centre.

Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin will join 150 policymakers, researchers and organisations at the conference to discuss international measures and cooperation on the theme of 'Promoting Sustainable Peace'.

A number of roundtable discussions with experts and policymakers will be held on various themes during the conference. Topics will include gender equality, climate change, new sustainable development objectives, peacekeeping operations and various regional security issues.

Two new reports will be presented during the conference: the OECD's 'States of Fragility 2015' and Small Arms Survey's 'Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015'.

- Speech: Opening address at the Stockholm Forum on Security and Development 2015

- Report: OECD - States of Fragility 2015
- Small Arms Survey: Global Burden of Armed Violence



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- Opening address at the Stockholm Forum on Security and Development 2015

- Report: OECD - States of Fragility 2015
- Small Arms Survey: Global Burden of Armed Violence



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin in Sendai

Published 17 March 2015 Updated 19 May 2015

Minister for International Development Cooperation
Isabella Lövin is taking part in the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction on 14-18 March in Sendai, Japan. World leaders are gathering to agree a new international framework for disaster risk reduction and resilience.

The number of climate change disasters is likely to rise, resulting in significant economic and human costs. The costs associated with natural disasters have now risen to USD 250-300 billion annually, which is twice as much as development assistance.

"More action must be taken to prevent disasters. Otherwise, crises and disasters will be a constant threat to progress and sustainable development. We need to combat the impacts of climate change, fight poverty and strengthen international cooperation," says Ms Lövin.

Since 2005, more than 700 000 have died as a result of natural disasters and more than 1.4 million people have been injured. Around 23 million people have lost their homes. Some 1.5 billion people have been adversely affected by disasters, which have caused material losses amounting to USD 1.3 trillion. Between 2008 and 2012, 144 million people were displaced by disasters.

Ms Lövin participated in a side event on 15 March on women's role in reducing the risk and impact of disasters and is also hosting a meeting of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) on Tuesday 17 March to discuss access to climate funds and other issues.

The conference is chaired by Sweden's Margareta Wahlström, the Special

Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Speech given at the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

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Speech given at the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Significantly increased level of ambition for climate action

Published 22 October 2014 Updated 18 May 2015

In 2015 the most important climate summit since Copenhagen will take place in Paris. The Government is now choosing to take greater responsibility for Sweden's climate impact and is making a commitment ahead of Paris 2015 by increasing Green Climate Fund (GCF) financing by approximately USD 550 million (SEK 4 billion) and allocating an additional SEK 500 million to international climate action.

Most ambitious contribution per capita

This contribution, which covers the period 2015-2018 and requires the approval of the Riksdag, is the most ambitious contribution per capita of the countries that have so far announced their intention to contribute to the fund.

"These decisions are fundamental to Sweden's and the EU's credibility vis-à-vis the developing countries in climate negotiations," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin. "Climate change hits poor countries and poor people hardest. Greater action to limit greenhouse gas emissions and to support climate change adaptation is crucial for poverty reduction and sustainable development. Sweden is now demonstrating international leadership through the Government's decision," she adds.

The Green Climate Fund

At the UN Climate Summit in Copenhagen in 2009, the parties agreed to

establish a new climate fund: the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The purpose of the Fund is to support developing countries through climate change adaptation measures and reduced greenhouse gas emissions, including forest-related measures. The Green Climate Fund, which is in the process of being established, is expected to be of key importance in future climate financing. Against this background, the Government intends to pledge a total of SEK 4 billion to the Fund's initial resource mobilisation process.

"Sweden will participate actively in the work of the Fund's board and intends to make a significant contribution to the Fund's activities so as to set an example to other EU countries and other donors," says Ms Lövin.

Important decision ahead of Paris 2015

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol represent a double commitment for Sweden and other industrial countries: reducing our own emissions and financing emissions reductions and adaptation to a changed climate in poor countries. If the decisive Climate Summit in Paris in 2015 (COP21) is to succeed, it is crucial that the rich countries live up to their commitments.

USD 100 billion per year

In accordance with decisions taken at the UN climate summits in 2010 and 2011, the high-income countries are committed to an objective to use various sources of financing - private, public and innovative - to mobilise USD 100 billion per year for climate measures by 2020. Sweden is to take a leading role in the dialogue with other countries about how this objective is to be achieved. The Government intends to work to ensure that the EU as a whole is proactive in developing sources of climate financing and takes a constructive approach to climate financing after 2020.

Green Climate Fund



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

"Climate change impacts on security - now the UN must act"

Published 13 July 2018

Translation of an article published in Dagens Nyheter on 10 July 2018.

Today the members of the United Nations Security Council are meeting to discuss climate change and security for the first time in seven years. In recent years, clear signs of climate change have made it difficult to turn a blind eye.

The aim of today's meeting, chaired by Sweden, is to increase understanding about the exacerbating effects of climate change on conflict.

In Sweden this year, spring and summer have been characterised by extreme weather. Water shortages, forest fires and crop failures have become recurring news stories. The issue feels increasingly relevant and part of our reality. Extreme heat is now also affecting Canada and California, while extreme rainfall across Japan has led to two million people being evacuated from their homes, and more than 120 people have died.

But people in poor countries are those hardest hit by the adverse impacts of climate change. There, resilience to extreme weather events and crop failure is extremely low. Women are often disproportionately vulnerable in these situations. Fragile countries risk being stuck in a vicious cycle of instability and climate risks.

A few days ago, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and other United Nations and African Union representatives conducted a joint visit to Chad and Niger. In doing so, we continue the focus on a region where the link between climate change and security is particularly clear. This will help us better understand

the various dimensions of the conflict, such as links to terrorism, lack of development, gender inequality and the impact of climate change. The visit made clear that traditional security measures are not enough to promote peace and security.

Last year, the Security Council also travelled to the Lake Chad region. After the trip, Sweden initiated a ground-breaking resolution that was the first to identify the impact of climate change on a specific conflict, and called for the UN to strengthen its capacity to respond. This marked the beginning of a new approach to climate change in the Security Council.

The Sahel region of West Africa has been hit hard, especially Mali and the Lake Chad region. Shorter and less predictable rainy seasons have increased competition for scarce resources, exacerbating existing tensions between herders and settled farmers. People's livelihoods and food security are threatened, further increasing people's vulnerability. In countries where resilience to crisis is weak and social and economic security extremely limited, we see more and more people being recruited by extremist groups offering money and food. Many choose to leave their homes and flee.

Another telling example is the many small island state that are at risk of being submerged when sea levels rise. It is difficult to image the consequences of entire nations potentially disappearing.

These are only a few examples of the link between climate and conflict. We need to better understand how climate interacts with, and at times reinforces, patterns of conflict. Without this understanding, we — the international community — will never be able to take fully informed decisions to promote peace and prevent conflicts.

Sweden has worked intensively to bring greater international attention to the issue. The international community must be better at understanding, highlighting and committing to action against the threats of climate change. This means improving conflict prevention work.

The United Nations Security Council, whose primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security, must lead the way. We simply cannot ignore this issue in our quest for sustainable and peaceful development. Since Sweden took its seat on the Security Council, we have worked continuously to raise awareness of this issue. And we have achieved many important results. Sweden is working with other like-minded countries to draw attention to climate-related security risks, and we have seen results in regions including West Africa and the Sahel, and countries such as Somalia and Mali. We also work strategically with incoming Security Council members to ensure that the issue continues to receive the attention it

deserves when Sweden is no longer a member.

Sweden is doing its share, in foreign policy, climate policy and aid policy. Sweden is demonstrating global leadership in climate finance and development cooperation, and is the highest per capita donor to most of the largest multilateral climate funds. Climate and conflict perspectives are continuously integrated into development cooperation, and a range of contributions focusing on climate and security are being implemented.

The Government also supports the establishment of an international research centre for climate and security, the Stockholm Climate Security Hub, which will engage some of the leading Swedish research institutes in the field. This will be launched in conjunction with World Water Week in August with the aim of promoting knowledge development and policy dialogue in the area, not least to support the UN and other multilateral actors with evidence-based analysis.

Today's Security Council debate on climate and security was far from self-evident. But our efforts are met with ever-clearer support from countries on all continents, and with great gratitude especially from the many affected countries that are already experiencing the grave effects of climate change.

We are now looking ahead to next year's UN climate summit. If we are serious about the Global Goals, including global sustainable development and peace and security, then climate-related security risks must be on the global agenda. The situation is acute. And we have no time to lose.

Margot Wallström
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin
Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

To lead on climate, countries must commit to zero emissions

Published 25 April 2018

Opinion piece by Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister Ms Isabella Lövin in The Guardian, 17 April 2018.

What does it mean for a nation to be a "climate leader" in 2018?

At the very least, it must mean having a firm plan in place to deliver your nation's fair share of the Paris agreement. During that stunning fortnight in December 2015, 195 governments freely and willingly committed not only to keep global warming well below 2C, but to aim for the safer level of 1.5C. And they committed to bring net greenhouse gas emissions down to zero.

I cannot help but feel huge pride that my government was the first in the western world to step up and deliver on the Paris agreement. In June last year, we adopted a target of cutting Sweden's net greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2045, and we set it in law. Within a generation, Sweden will not be contributing to the problem of climate change. Science tells us that if all nations adopt this target, there is a good chance that we will live up to the commitments that we made at the Paris summit, and keep climate change within safe boundaries.

Our law does not only set an emissions target and a date. Every year the government must present a progress report to parliament, and every four years it must make a new set of policies that deliver ever-greater emission cuts. This way we will ensure that we will make steady progress towards our net-zero target.

For these ingredients of our law, we owe the UK a debt of gratitude. Ten

years ago, the UK brought in the first law in the world that set a legally binding target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Sweden borrowed heavily from the UK Climate Change Act in drawing up our own, as have other countries such as Denmark and Finland.

Climate laws deliver something that in a healthy democracy is invaluable for businesses and citizens: certainty. Our companies know that fossil fuels will be virtually eliminated over the next 25 years; coal has already gone, and oil and gas will follow. Certainty helps citizens, companies, investors and the government itself to make better decisions. For example, it is clearly good sense that all new houses are built so as to waste very little energy, so eliminating the need for more expensive retro-fitting in a decade's time.

A number of other countries have stepped up since the Paris summit by committing to net zero emissions targets by 2040 or 2050. They include France, Iceland and New Zealand – but also some developing nations such as Costa Rica and Bhutan. Driven by a progressive alliance including Sweden and the UK, the European Union is heading in the same direction. The EU parliament has already voted for a net zero target, and the commission is updating its energy and climate roadmap in line with the Paris agreement – a process which will inevitably recommend a net zero target for the EU with a target date no later than 2050.

More nations will inevitably follow later this year. In October the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will publish a landmark report which is expected to confirm that the world will need to be at net zero emissions by mid-century in order to deliver on the Paris agreement. Those countries where finance and modern technology are more available will naturally be expected to take the lead in getting there. The IPCC is an intergovernmental body – so at that point, it will clearly be untenable for any western government that does not have a net zero target with an appropriate date and a means of delivering it to claim to be a "climate leader".

Meeting a net zero target will not be easy for all sectors of the economy. We know how to do it for electricity, heating and road transport; for others such as agriculture and aviation it will be more challenging. Here, we must trust to innovation, the speed of which continues to amaze. And we can accelerate changes in these sectors with specific financial instruments such as the aviation tax that Sweden introduced this month.

Certainly it is not acceptable for any government or statutory adviser to say that net zero cannot be done. It has to be done – because as long as we

continue emitting carbon dioxide, temperatures will continue to rise. Claiming that net zero is impossible would mean giving up on the imperative of halting climate change; accepting that we will never hold back the tide of rising sea levels, failing food supplies, species extinctions and an acidifying ocean. That is not a world that I can bequeath to my children and grandchildren; nor, I believe, can any responsible leader.

Ten years ago, the UK won the gratitude of many other nations, including my own, by adopting the Climate Change Act. But science and diplomacy move on; and when the IPCC and the Paris agreement are telling us that greenhouse gas emissions need to reach net zero by mid-century, it is incumbent on us all to reflect that in our national programmes. That, at the very least, is what it means in 2018 to be a "climate leader".



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Let us work together, with courage and patience, to make the world more gender-equal

Published 15 April 2018

Today sees the opening of the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality – a global conference with 600 participants from over 100 countries. The Forum will bring together activists, academics, politicians and entrepreneurs who put their energies into making the world more gender-equal.

If we want to achieve change, we must strive for it every day – through active and patient efforts. The women's movement showed the way, standing on the barricades and fighting for gender equality at both national and international level. Thanks to their fight, we have been able to launch, as the first government in the world, the feminist foreign policy. Sweden has received attention from all over the world, and several countries have followed suit with their own policies. Last autumn, the #MeToo movement gave international momentum to the gender equality issue.

But at the same time, we have also seen how the forces working actively against women and girls have gained in strength. This is a trend that is spreading, and all the while political leaders are reducing their global responsibility. This is dangerous and it means that those people who want a more gender-equal world need to come together even more than before. The Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality is thus taking place at a particularly important time.

Policy must lead to concrete results to be relevant. For us, therefore, it has been a priority to pursue a feminist foreign policy based on action and real

change. Let us point to a few examples:

We are investing SEK 1 billion in a global strategy for gender equality and women's and girls' rights. Activists and women's organisations working for gender equality often face strong opposition in their fight for human rights. The possibilities of working independently are reduced when financing and democratic space shrink.

We have started a network of women mediators who are active in countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine. We will continue our work to ensure women are involved in peace processes at all levels.

Thanks to the WikiGap campaign, which the Ministry for Foreign Affairs conducted together with Wikimedia on International Women's Day this year, Wikipedia now has over 2 500 more articles on women: an important contribution to the encyclopaedia, in which four in five of the articles about people are about men.

Through Sweden's engagement, the UN Security Council has considered the situation of women to a greater extent – a concrete example is that since Sweden took up a place on the Council, all of the Council's statements have mentioned women, peace and security.

Swedish support has enabled the UN body UNCTAD to produce a 'trade and gender toolbox' to help ensure that trade policy has a gender equality perspective. In addition, almost 100 Swedish embassies are now giving priority to raising and promoting gender equality issues in various ways.

The full list is much longer – and is a reason to be proud. It shows that it is possible to make a difference through determined and patient work.

Now that the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality is getting under way, we want to reach out a hand to all of the forces in Sweden and the world that are working for gender equality: let us work together, with courage and patience, to make the world more gender-equal. The Forum is a launchpad for this. We cannot afford anything less.

Margot Wallström
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin
Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and
Deputy Prime Minister

Ann Linde
Minister for EU Affairs and Trade



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

SheDecides has grown into a global power

Published 02 March 2018

Sixteen million young girls and teenagers give birth each year – most of whom live in low-income countries. Unwanted and forced pregnancies can be prevented. But the right to contraception and safe abortions is currently under attack.

This is why one year ago today, Sweden and four other countries launched SheDecides – a movement that has grown into a global power for the right of all women and girls to decide over their own bodies.

In all, as many as 22 million women and girls around the world have unsafe abortions each year. Abortions account for almost 13 per cent of maternal mortality around the world. Studies by the World Health Organisation show that prohibiting and limiting legal abortions does not result in fewer abortions; it instead results in more women and girls dying as a result of unsafe, illegal abortions. Even so, one of President Trump's very first decisions on taking office last year was to reinstate and expand the Mexico City Policy. This decision prevents US aid from providing funding to foreign NGOs that perform or recommend abortions, or even provide information about the right of women and girls to have an abortion.

The Mexico City Policy has had the impact that President Trump intended. The US State Department recently published a report on implementation of the policy. The report states that to date, of more than 700 contracting partners, only four US partners and twelve subcontractors in the health field have chosen not to renew their agreements. Most of them were forced to sign agreements prohibiting them from working on the issue of abortion.

The policy impacts all organisations working on health issues that receive US aid, and so not only affects access to abortions but also access to maternal health care and contraceptives. Civil society organisations – an important advocate of women's rights – are forced into silence. This is why the Mexico City Policy is also known by the fitting epithet 'Global Gag Rule'. Many international partners and friends of the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education bear witness to a divided civil society in which everyone is forced to choose sides: stand up for the right to abortion and lose US funding, or consciously remain silent and witness the lives of women and girls being put at risk due to unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

One year ago today, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands jointly launched the SheDecides initiative – a movement to increase mobilisation of political forces throughout the world and increase financial support to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The SheDecides movement inspires hope that, together, we can bring about change. To date, more than 40 000 people have become Friends of SheDecides and taken a stand for the right of women and girls to decide over their own bodies. During the first year, over USD 445 million was raised and several countries, including Sweden, have announced that they will further increase their support in 2018.

Even before the Mexico City Policy was introduced, there was an enormous need of political and financial support to the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls. For example, funds corresponding to SEK 100 billion are needed annually to give all girls and women in developing countries access to modern contraceptives and contraceptive advice. Abortions are totally banned in six countries around the world, and abortion legislation in another sixty or so countries is restrictive or very restrictive. The consequences of President Trump's policy, which include reduced access to contraceptives and increased maternal mortality, are not yet clear.

One of the most effective ways of limiting the empowerment, participation and influence of women and girls is to limit their access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Lack of knowledge of how the body works, child and forced marriages, discriminatory legislation and gender-stereotyped values and standards limit the opportunities for women and girls to go to school, participate in working life, make their voices heard and gain political influence. Poorer access to education and an income in turn affects the total economic development of entire countries and regions.

The right of women and girls to decide over their own sexuality and

reproduction is a top priority in development cooperation. The Swedish Government and the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education have different roles in this work, but we stand up for the full enjoyment of human rights by women and girls.

We encourage everyone – individuals, companies and civil society organisations – to become Friends of SheDecides on shedecides.com. Now more than ever, Sweden's voice is needed.

Isabella Lövin

Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate

Hans Linde

Chair, Swedish Association for Sexuality Education



Opinion piece

Swifter action is needed to honour the Paris Agreement

Published 16 November 2017

Opinion piece by Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister.

Thanks to the Paris Agreement, the world is now working together to curb global warming, and right now the parties are gathered in Bonn, Germany to negotiate on how to implement the agreement. However, it is urgent that all countries significantly raise their ambitions and adapt long term policies for reducing carbon emissions. Otherwise we are likely to fail in meeting the Paris Agreement's ambitious goal of keeping the global temperature well below 2°C above pre-industrial level.

Sweden is the only country in the world that has adopted a goal of zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. A new law that binds future governments to this goal has also been adopted. In addition, this law also requires the government to present an annual climate report in its Budget Bill.

Sweden has long shown that it is possible to adapt ambitious climate policies while also enjoying good economic growth. Despite having the world's highest carbon tax for more than 20 years and an unusually strict climate policy, seen in an international perspective, Swedish companies are at the forefront and have retained and reinforced their international competitiveness. At national level we now see that since 1990, emissions in Sweden have decreased by 25 per cent while GDP has increased by 69 per cent. Just as in many other parts of the world, we see that the link between the curves for carbon emissions and increased GDP has been broken. A shining example is the development in the renewable energy industry, where we can see how a significant fall in price can be linked to a dramatic increase

in employment and growth. Countries that remains dependent on fossil fuels risk lagging behind when the rest of the world continues on the path towards an efficient and climate-smart economy.

However, fossil fuel dependency still remains substantial in many parts of our society, not least in the transport sector and manufacturing industry. Transitioning these sectors is essential for curbing global warming, but requires sharp policies that drive the transition forward and include all actors within society. The Swedish climate law obliges governments to roll out sharp policies to end all emissions to 2045. It is also essential that rich countries assist developing countries in their efforts to reduce emissions and Sweden is a leading donor in climate development aid, both for mitigation and adaptation.

But despite the ongoing transition away from fossil fuels based economies, the global temperature continues to rise and in many places we are already witnessing the devastating effects of climate change. The world needs to scale up the climate work. We all need to do more. Countries, regions, cities and business now all need to move further, faster and step up together for the next generation.



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden has shown that climate action and economic growth are absolutely linked

Published 04 June 2017

Opinion piece by Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin, and Director Haga Initiative Nina Ekelund, published in Huffington Post on 2 June 2017.

A few days ago, US President Donald Trump followed through on his threat to leave the Paris Agreement. A total of 147 countries have ratified the Agreement, which states that a global temperature rise will remain well below two degrees Celsius, and efforts will be made to limit it even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The Paris Agreement was a decisive breakthrough in international climate efforts and is needed more than ever now that we are getting reports that Arctic ice is melting much faster than researchers expected. The US leaving the Paris Agreement is a huge setback for future international climate efforts. It also affects tomorrow's jobs and the labour market. The rest of the world cannot afford to slow down to wait for the US. Those who opt out of making the transition now will be left hopelessly behind.

An increasing number of companies see profitability and business opportunities in reducing their climate impact and respond to growing demand for sustainable solutions. The challenge of climate change requires policies and leadership that create opportunities for the business sector to use this to turn risks into opportunities. The US now risks moving in a direction diametrically opposed to its own development and the development of the rest of the world.

In connection with the annual spring meetings of the IMF and the World Bank, we co-organised a seminar on climate-smart growth and the business sector's role in the climate transition. The seminar in Washington pointed out the lessons Sweden has learned regarding the role of policies and the business sector and their interaction in the climate transition. Sweden is one of the most innovative countries in the world and at the same time has both one of the world's most ambitious goals for emissions reductions and for transition to a 100 per cent renewable electricity system.

It was long a common perception that climate efforts led to increased costs and that the aim of companies' climate efforts was to live up to requirements and avoid risks. In recent years, this perception has changed – companies have realised that ambitious climate efforts present opportunities. The Haga Initiative is a network of companies that wants to show that the business sector is part of the solution in the climate transition. Each of the fifteen heads of the companies that make up the Haga Initiative can describe how both customers and employees are more loyal to companies that take responsibility for the climate, and how climate efforts lead to technological development, innovations and new products that in turn result in new and better business opportunities. The Initiative's vision is actually working out so well that these companies have already achieved the previous climate objective of a 40 per cent reduction in emissions, and have now raised the bar – they intend to be fossil-free by 2030.

Swedish experience shows that predictability and effective policy levers play an important role in companies' transition potential. Despite having the world's highest carbon tax for more than 20 years and an unusually strict climate policy, seen in an international perspective, Swedish companies are at the forefront and have retained and reinforced their international competitiveness. At national level we now see that since 1990, emissions in Sweden have decreased by 25 per cent while GDP has increased by 69 per cent. Just as in many other parts of the world, we see that the link between the curves for carbon emissions and increased GDP has been broken. A shining example is the development in the renewable energy industry, where we can see how a significant fall in price can be linked to a dramatic increase in employment and growth.

These Swedish climate success stories are not surprising to those following the research. More than ten years ago, prominent economist Nicholas Stern stated that the costs of not taking action against climate change will be much higher than if the world takes decisive action now. Based on Mr Stern's realisation that it will be more expensive to take action later, the New

Climate Economy research commission stated in a report that it is less expensive to take action now, since many climate measures also lead to major benefits to society. Just recently the OECD published a report concluding that the G20-countries thorough acting on climate change can increase growth by 1% by 2021 and 2.8% by 2050. At company level, Harvard Professor Robert G. Eccles has shown that companies with a focus on sustainability perform better and have a higher market value than other companies.

In addition, parts of the US business sector would like to see a stronger climate policy. The "Business Backs Low-Carbon USA"-initiative has the support of more than 1 000 companies and investors in the United States. They want to see climate-smart investments and continued US support for the Paris Agreement, since this creates jobs and strengthens US competitiveness. China and the EU remain committed to the Paris Agreement. What will it mean if the US continues increasing its emissions when the rest of the world continues on the path towards an efficient and climate-smart economy?

There are 160 000 jobs in the coal industry, but there are twice as many jobs in the solar industry alone. There are 640 000 jobs in traditional industries linked to fossil energy, but there are 2.5 million jobs in the new climate economy. The US needs the green industry for its growth, its jobs and its welfare.

Several major companies in the US have taken the lead and contributed to green technological development around the world. The US also represents an important market for a number of Swedish companies. Sweden is one of the largest investors per capita in the US. Swedish companies create more than 330 000 jobs in the US. There is every reason now to focus on continuing to strengthen cooperation with these companies – and the states and cities in the US with ambitious climate agendas – to promote positive social development and ensure a market for sustainable enterprise internationally and on the other side of the Atlantic.

Isabella Lövin, Minister for Climate and Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden
Nina Ekelund, Director Haga Initiative*



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Opinion piece: "To us – She Decides"

Published 08 March 2017

Opinion piece by Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Ms Isabella Lövin and seven European colleagues in Svenska Dagbladet, 8 March 2017.

Globally almost 225 million women and girls have an unmet need for contraception. Every day over 800 women and girls die from preventable causes related to pregnancy or child birth. Annually 22 million unsafe abortions occur and two million girls under 15 become mothers. This is the situation for millions of the most vulnerable women around the world. In our part of the world, pregnancies are fortunately in most cases happy circumstances. In other parts of the world, this is not the case. Indeed, a pregnancy can be life-threatening as well as life-changing. Therefore, women's and girls' full and equal enjoyment of all and their access to contraception and comprehensive sexuality education are key-priorities in our development policy.

During the last decades maternity mortality has almost halved thanks to hard work and increased access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Now we see worrying trends challenging this progress. We cannot afford to turn the positive trend backwards. It is literally a matter of life and death.

When we are fighting for women's and girls' rights, we are fighting for human rights for everyone. It is our firm conviction that a woman has the right to choose with whom she wants to start a family, when and if she wants to have children and how many children she wants. However, as the statistics clearly show, millions of the most vulnerable women around the world do not enjoy these basic human rights.

Today, on 8 March women around the world have for generations been fighting for justice, equality and human rights for everyone. We feel a strong gratitude for the strong and visionary women who have spoken for the justice, freedom and equality that we, our mothers and our daughters are enjoying today. And we feel a strong commitment to use the voice given to us to speak for the women, who don't yet have the privilege to speak for their own rights. When we stand tall today, we stand on the shoulders of women who fought before us. Therefore, we raise our voice for the women who are not heard.

Not only because from a human point of view it is the right thing to do. But also because we know that when we invest in women everybody wins. We cannot achieve the Sustainable Development Goals which the whole world agreed upon at the UN General Assembly in September 2015, if women are not an active part of development. And for women to be an active part of development, they must have control over their own bodies. According to a study done by McKinsey, global GDP could be increased by 26 % by 2025 if women were to get full equality to that of men.

Fighting for women's and girls' full and equal enjoyment of all human rights is not only the right thing to do, it is also a rational thing to do.

We turn up our engagement

Unfortunately, the fight for women's and girls' rights suffered a setback on 23 January with the reintroduction of the Mexico City Policy, also known as the Global Gag Rule. This will affect American funding for organisations working with sexual and reproductive health and rights. According to the NGO Marie Stopes International the consequences for the world's most vulnerable women will be very serious: up to 6.5 million additional unintended pregnancies, 2.1 million additional unsafe abortions and 21,700 additional maternal deaths between 2017 and 2020. And this is just one example from one organisation. The total impact can be much greater. Experience from last time the Global Gag Rule was introduced shows that the number of abortions actually increased.

Fortunately, several countries in the global North and South are longstanding political and financial supporters of women's rights. Several new initiatives have already been taken by individual EU Member States including fundraising and a holding of Ministerial Conference 'She Decides' to increase political and financial support for the agenda. The "She Decides" conference in Brussels last week brought together more than 50 countries from

Afghanistan to Canada and from Norway to Chad and raised 181 million Euro to this crucial agenda. What was as uplifting as the political support was the great financial support from private donors. This shows that women's and girls' rights are not just a political priority, it's a movement of people.

At the "She Decides"-conference, we saw the beginning of a movement which rallied financial and political support for non-governmental organizations and UN agencies that make sexual and reproductive health and rights a reality for millions of women and girls by providing access to counselling, evidence based information, non-discriminatory comprehensive sexuality education, family planning, modern contraceptives, safe delivery, HIV testing and safe abortion care. The broad international support for women's rights is crucial for the lives of millions of women and for the development of their countries.

And it shows that when other countries turn down their engagement in the fight for women's and girls' rights, we are ready to turn up our engagement.

With a number of like-minded EU-colleagues we have called upon the European Union to increase its funding for and make greater use of its influence in support of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

It's her decision

Deciding when to start a family is a decision for life. For girls and young women in the developing world starting a family is often equal to finishing school. Therefore, it is very important when this decision is taken. And it is very important that girls and young women themselves take that decision. Women who have the opportunity to decide for themselves will have healthier and better educated children. This is clearly recognized in the Agenda 2030 Goal 3 to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages and Goal 5 that aims to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.

To us, a girl's and a woman's body is for her to control. It's her decision with whom she wants children, how many and when she wants children. We want to give her the tools to decide for herself. Today on 8 March we want to send a message that is as important as it is simple: She decides!

Isabella Lövin, minister for development cooperation, Sweden,
Lilianne Ploumen, minister for foreign trade and development cooperation,
The Netherlands,

Alexander De Croo, deputy prime minister and minister for development cooperation, Belgium

Ulla Tørnæs, minister for development cooperation, Denmark,

Mr. Romain Schneider, Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs, Luxemburg

Kai Mykkänen, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, Finland

Sven Mikser, Foreign Minister of Estonia, Estonia

Teresa Ribeiro, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Portugal



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

"Dark Days for Children"

Published 14 February 2017 Updated 14 February 2017

Opinion piece by Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Ms Isabella Lövin, and Executive Director of UNICEF Anthony Lake in Project Syndicate, 27 January 2017.

The year 2016 will probably be remembered for military and political events, but it should also go down in history as one of the worst years for children since World War II. Images of dead, injured, and distraught young children filled the media on an almost daily basis: a small boy sitting stunned and bleeding after his home was bombed; small bodies being lifted out of rubble; and small graves on the Mediterranean shoreline that mark the deaths of unknown children.

These images are powerful and uncomfortable. And yet they cannot capture the magnitude of children's suffering. More than 240 million children are living in conflict zones – from the killing fields of Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and northern Nigeria, to less well-documented but horror-stricken areas of Somalia, South Sudan, and Afghanistan. And of the 50 million children who live outside their own countries or have been internally displaced, more than half have been forcibly uprooted, and are facing new threats to their lives and well-being.

Millions of children are undernourished and out of school; millions have witnessed unspeakable brutality; and millions are threatened with exploitation, abuse, and worse. This is not rhetoric; it is reality.

The United Nations – with support from countries such as Sweden, and by working through a coordinated humanitarian-response system that includes UNICEF – is alleviating suffering whenever and wherever it can. But the quantity and complexity of cascading crises are testing that system as never before. New challenges, such as extremism, are increasing the risks to

children, and making it more difficult and dangerous to reach them. Meanwhile, armed groups are increasingly targeting schools, hospitals, and homes, and compounding innocent people's suffering.

Political solutions to these conflicts are the surest way to stop the suffering and bring an end to such savage violations of human rights. But, barring that ideal outcome, we need to strengthen the current humanitarian system's capacity to reach the children at greatest risk.

More than 70 years ago, world leaders addressed the unprecedented humanitarian crisis following World War II by creating new institutions to bring immediate assistance to those in need. These new global entities laid the foundation for a future based on cooperation, dialogue, and results, rather than conflict, disaster, and ruin.

That was a turning point in world history; we have now arrived at another one. We need to summon the same spirit of solidarity and creativity today that inspired previous generations, not by founding new institutions, but by finding new ways of responding to the hard realities of our own time.

For starters, we urgently need to harness innovation to expand our capacity to reach children who are cut off from assistance in besieged areas or communities controlled by extremists. We should be exploring every option, such as using drones to airdrop food and medical supplies, and developing mobile apps to monitor needs and track supplies on the ground, and to keep aid workers safer. While there will never be a substitute for safe, unimpeded humanitarian access, we need to explore every avenue to reach children in danger.

More broadly, we must do a better job of coordinating among governments and organizations to provide short-term and long-term relief more efficiently, and to make every dollar count. With chronic crises proliferating, we should be maximizing synergies between humanitarian and development initiatives, because the two go hand in hand. How we respond in emergencies lays a foundation for future growth and stability, and how we invest in development can help build resilience against future emergencies.

Lastly, we need to change how governments calibrate the critical aid that they provide to meet fluctuating needs. In recent years, as appeals for aid have escalated, countries undergoing domestic austerity have increasingly had to justify their foreign-aid outlays. Many donors have earmarked their aid funds for specific purposes. To be sure, such funds will always be an

indispensable tool in both humanitarian and development efforts; but in today's unpredictable environment, more flexible, long-term funding is critical.

"Core" funding, as it is known, enables the UN and nongovernmental organizations both to react more quickly in emergencies and to plan more strategically. Such funding allows us to provide life-saving help when people need it most, rather than having to wait for countries to respond to specific humanitarian appeals. This is especially important for addressing the "forgotten" crises that the media may have missed.

Sweden has long been a proponent of such flexible support for UN organizations, because it improves results. For this reason, Sweden's government recently decided to double its 2016 contribution to UNICEF's core funds. Now that the world is working together on a new global development agenda, we hope this practice will spread and inspire other governments to move more toward high-quality funding for humanitarian relief and sustainable development.

We must protect the rights, lives, and futures of the world's most vulnerable children. To the extent that we do that, we will help to determine our common future as well.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden raises the ambitions in the work for human rights

Published 10 December 2016 Updated 10 December 2016

Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December. It presents an opportunity to highlight the Government's distinct emphasis on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Developments over the past few decades have meant that more people than ever before enjoy their human rights, including access to education and health care, the right to work and to organise in trade unions, and to live with whomever they choose. Since the 1970s, many states have made the transition to democracy – at least as regards the introduction of multiparty systems and the conduct of regular elections. The majority of the world's states have acceded to the core human rights conventions. Sweden's foreign policy engagement has contributed to this development.

We are living in a world that is more uncertain than it has been for many years and in many places we can also see that progress is being undone.

In a growing number of countries, human rights and democracy are weakening. Authoritarian and repressive regimes are gaining more influence, both over their own citizens and in the world. A number of states, including Russia, Egypt and Turkey, have introduced legislation or taken measures that make it extremely difficult for independent actors and journalists to operate freely. A number of stable democracies have also shown disturbing populist tendencies and legislative trends that restrict freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

It is clear to us that the democratic space is shrinking.

A further factor in this downward trend is the ever-shrinking civil society

space. Human rights defenders and journalists are subjected to threats and harassment, and laws are enacted to make activities highlighting human rights violations, corruption, abuse of power or electoral fraud excessively difficult or indeed impossible. At the seminar on hate and threats against women journalists that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs co-hosted with media institute FOJO, the Swedish Institute and UNESCO, it became very apparent just how vulnerable and exposed journalists – and particularly women journalists – are as a result of exercising their profession.

Perhaps the greatest challenge when it comes to human rights is that the universality of these rights is increasingly being called into question. Cultural or historical contexts are cited that enable the meaning of rights to be interpreted differently depending on where in the world a person lives or was born. This is an unfortunate trend that Sweden will forcefully counter. This is particularly relevant with regard to women's enjoyment of their human rights. For example, about 100 states place restrictions on the types of jobs women can do.

For the Government, it goes without saying that human rights are everyone's rights and thereby universal.

Economic, social and cultural rights are given higher priority than ever before. The right to education and health, and to health care and work are just as important as the freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of assembly and other civil and political rights.

Today, access to sexual and reproductive health and rights is a globally contested issue. Forces that want to restrict these rights are gaining strength in many places. More and more, it is a matter of not regressing, for example, on the issue of sex and relationship education, which has a huge bearing on the prevention of violence against women and girls.

It is clear that gender equality issues remain controversial in many parts of the world. This is why we will continue to pursue our feminist foreign policy and focus on issues related to women's equal rights.

The negative developments we see, where human rights, democracy and the rule of law are questioned and challenged in all parts of the world, place new demands on Sweden. This requires strategic analysis and a new approach – but also integrated activity-oriented policies.

This is why the Government is now submitting a written communication

to the Riksdag on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This communication will be our compass for action in the coming years, presenting the Government's priorities and tools. The communication is also unique in that it addresses the development of human rights in every region of the world.

The Government has also appointed an Ambassador for Human Rights to have overall responsibility for the implementation of the communication and to be the messenger of Sweden's human rights, democracy and rule of law policy.

The EU project is more important than ever in a world following a repressive course. It is essential for the credibility of the EU that we practise what we preach; this is why Sweden will continue to push for human rights, democracy and the rule of law both within the EU and externally.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) also has an important role to play here with its clear emphasis on human rights, democracy and the rule of law as a prerequisite for sustainable peace and security in Europe.

The UN continues to be one of our most important platforms, and Sweden's imminent entry as a non-permanent member of the Security Council is extremely important for our work. The UN Human Rights Council and other UN bodies Sweden is involved in are important arenas. In each of these forums we intend to continue to pursue policies that are firmly anchored in human rights, democratic values and the rule of law.

Our development cooperation has a strong emphasis on democracy and gender equality, increased respect for human rights and freedom from oppression. The coming policy framework for Swedish development cooperation establishes that human rights and democracy are two of the most important priorities in this area. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency has been especially tasked with examining the issue of shrinking civil society space and proposing measures that Sweden can take to counter this. The report is to be submitted in the first half of 2017.

As a further step in putting this enhanced ambition into practice, we are conducting a freedom of opinion and expression campaign in connection with the 250th anniversary of Sweden's Freedom of the Press Act. Next year, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will present reports on human rights,

democracy and the rule of law in countries in all regions of the world.

Sweden has a proud history of working for human rights throughout the world. This is a tradition the current Government will strengthen. Our seat on the UN Security Council offers a unique opportunity to fight for these issues in a world that more than ever before needs a clear voice for the equal value and rights of all people.



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

A Better Global Framework to End AIDS

Published 05 December 2016 Updated 05 December 2016

Opinion piece in Project Syndicate 2 December 2016 by Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS.

This week, we celebrate the tremendous progress that has been made in the struggle against HIV and AIDS. In many countries with strong health systems, HIV is no longer a death sentence, but a chronic condition. And Africa has reached a critical milestone: each year, there are now more Africans starting HIV treatment than being infected.

Still, even as we celebrate, we must also mourn the 1.1 million people who lost their lives to the disease this year. HIV still infects 6,000 people every day, and AIDS remains a leading cause of death among children, adolescents, and women in Africa.

The movement against AIDS has inspired all of us to help the people who continue to be left behind, and to commit to ending AIDS once and for all. Fortunately, we already have the know-how, resources, and, crucially, the political momentum to do this; and at the High-Level Meeting on Ending AIDS this year, United Nations member states made ambitious commitments that will put us on the fast track toward our goal.

What's more, in September, Canada hosted a successful financing conference for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, which brought in almost \$13 billion, replenishing the Global Fund for 2017-2019. Meanwhile, individual countries have increased their domestic investments, and international partners – big and small – have maintained their support, which is how we will reach the \$26 billion needed for the

global AIDS response in 2020.

But funding parts of the global health system is not enough. The international community must take a more holistic view and reinforce a global-response architecture that features a clear division of labor and seamless cooperation among various stakeholders. Ultimately, the goal of such a framework must be to support countries' own health systems, by marshaling public and private actors at all levels in a given country, so that every facility – from the public hospital in the capital to the village clinic – is properly provisioned.

Sweden is proud to continue its support for the Global Fund; at the replenishment conference in September, it pledged 2.5 billion krona (\$271 million). The Global Fund is by far the largest multilateral source of financing for efforts to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria; but just like the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (now known as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance), it is part of a global architecture, and relies on a range of partners to deliver aid effectively. So, if country-level support for other global-health organizations – such as UNAIDS, the World Health Organization, and the UN Development Programme – dries up, continued progress in the fight against HIV and AIDS will be at risk.

Providing the necessary support will require donors to coordinate with one another, so that all parts of the existing architecture for managing global health issues are adequately funded. This will then ensure that all countries – and, more importantly, all people – receive the support they need.

UNAIDS is setting a powerful example for international collaboration, by organizing partners around a common 2016-2021 Strategy to end AIDS. This unique and innovative partnership brings together 11 co-sponsoring UN agencies, each with diverse sector-specific expertise, and mobilizes various government stakeholders. Partners include business, community, and faith leaders, as well as teachers, judges, members of law enforcement, parliamentarians, and many others outside the health sector whose actions nonetheless affect health outcomes.

One of UNAIDS' tasks is to encourage national governments to keep AIDS high on their public-health agendas, and to invest in joint efforts to end the disease. It is also the only organization with a mandate to set norms and standards for the global response to AIDS, which means that it plays a key role in the current international framework.

UNAIDS maintains a close partnership with the Global Fund. It has a

presence in more than 80 countries, and its regional teams provide technical support and strategic information, which helps the Global Fund direct its grants to the right programs, locations, and populations at sufficient scale. Moreover, it helps to create the social, legal, and political conditions for people to use health services, not least by promoting gender equality and ensuring that populations at higher risk of contracting HIV do not face adverse discrimination.

UNAIDS engages with civil society at all levels, by leveraging the international AIDS response to promote equality, dignity, and human rights around the world. As such, UNAIDS works to expand the political space for – and investment in – civil society.

Yet, despite its broad mandate and many functions, UNAIDS lacks adequate resources, which threatens past achievements and future programs alike, and poses a danger to people and communities that depend on the lifesaving support the organization helps facilitate.

Sweden and UNAIDS will work together to ensure that the international AIDS response continues to transform – and save – lives. We will safeguard and empower women and girls, and make sure that vulnerable populations' voices are heard. But, at the same time, the international community must strengthen the existing framework for managing global-health issues.

As Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven said in Montreal in September: "Today we are focusing on the Global Fund, but tomorrow let's not forget to provide sufficient funding for the entire global health architecture." It is time for the international community to meet that challenge, by pledging to support our global health infrastructure, so that no agency – and no country or person – is left out.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

To End Sexual Violence In Conflict, Women Must Be Agents of Change

Published 21 June 2016 Updated 21 June 2016

For the past year I have visited conflict zones from Afghanistan to Somalia, Lebanon, Liberia and South Sudan. In each of these countries it has been the human stories that stick with me, both those related to sexual- and gender-based violence and those of courageous women and men committed to promoting peace and development.

Sunday is the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. This date will mark an occasion for the international community to increase accountability, raise awareness, and demonstrate its resolve to address this crime. The UN's grim estimate is that roughly 35 percent of women globally have experienced physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives—this figure is even higher in conflict zones. This compels us to work together, in partnership, because the challenges we face today in relation to the systemic and widespread use of sexual violence in conflict are extraordinary.

All forms of violence, but perhaps sexual violence more than most, have a negative impact on both the individual and society. While more men and boys are killed in direct conflict-related violence, women and girls are more exposed to conflict-related sexual violence. Widespread sexual violence during and after conflicts undermines the chances for sustainable peace and security whereas women's empowerment enhances it. We now know that when women are part of the process, peace negotiations are more successful

and peace is more sustainable.

I am proud to represent the first explicitly feminist government in the world, and one that has been at the forefront of advocating for greater attention to women, peace and security. We are convinced that gender equality is the foundation of sustainable peace and development, and that gender-based violence needs to be addressed head-on as part of the efforts to build peace.

We are not alone. The Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence in Emergencies initiative was launched by Sweden and the U.K. with the aim of building a truly global coalition to prevent gender-based violence. Today, more than 50 partners have joined. We are particularly keen to see states from the south join us to share experiences and knowledge on this subject.

But political consensus now needs to be turned into consistent action. Of the 1,168 peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2013, less than a fifth refers to women or gender. While over 100 countries around the world now have specific laws aimed at tackling violence against women, this kind of protection and recourse simply isn't available to the millions of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict zones. The international community must support conflict-affected states in filling that void.

To this end, we must shift the focus from women as victims, to women as agents of change, and strengthen the link between women's economic empowerment, women's political participation, and the full enjoyment of their human rights. This will mean transforming institutions, and changing norms and behavior.

There is also a final, overarching challenge: engaging with men and boys. Violence against women is not a women's issue. Engaging men in the fight against sexual violence is key. Men and boys can be drivers of change. They need to be involved and take responsibility. Although the Democratic Republic of Congo is perhaps better known for its many cases of conflict-related sexual violence, it is in fact home to many successful strategies for engaging men in preventing violent male behavior, including as group education and mentorship programmes for ex-combatants and military officers. These programmes focus on positive masculinities as a strategy to initiate a change of behavior. I am proud to say that Sweden supports this work.

The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, led by the g7+ group of fragile and conflict affected states, the donor community and civil society is now putting gender equality issues at the forefront of its peacebuilding efforts. In our "New Deal" initiative and on the ground in conflict-affected states we are seeing this bear fruit. In Togo, for instance, where gender rights groups were specifically brought in by the government to take part in the country's post conflict fragility assessment—a key part of the New Deal process.

As co-chair of the International Dialogue, I am proud to say that our Stockholm Declaration from May this year has made a strong commitment to U.N. Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security. The importance of women's participation and partnership with women's organizations must now be on top of our agenda.



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

First Generation to Eradicate Poverty

Published 09 June 2016 Updated 09 June 2016

Opinion piece by the Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin and the Minister for Education, Gustav Fridolin in The Huffington Post, 9 June 2016.

The last decades hundreds of millions of people have left extreme poverty. Today more than 90 percent of all children are enrolled in school, even in developing countries. Thanks to digitalization we are more closely interconnected with each other than ever before. Knowledge and ideas flow throughout the world and transcend all previous boundaries.

At the same time, the world is younger than ever. Almost half of the world's population is younger than 25. Together, we now have a unique opportunity to continue creating a better, more sustainable future. And we have recently taken some important steps. Last year, 2015, the world came together to agree on three milestones: the climate agreement in Paris, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for financing development and not least the UN Agenda 2030.

With the Agenda 2030, for the first time in history the world has one, integrated agenda for both development and environmental sustainability. We can't have one without the other. Poverty eradication without respect for the ecosystems and the planets limited resources is a dead end. This creates new visions, new possibilities — and challenges.

But we all know that plans and visions are not enough. The urgency of

putting words into action is underlined when we consider the climate change, the refugee crisis, the growing number of conflicts and wars, the threat of global terrorism, fundamentalism and hate speech, or the fact that more than one billion people are still lacking electricity. It is obvious that the world so far has failed to deal with the greatest challenges of our time.

The world needs countries that are willing to lead the way toward the fulfillment of the Agenda 2030. We are proud to declare that Sweden is committed to be such a country. Four areas are especially important in fulfilling the agenda:

- Including youth. This spring, Sweden launched the global campaign "#Firstgeneration." First Generation implies the generations and civil society actors who, thanks to digitalization, have access to networks and new knowledge and thus have a unique opportunity to use the 2030 Agenda and the global goals to build new solutions for a sustainable future — a future that can end poverty! Around the world we will organize activities and collaborations including everything from innovation competitions, university activities to social-media initiatives. A key target group is the teachers around the world. The crucial role of teachers in society, as well as their position as role models and sources of inspiration, gives them unique opportunities to pursue sustainability issues and influence our future.
- Climate. Sweden is committed to become one of the first fossil-free welfare nations in the world. Sweden used to be a country very dependent on fossil fuels. Since the oil crises in the '70s, we have been working systematically to reduce energy consumption and to increase the share of renewables. During the same period our economy has developed very fast. We opt for sustainable-energy sources for the sake of the climate, but also because it is economically sound. We believe it is much smarter to be the first one to enter the new economy, rather than being the last one depending on old solutions. Sweden is also the largest per capita contributor to the Green Climate Fund.
- Feminism. Sweden is the first country in the world to pursue a feminist foreign policy. Ensuring that women and girls can enjoy their fundamental human rights is both an obligation within the framework of our international commitments and a prerequisite for sustainable development. Investing in gender equality and promoting opportunities for non-traditional education and career choices for both boys and girls is of utmost importance. Investing in girls' education in particular is one of the most effective measures to promote gender equality and to contribute to economic and social development.

- Coherence. Coherence is a fundamental part of the Agenda. Sweden has a long tradition of working with policy coherence for global sustainable development, through what we call Policy for Global Development. Every Ministry has to produce its own action plans on how to achieve greater policy coherence for development. The Government recently appointed a multi-stakeholder National Committee to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda throughout Swedish society. The responsibility includes conducting an assessment of the extent to which Sweden fulfills the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, submitting a proposal for an overarching action plan for Sweden's implementation and working to include all relevant actors. Civil society organizations, municipalities, academia, private sector and trade unions are essential in this endeavour, since we know that every part of the society needs to work together if we are to succeed.

We now have 15 years ahead of us to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030. We are convinced that it is possible to achieve the goals and to create a better future for us all. But we need to get to work at once, and we need to do it together. We are convinced UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is right: We are the first generation that could end poverty and the last one to limit climate change. Let us jointly rise to that challenge.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin on DN debatt

Published 26 May 2016 Updated 26 May 2016

When I took office in October 2014 as Minister for International Development Cooperation after more than five years in the European Parliament, many people asked me how it felt to 'switch' issues. In the European Union, I had worked mostly with fisheries policy, and at this point I would be dealing with development issues. In retrospect, I can see that the switch was not as dramatic as one might believe.

Fisheries, the world's oceans, the climate, inequality, poverty, the refugee situation and conflict issues – they are all interrelated. The political challenges facing the world are so tightly interwoven that they cannot be addressed individually. They require a common approach, and when we look at the world around us, it is clear that up to now we have failed to find such an approach.

Earlier in the week I took part in the UN World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul. Sixty million people in the world are displaced, and 125 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. Not only are there more international crises, they have also become more protracted. The average time spent by a refugee in a refugee camp is now 17 years. In which case, sending food and blankets is hardly enough.

War and conflicts risk being exacerbated and prolonged by more extreme climate change. The average global temperature is currently rising at an alarming rate. Heat records were set globally in both 2014 and 2015. And all the evidence suggests that 2016 will be even warmer. Arctic ice is melting at record speed. The poorest people will be hit hardest when storms, flooding and drought become more commonplace.

At the same time, one billion people still lack access to electricity. This is a crucial obstacle to fulfilling a number of other fundamental human rights, such as access to functioning systems for water and sanitation, or lamps for doing homework in the evenings.

We must resolve these challenges without creating new problems in the process. We must deal with these issues jointly, rather than seeing them as separate problems to be solved individually. It may sound obvious, but it means we must rethink a number of areas.

When we support countries to build energy solutions and infrastructure for the billions of people who lack access to these today, an opportunity then opens up to step straight into the future and not lock these countries up in yesterday's mindset of dependence on fossil fuels. We must ensure that all investments – not only money from the climate funds – are used for sustainable solutions.

The same applies in Sweden. All investments, all trade and all policies must be sustainable, both in Sweden and abroad. Housing that we build today should also function in a future fossil-free Sweden. Infrastructure, railways and agriculture must also work well in a future in which we have stopped overexploiting the Earth's resources. Sweden must be at the forefront of innovations and climate-smart solutions that give Swedish companies export advantages in new growth markets.

The dividing line between domestic and foreign policy has become increasingly blurred. The global refugee situation, climate change and the financial crisis are examples of global phenomena that set the agenda for Swedish domestic policy. The distinction between developing countries and industrialised countries is also increasingly outdated; obviously there are still poor and rich countries, but policy is now so interwoven that all countries and all policy areas must contribute to sustainable development.

More and more people are beginning to see this mutual dependence. In the past year, the world adopted a historic climate agreement in Paris, new UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development up to 2030 and a framework for how to fund these efforts. Economic, social and environmental developments must go hand in hand. If we do not succeed in tackling these challenges in parallel, we will fail in all three.

The new UN Agenda for Sustainable Development applies to all countries and all policy areas, not only to 'poor' countries and not only to development

cooperation. In Sweden, we have been working since 2003 on Sweden's Policy for Global Development, which states that all policy areas are to contribute together to sustainable development in the world, because fair trade, tax evasion, environmental or migration policy are just as important for global development as development aid. As Minister for International Development Cooperation, I have not only had the primary responsibility for development aid, but also for coordinating the Policy for Global Development to ensure that all parts of the Government Offices are working towards a common goal.

Sweden is at the forefront of international development cooperation, both as a donor in terms of percentage of GNI and with regard to the quality and effectiveness of development aid. We are also leaders in the area of climate change, as the world's largest per capital donor to the UN's Green Climate Fund, by taking the lead at home with regard to investing in building of a green society and by putting a price on emissions.

Sweden will continue to be an international role model in the areas of both climate and development, and by regarding the two areas as parts of a whole we can achieve even more. We are showing that it is possible to unite economic development with reduced emissions.

For this reason, Sweden is now taking one more step to be at the forefront by appointing a minister for international development cooperation and climate. I will be responsible for international climate policy in addition to aid policy. Responsibility for daily work on these issues will be divided between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment. I will also carry the title of Deputy Prime Minister. The concept of international development cooperation is more accurate than development aid, since the activities we are carrying out are more about creating conditions for development in cooperation with countries, institutions and civil society than about Sweden sending money to a passive recipient.

As Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, I will be responsible – together with the new Minister for the Environment, Karolina Skog, and other colleagues in the Government – for making Sweden one of the first fossil-free welfare nations in the world. By taking responsibility for our climate at home, Sweden will demonstrate leadership in the global arena.

We must do this together. Throughout society today, there is a strong push for progress towards greater sustainability. The framework of the Fossil-free

Sweden initiative brings together hundreds of companies, municipalities, regions, and associations that want to work together towards the vision of making Sweden one of the world's first fossil-free welfare nations.

In politics, too, there are many opportunities for cooperation across party lines. Earlier this year, seven Riksdag parties agreed to introduce a climate policy framework to ensure that emissions are kept within sustainable limits. The parties are currently discussing energy systems of the future within the framework of the Commission on Energy, and there is also a broad consensus across party lines on Sweden's Policy for Global Development.

During my years at the European Parliament, I managed, together with representatives of a number of other parties, to help reform EU fisheries policy and radically improve prospects for our oceans to recover from the overfishing that has gone on for many decades. We achieved this by listening to each other and focusing on common interests, rather than by looking for differences of opinion. I believe that Swedish policy would gain from more cooperation and less disagreement for the sake of disagreement.

"We are the first generation that can wipe out poverty and the last one that can halt climate change." These words were spoken by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and are a good summary of our greatest task. So let us begin.

Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Access to the life-saving services of a midwife is a gender rights issue

Published 05 May 2016 Updated 05 May 2016

Opinion piece by the Minister for International Development Cooperation, Isabella Lövin in The Guardian on the International Day of the Midwife, May 5, 2016.

In the mid-18th century, the maternal mortality rate in Sweden approached 900 deaths for every 100,000 births. A hundred years later, the introduction of professional midwives had contributed to the rate being pushed down to 230. Today, four women die per 100,000 live births.

This goes to show that the midwifery profession and workforce have the power to save thousands of lives each year. Unfortunately, not everyone gets to enjoy the benefits of that power. Although global maternal and infant mortality rates have dropped by half since 1990, about 800 women and girls worldwide still die from pregnancy- or childbirth-related complications each day. Almost all of them, 99%, die in developing countries. Every day there are more than 8,200 stillbirths and, each year, 2.8 million babies die within the first six weeks of life.

These figures are troubling in themselves, but the fact that the majority of these deaths could have been prevented with the help of qualified midwives and doctors makes the situation even more frustrating. Added to that is a persistent and – in some places – growing resistance to the human rights of women, not least among violent extremist groups, who make the control of women's lives, bodies and reproduction a central part of their ideology and rhetoric. Women's human rights can never be taken for granted.

To help spread the word about the major part played by midwives in sexual and reproductive health, the Swedish foreign ministry teamed up with the International Confederation of Midwives to launch the Midwives4All initiative. Our aim is to strengthen women's human rights, improve access to health services and resources for women, and increase female representation. This year we're celebrating the heroism of midwives by acknowledging those whose efforts make a real difference. Our excellence in midwifery award is open to healthcare workers in 14 countries around the world.

Midwives not only improve the chance of a safe pregnancy and delivery, but also provide the full continuum of care throughout a woman's life. By doing so, they play a key role in the empowerment of women and building sustainable societies. Access to a midwife is a big and important step in achieving sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. These rights are crucial for gender equality and are not merely a health issue.

Sweden has a feminist government and sexual and reproductive health and rights are seen as central to the struggle for women's human rights. If women and girls can't control their own bodies, decide whether or not to have sex with someone, and choose who to marry and when to have children, how can they participate on equal terms as men in society?

Sweden has a long tradition of being at the forefront on these matters, and up to 60% of Swedish development cooperation for health goes to promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights. In 2014, it amounted to 2.3bn Swedish kronor (£197m).

We promote more and better midwife training, strengthened legislation, increased recognition of the profession, and better information on the role midwives play. Swedish aid helps women and girls in countries where maternal mortality is highest. During my trips as a minister in Afghanistan, Somalia and South Sudan, I have seen how this work saves lives and build better capacity for the future. In Bangladesh, Swedish midwives, in close cooperation with local authorities, have helped to build up a new profession from the ground.

We have the policy and the mindset to drive change for the better, but first and foremost we have the opportunity. Through the ambitious goals of the 2030 agenda, two of which explicitly relate to sexual and reproductive health and rights, world leaders have already agreed to invest in gender equality. Partly because it is the right thing to do, but also because, when

women and girls can educate themselves and find a job they like, they bring economic development. This pays off: if every country matched the most gender-equal country in its region in terms of access to the labour market, the global GDP would increase by 11%.

Gender equality can truly be the key to ending poverty.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Addressing the displacement crisis

Published 04 April 2016 Updated 04 April 2016

Our world today is experiencing a humanitarian crisis of historic proportions. More people than ever – over 125 million – are in need of emergency aid. Over 60 million people, more than half of them children, worldwide have fled their homes as a result of conflict and persecution, many of them trapped for decades without any possibility to learn, work and build a future. The crisis has touched almost every region of the globe, including Europe. But even though Europe has recently seen a staggering increase of asylum-seekers, developing countries are still host to over eight in ten of the world's refugees.

The international community needs to step up in order to face these challenges. That is why next week's ministerial meeting, the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State Building in Stockholm, and the first ever World Humanitarian Summit coming up in May in Istanbul are extremely important as they offer opportunities for political leadership and action.

While receiving countries and communities struggle to shelter the world's forcibly displaced, those who help often do not have the means to do so. Humanitarian organisations like UNHCR have been warning for years that funding is insufficient to cover the rapidly growing needs. With humanitarian appeals regularly underfunded by some 50 per cent, not only do millions of people go without some of the most basic human necessities, but they also are not given the tools they need to rebuild their lives and become self-reliant. To break this vicious cycle, several things are needed.

- Most importantly, peace. We must stop the violent conflicts that are pushing tens of thousands of people to flee every single day, and prevent new ones from breaking out. Fifteen conflicts have erupted or reignited in the last five years alone, displacing millions of people. Almost half of all peace agreements in the world fail within five years. We need to build stronger partnerships, coordinate better and target development aid more efficient. During the Stockholm meeting, gathering leaders from conflict affected countries as well as donors, civil society and UN agencies, participants will agree on a "new deal for peace" to more effectively prevent armed conflict and extinguish the flames of conflict before they threaten the social, economic and political fabric of societies.
- Unearmarked funding. There is also an urgent need for more, more flexible and more predictable, resources. The world is unpredictable in so many ways that humanitarian funding should not be. Unearmarked support enhances efficiency, lowers administrative costs and allows humanitarian organisations to be flexible and quickly respond to emergencies. Sweden is UNHCR's largest donor of unearmarked support, increasing its core contribution to 715 million SEK this year. This flexible funding has been key in enabling a rapid response to recent displacement crises in Central African Republic, South Sudan, northern Iraq, Ukraine and Nigeria. But overall, an increasing share of international humanitarian funding is tied to specific activities – only 15 per cent of UNHCR's total funding last year was unearmarked. Restricting the use of humanitarian funding risks slowing down responses, politicising aid and hitting people affected by forgotten crises the hardest. A High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing convened recently by the UN Secretary-General recommended that donors increase the share of unearmarked funding to 30 per cent of their contributions in line with the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship. We fully support this proposal and hope others will as well.
- Opportunities for jobs and education. In crisis after crisis, refugees get stuck in camps for decades. Humanitarian aid has long stopped being a short-term measure, with many of the world's refugee situations now lasting on average some 20 years. Millions of displaced and stateless children risk growing up as a lost generation, with no chance to get an education, jobs or citizenship. This is not only unjust, unsustainable and an enormous loss to themselves and their societies, it also risks generating new tensions and displacement, and increases young people's vulnerability for exploitation, including by extremist groups. Education and access to livelihoods are crucial elements of conflict prevention, and

should be a central focus of more closely interlinked humanitarian and development programmes. In Syria and elsewhere, Sweden and UNHCR are looking into new strategies to create such opportunities.

- Include women and local voices. National and local actors are often the first responders to humanitarian emergencies, and they are also the last to leave. To build stronger partnerships with these actors is key to find lasting solutions to protracted refugee crises and to make refugees and host communities more resilient and less dependent on aid. Women and their representatives are particularly important in this regard, but too often their voices go unheard. Women face specific risks, often carry the bulk of daily responsibilities, and can play an important mediating role in communities. Their knowledge and experiences are essential to delivering efficient aid and building lasting peace.

As we prepare for the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul next month, many of these issues will be put on the agenda, in a common effort to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action for the benefit of the world's most vulnerable people. Changing the way things are done is never quick or easy. It requires innovative thinking, political commitment, adequate resources and genuine cooperation. But it is possible, as we saw last December when – in the face of increasing concern over the acceleration of global warming – world leaders agreed to sign the Paris climate deal. Today's humanitarian crisis is no less worrying, and its effects are both immediate and long-term. Addressing it will need a similar level of resolve and cooperative spirit, based on the recognition that in today's globalized world, human suffering, although caused by conflicts raging far away, ends up affecting us all.

Isabella Lövin is the Minister for International Development Cooperation of Sweden.

Filippo Grandi is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden gives SEK 350 million in additional emergency aid Syria crisis

Published 04 February 2016 Updated 04 February 2016

Opinion piece by Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation. Expressen 4th of February 2016.

The war in Syria will soon enter its fifth year. There are alarming reports about how winter is hitting the refugees in Syria, who do not have enough warm clothes and shoes, and images of emaciated people bear witness to how starvation is being used as a strategy of war. More than 400 000 people are starving in besieged cities. This is completely unacceptable, and the people responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes must be held to account. Some 13.5 million people in Syria are in need of humanitarian aid or have been forced to flee from their homes. Sweden was a driving force in the adoption of the UN resolutions on increased humanitarian access, and we are now pushing for them to be respected. At the international donors conference that opens in London today, Sweden will pledge an additional SEK 350 million in emergency assistance to those affected by the war in Syria.

But humanitarian aid is not enough. Many people have given up hope of a decent future. This is equally true of those who have chosen or been forced to stay in Syria and those who have fled to neighbouring countries. They have very few possibilities to work, and far too many children are unable to attend school. This is a very troubling situation.

A political solution is necessary to bring an end to the conflict. It is therefore

encouraging that the peace negotiations in Geneva were initiated, even though they are currently suspended and it will take time to achieve a solution to the conflict. The intensified Russian bombings and the world's inability to make the Assad regime conform to the Security Council's demands for an end to sieges and bombings of civilians, full humanitarian access to the civilian population, and the release of political prisoners have played a major role in jeopardising the now suspended peace talks.

The donors conference in London is crucial in mobilising support for all the people affected by the horrors of the war and to offer hope to underpin future peace. The UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura has our wholehearted support. To increase the prospects of success in the discussions in Geneva, we are also giving substantial support to increase women's participation and influence in the negotiations.

The international community must try to inspire hope and support existing positive forces. We are therefore taking both a pledge to increase humanitarian aid and Sweden's new Syria crisis strategy, encompassing initiatives totalling SEK 1.7 billion, with us to London. Sweden is the first country to adopt a long-term strategy for the Syria crisis, and it is a model that we believe more countries should emulate. The strategy aims to mitigate the effects of the conflict in both Syria and neighbouring countries. During the conference we will push for more countries to increase aid in five areas that are central to Sweden's Syria strategy:

1. People in Syria and neighbouring countries must have increased opportunities to support themselves. Being able to support oneself inspires hope, and reduces the risks of forced marriage, forced labour and recruitment to terrorist groups, thus having an impact on all of our safety. In neighbouring countries, it can reduce tensions between refugees and local people, and offer people dignity and faith in the future. It also maintains and builds on people's skills, which is important for the future.
2. More people must have access to community services in Syria and in neighbouring countries. This means more children attending school, and access to water, sanitation and health care for more people. More than three million children are not going to school, and the number is increasing. There is an impending risk of child labour and recruitment of child soldiers. If we do not take strong action, we risk creating a lost generation, which will hamper reconstruction.
3. The courageous civil society organisations that remain in Syria, negotiating local truces, working for dialogue and documenting crimes

against human rights, need more support. Sweden is currently one of the few donors to such organisations.

4. Work to prevent violence against women and girls and ensure that victims of sexual violence receive rehabilitation and care must be given more resources.
5. Women must be able to participate in peace processes on equal terms with men. Sweden gives concrete support to women's participation in the Geneva negotiations and to women who are active in local peace efforts on the ground in Syria. More countries need to do more to ensure that half of Syria's population is not excluded from the peace process.

We hope that the London conference will result in a considerable increase in support from the rest of the world to those affected in Syria. Nonetheless, aid will not end the war. That will require a political solution, and the defeat of the terrorist organisation Daesh. But used wisely, aid can lay the foundations for a future peace. It also offers a lifeline to many people, and it can inspire faith in the future and show that the international community has not forgotten them.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Swedish aid has given us influence

Published 14 December 2015 Updated 15 December 2015

Opinion piece by Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin in SVD 14th of December

While the world around us is being torn apart by a growing number of wars and conflicts, last weekend world leaders agreed on a climate agreement with substantially higher ambitions to save the planet from the worst effects of global warming, effects that would drive hundreds of millions of people into poverty.

It gives hope in an otherwise difficult time. Sweden played a crucial role in the final stage of the climate negotiations through several important mediations. The fact that we were given a mediator role is largely the result of being seen as a reliable aid donor and partner for poor countries. Swedish aid makes a difference – it has given us international influence.

It also enjoys wide and well-deserved support in society, which became clear in connection with the intense debate in recent months on possible cutbacks in aid. For this reason, Monday's parliamentary debate on the aid budget is so important.

This year, Sweden has received more refugees than ever before in modern times. At the same time, we continue to be one of the most generous aid donors in the world. The Government is now setting a limit – a maximum of 30 per cent of aid will be used to finance refugee reception in Sweden.

This demonstrates that the Government is safeguarding aid, even in exceptional times when the budget is strained. Without this limit, more than half of the aid could be used for refugee reception costs in Sweden next year under the current accounting model.

The Government also stands by its goal to use one per cent of gross national income (GNI) to combat poverty and oppression. Sadly, this is in contrast to the international trend, where an increasing number of donors are cutting back.

With limited resources available, we must prioritise, find our bearings in a changing world and directing aid to where it is most needed. I would venture to say that never before has aid been as important as it is now. The Government sees four areas where Sweden makes a difference, and where enhanced efforts are needed. Firstly, with regard to humanitarian disaster relief. Never before have more people been in need of disaster relief. The needs have doubled in five years and UN appeals only have half of their funding secured for humanitarian support this year. The number of wars and conflicts is increasing after decades of decline and a record number of people have been forced to flee their homes.

To meet these challenges, we will strengthen work in a number of areas in 2016. The Government will initiate a new five-year strategy for humanitarian work that reflects today's growing needs and also makes visible the situation of women and girls, which is all too often ignored today in international humanitarian work.

We will raise appropriations to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other organisations working on the ground to help people in the neighbouring regions, and we will push for a more effective United Nations ahead of the global summit on humanitarian issues that will take place in Istanbul in May 2016. Secondly, and more importantly, we must get at the underlying factors forcing people to flee. The proportion of poor people in conflict-affected or fragile states is increasing. Today, more than 1.5 billion people live face-to-face with violence and insecurity, while the scope for democratic forces is shrinking in country after country and the oppression of women is increasing during and after conflicts.

Therefore, we will stress peacebuilding and statebuilding, with a strong focus on institution-building and inclusive, legitimate policy that builds on democratic principles with respect for human rights.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has already been tasked with including a conflict prevention perspective in all aid, and now we will give Sida an additional task to review how aid can better prevent armed conflicts and crises, and to present tangible proposals in April.

Thirdly, the lack of gender equality is one of the areas with the most acute needs, and where Swedish aid has long made a crucial difference. Access to schooling for girls and the right to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are still very much being fought for in many countries.

Girls are married off at an early age, deprived of their right to schooling, circumcised and forced to become mothers at an age when they themselves are scarcely more than children. This cements poverty and prevents major sections of the world's population from contributing their full capacity and lifting the world out of poverty. Not all donor countries acknowledge SRHR as an important issue, and in this context, Sweden has a key role. Last but not least: the climate issue, which is closely linked to issues concerning sustainable food production, water and energy supply and thereby also the issue of combating poverty, and peace and security. Climate change puts further pressure on already vulnerable countries and risks inflating and worsening unrest. At the weekend, world leaders took a decisive step by agreeing on a global climate agreement. However, if the agreement is to be worth something, it must also be put into practice.

Money must be channelled towards clean and renewable energy, rather than brown, fossil energy. We will therefore sharply increase our ambitions to support poor countries' investments in clean energy, which can lead to revolutionary development for the poorest people in remote villages and communities. Today, a total of 1.3 billion people in the world do not have access to any electricity.

Through the initiative Power Africa, Sweden will contribute small-scale, renewable energy solutions at a value of USD 1 billion by 2020. We will also give Swedfund a capital injection of SEK 400 million to begin work on renewable energy, and we are one of the largest donors to the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund to help the poorest countries leapfrog into the future using adaptation and renewable energy.

At the same time, we know that international financial institutions such as the World Bank and others have been investing hundreds of billions in fossil energy for many years. This is, of course, no longer tenable as the world is aiming to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

To this end, the Government has produced a new plan to redirect investments in all international financial institutions, to adopt ambitious and scheduled goals to increase the share of renewable energy. When

international financial institutions decide on new energy projects, renewable energy is to be the first choice.

There are enormous sums of money at stake. In 2014, the World Bank alone loaned USD 9.5 billion to energy projects worldwide. Redirecting these investments to renewable energy would have enormous positive effects on international climate efforts.

Redirecting these investments to renewable energy would have enormous positive effects on international climate efforts.

Change is possible when the world successfully coordinates its forces. Aid is not a universal solution, but it does play an important strategic role. Swedish aid is world-class, not least thanks to the broad involvement of civil society organisations, trade unions, religious communities, municipalities and individual Swedes who want to make the world a better place.

I am tremendously pleased about this commitment, and I am convinced that by more clearly focusing our efforts on these strategic areas, Swedish aid will be even more important and relevant in a world that is moving ever faster.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin: Opinion piece in Metro, 20 November

Published 19 November 2015 Updated 20 November 2015

Opinion piece in Metro, 20 November Mayana, aged 16, whom I meet at a Swedish-funded women's shelter in northern Afghanistan, talks about her husband's abuse: "My husband locked me in the cellar for several days without food, later I managed to escape, but now he has my four-year-old daughter."

Life is unimaginably difficult for many people where I am now. Security has deteriorated and the Taliban offensives and rising unemployment harm girls and compel boys to leave the country. Nearly two thousand unaccompanied children from Afghanistan arrived in Sweden in early November alone. As in all conflict-affected regions, it is the children who suffer most. Today is the UN Universal Children's Day, and I would like to spotlight all these girls and boys. As Minister for International Development Cooperation, I promise to do everything in my power to avoid lost generations growing up in conflict areas. To this end, we are stepping up our efforts for children's rights.

Aid has an important role to play in meeting the challenges the world currently faces. The number of wars and conflicts is on the rise again and more than 60 million people have fled their homes, around half of them children. I met some of them in Lebanon, on the border with Syria. They all wanted to go to school and indeed, the first thing their parents wanted to talk about was their concern about their children's education. UNICEF and other organisations that Sweden supports are on the spot and are offering lessons for children. Yet although they are working flat out, some 200 000 Syrian children in Lebanon alone are estimated not to be going to school. This is a challenge the international community has to tackle, not just in the wake of the Syria crisis, but also in other conflict areas. Children are the next

generation who will help build the future. If we lose them, we will lose the peace.

During and after conflicts, the risk of sexual violence and child marriage increases too, and this in turn drastically reduces the freedom of girls and their opportunities to participate in society. Moreover, boys and girls run the risk of being recruited and abducted by armed groups. In Somalia I recently met Ilwan and other women activists working to prevent more boys being recruited by the al-Shabaab terrorist group and to reintegrate those who have managed to escape its clutches. “The boys must be given an alternative,” they say – and I agree. These recruitments have more to do with economics and a lack of belief in the future than with ideology. Aid is one of the factors contributing to education and jobs, particularly in these fragile states where investors do not dare to get involved and the state apparatus has failed.

Sweden has a long tradition of standing up for children’s rights. We are now taking this further by giving child rights issues higher priority in future aid strategies, for example, in the upcoming strategy on the crisis in Syria. This also applies to the new aid policy framework that will be finalised in 2016.

It is our children who will take over what we leave. It is our responsibility to give them the best possible conditions, so that they are not forced to flee by perilous routes to an uncertain future. Like the children from Afghanistan.

Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Debate article: How we will strengthen UN emergency and disaster response operations

Published 03 September 2015 Updated 03 September 2015

Swedish Daily Göteborgs Posten 3 September 2015 A number of reforms are now being launched to strengthen the UN. One of these is to provide support to a dozen or so UN bodies that work with everything from providing help to people in need and strengthening children's and women's rights to countering the effects of natural disasters, writes Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

Every day, we are confronted with reports of the horrors of war that split communities and force people to flee, of extreme weather events that ruin opportunities for people to earn a living and growing extremism that fosters fear and insecurity. To meet these challenges, the international community must assume responsibility and take concerted action. The UN plays an important role in this and support to UN organisations is one of the Government's primary tools for contributing to sustainable development. Today the Government will therefore take decisions on organisational support, known as core support, to a dozen or so UN bodies that work with everything from providing help to people in need and strengthening children's and women's rights to countering the effects of natural disasters.

Sweden is one of the single largest donors to the UN and development banks such as the World Bank. This gives us a strong voice and the opportunity to influence important decisions on poverty reduction and climate issues. Sweden plays a key role in promoting gender equality work in the UN

system, which is of vital importance at a time when women's rights are encountering resistance.

A large proportion of Sweden's contributions to UN bodies is given in the form of organisational support, which means that the funds are paid into the organisations' budgets without being earmarked. This gives them greater flexibility and the possibility to plan their activities over the long term, while still being able to act quickly in the event of a crisis. Distressed and desperate people should not have to wait for each individual donor's analysis, grant management and, in the worst case, policy decisions before the response can be set in motion. Sweden's support enables immediate assistance for women, men, girls and boys who, in many cases, are fighting for their lives. As the largest donor of organisational support to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR), we have helped it provide rapid and vital protection and help to people in places such as Ukraine, Iraq, the Philippines, South Sudan and Ethiopia.

The UN's work makes a difference for many people living in vulnerable situations. Through our support to UN Women, women and girls receive psychosocial support and protection from sexual violence in refugee camps in Iraq, Syria and South Sudan. In 2014, 18 million people in crisis and disaster situations received access to clean water and 150 000 girls in Syria were offered access to school clubs via the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

To strengthen and improve our work with UN bodies, we are implementing reform efforts within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that correspond to recommendations made by the Swedish National Audit Office. A number of reforms will be launched so that we can better promote more vigorous results in the UN and increase transparency and efficiency in case management. The Swedish people have a right to easily find out how aid is used and how appreciated their international solidarity is among people in both poor and rich countries. I bring this heartfelt appreciation home with me after every trip abroad.

The challenges and threats we are confronted with in media reports may appear overwhelming. However, the picture is not entirely bleak. Progress is being made on several fronts; the situation is improving for more and more people. World poverty has been halved, as has child mortality, and nine out of ten children are enrolled in primary education. The UN and the Millennium Development Goals to combat world poverty have played an important role in these successes.

In September, world leaders will adopt new global development goals that will replace the Millennium Development Goals. The new goals deal with everything from eradicating poverty, strengthening gender equality and promoting peaceful societies to renewable energy. The fact that world leaders are able to agree on these goals instils hope and offers tremendous opportunities.

The UN also has a key role in revitalising these goals and following up and coordinating the work. This requires reforms and, as a true friend of the UN, we have a responsibility to convey constructive criticism. The Government will use Sweden's influence to advance reform efforts for a UN that is better equipped to manage crises, safeguard human rights and promote sustainable development. We will also continue to develop our own work so that Swedish support is as relevant as possible and, in the most feasible manner, improve the living conditions for people living in poverty and oppression.

Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden strengthens its humanitarian efforts

Published 19 August 2015 Updated 19 August 2015

Aftonbladet 19/8 Today is World Humanitarian Day. With 60 million people fleeing from war and violence, the international community is facing major challenges both in trying to resolve conflicts and in providing protection and support to people in distress.

Several of the current conflicts are a threat to international security. The refugee flows have made issues relating to solidarity a matter of urgency. Today we want to highlight the contributions Sweden is making to humanitarian efforts. The Government has decided to appoint a special envoy for humanitarian issues. This job has gone to Per Örnéus, a diplomat with considerable experience of foreign service. Per Örnéus will now, together with us, coordinate Sweden's contributions within the framework of humanitarian work.

The atrocities committed in Syria and Iraq by the terrorist organisation ISIL (or IS as it is also called) are examples of when terrorist groups act entirely arbitrarily. Civilians, including aid workers, are direct targets, and the war in Syria and Iraq is transgressing moral and geographical boundaries. We are now seeing a worrying global trend in which attacks on aid workers are increasing and it is becoming ever more difficult to reach people in distress. Limiting the effects of armed conflicts is now one of our greatest challenges.

The UN's current humanitarian system needs reforming. Sweden is the world's fifth largest bilateral humanitarian donor and we have high expectations of others to participate and contribute. It must be obligatory for countries to contribute to humanitarian work. In light of the worrying trend and the growing urgent needs, in spring 2016 the UN will host a

humanitarian summit for the international community to agree on necessary reforms.

The humanitarian system is on its knees. The UN's humanitarian appeals have grown fivefold since 2004, but last year financing levels only reached just over half of what was required. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently appointed a high-level panel to tackle the growing gap between humanitarian needs and available resources. As Minister for Foreign Affairs, I am a member of the high-level panel, and an additional six people from other countries contribute proposals and input for how the future humanitarian system is to be financed. Sweden will present concrete proposals based on our considerable experience.

We also need to better link together humanitarian measures with long-term development cooperation. The Government will shortly be adopting a new Syria crisis strategy, which will be a concrete example of how urgent humanitarian support can be linked to more long-term measures that also provide support to neighbouring countries affected by the conflict. Sweden has a role to play, both as chair of the UN Peacebuilding Commission and in my role, as Minister for International Development Cooperation, as chair of the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. During the autumn, the Government will also establish a Swedish civil society forum to make use of the expert knowledge available to better reach out to people in distress.

In the intermeshed world of today, war and conflicts affect us all. Sweden's long tradition of assisting people in distress is ultimately a sign of the Swedish people's international solidarity, but also a way to safeguard security for us all.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Strengthening democracy

Published 21 July 2015 Updated 21 July 2015

Svenska Dagbladet July 2 2015 Today, here in Almedalen, the Government has decided to step up cooperation with civil society in Sweden to reduce poverty and oppression in the world. Together, the Government and civil society organisations have drawn up joint commitments to enhance dialogue and collaboration in the area of development cooperation. Meanwhile, as these are being adopted, we witness country after country reducing the scope for independent organisations, human rights defenders and journalists. The Government will fight this trend and work to ensure that civil society organisations everywhere – not just in Sweden – are able to work freely.

Almedalen is a throng of social movements, organisations, political parties and businesses – a scene of Swedish democracy, where spontaneous meetings and discussions take place on the street between politicians, community stakeholders and private individuals. This openness is in stark contrast to what is happening beyond Sweden's borders. The progress the world has seen in recent decades, including more people who are able to vote and democracy gaining ground, has unfortunately been halted. More than 50 countries have adopted, or intend to adopt, legislation that will make it harder for civil society organisations to operate, for example by making it difficult to seek international support. The best-known case is Russia, but it is not the only one. The trend is spreading rapidly around the world – everywhere from Europe to the Middle East, Latin America, Africa and

Asia.

Organisations and human rights defenders with international contacts and financing are being dragged through the mud and denounced as foreign agents. This has devastating consequences for their ability to work and threatens their safety. For many organisations, cooperation for example with civil society organisations in Sweden is a lifeline providing both moral and financial support, and a channel to the outside world. Without it, it is difficult for them to carry out their important work. Without it, it also becomes more difficult for governments and international bodies to get a full picture of the situation in a country.

In many ways, civil society is the engine that drives society towards continuous improvement. This is certainly the case in Sweden, where civil society organisations have played, and still play, an important role in building our nation. It is civil society organisations and individual activists who warn us when companies commit environmental offences, when governments and authorities are corrupt, when women and children are abused and when political tensions risk leading to widespread violence and instability. The wave of restrictions we are now seeing means that the global network of civil society organisations, individuals and states is in danger of being replaced by something else: repressive states, less scope for people to organise and less cross-border contact.

It is crucial that Sweden acts as a counter force and that Swedish development cooperation is used to support the potential of civil society in the world, as well as human rights, democracy and the rule of law. I am proud that there is broad political consensus on this in the Riksdag and on the added value of Swedish civil society organisations and their role in the fight against poverty and oppression.

The joint commitments the Government and Swedish civil society organisations are adopting today are proof of this and a product of work begun during the previous government's last year in office and now completed by us.

We, the Swedish Government, are committed to defending the independence of civil society organisations, inviting dialogue and drawing on their knowledge, pushing for favourable conditions for their work and promoting their role as a collective voice and opinion former in Sweden and internationally. With the new direction of Sida's information and communication strategy the Government has recently established,

organisations will be able to do more than merely inform about the results of aid. We are opening up opportunities for them to seek means for reviewing, stimulating debate and public opinion on the challenges and opportunities of development work, and also for giving a voice to civil society in partner countries.

We will also concentrate more on strengthening democratic institutions in developing countries, for example legal systems, welfare systems, national audit organisations and anti-corruption mechanisms. This is extremely important. People and organisations do not live in a vacuum; they depend on a well-functioning state to be able to exercise their human rights.

We are also going to develop a new framework for the direction of aid and a written communication for human rights, democracy and the rule of law in foreign policy, both of which will be submitted to the Riksdag in 2016. In this context, the scope of civil society has an intrinsic place. We need new thinking to counteract global anti-democratic tendencies around the world. How can we best support the new emerging networks and movements that are being forced to find new ways to organise because of repressive regulations?

Our ambition is clear: the voices of civil society, human rights defenders and journalists must not be silenced. Almedalen may be criticised for being exclusive, gaudy and superficial, but in an international perspective the week here in Visby is a reminder of Sweden's openness and the opportunities we have for free debate and discussion – something that can never be taken for granted. In too many countries around the world a Democracy Week like the one we celebrate every year in Visby would be absolutely unthinkable. But the lack of openness and pluralism is what creates long-term instability in these countries. The Government's strengthened cooperation with civil society means we can create better conditions for sustainable development in our increasingly troubled world.

Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

How Sweden wants to finance the world's 17 new development goals

Published 13 July 2015 Updated 14 July 2015

DN Debatt 13 of July 2015 Today, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for Financial Markets Per Bolund and I will arrive in Addis Ababa for the UN Financing for Development summit on how to finance the new global development goals.

To eradicate poverty and create an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable world, both public and private resources need to be used more smartly and invested in the right way. This work has top priority for the Government, and Sweden is playing an active part to ensure that this week's negotiations lead to a package of common measures.

Fifteen years ago the United Nations brought 147 heads of state and government together to agree on goals for global development efforts. These Millennium Development Goals were to be measurable and ambitious. They included eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education and ensuring sustainable development. These goals were incorporated by many developing countries in national plans.

Now, as the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals approaches, we can confirm that they have produced results. The proportion of people living in extreme poverty has been more than halved. Nine out of ten children now attend primary school. This is a great success for global development efforts and an important step in combating extremism and injustice.

Yet much remains to be done. One billion people are still living in extreme poverty and 800 million go to bed hungry every day. The world is far from being gender equal: far too many women are denied the opportunity to

participate in the economy and working life, and millions die in childbirth. What is more, climate change risks wiping out all the progress made so far and hitting the poorest hardest.

In September world leaders will adopt 17 new global Sustainable Development Goals. These goals will be very ambitious and will range all the way from eradicating extreme poverty and hunger to achieving gender equality, peaceful societies, sustainable seas and sustainable consumption. They must be matched by an equally ambitious financing plan – which is what we have come to Addis Ababa to put together. A positive outcome this week will create a favourable negotiating climate, which is very important ahead of the adoption of the sustainability goals in September and the global climate change conference, COP21, in Paris in December.

The new goals differ from the old Millennium Development Goals in two important ways: the new goals target *all* countries, rather than just developing countries, and they establish a serious link between the poverty agenda and the environment and climate agenda. Some key issues that have been discussed ahead of the conference and will be very much to the fore are the level of development assistance, how less developed countries are to mobilise domestic resources, and how private capital can be invested in developing countries.

Sweden has everything to gain from developing countries being raised out of poverty. As a small, export-oriented nation, Sweden stands to be one of the big winners when global trade increases. Sweden's good reputation makes us a popular trade partner and, with a population drawn from much of the world, we have every opportunity to establish trade contacts in Africa and Latin America, for example. Consequently, sustainable global development will also boost the Swedish economy in the future.

The Government has high ambitions in the fight against climate change. Swedish carbon dioxide emissions, for example, have been reduced by 25 per cent since the beginning of the 1990s, thanks to effective policy levers and consistent environmental policies. To intensify international climate efforts, the Government has decided to allocate SEK 4 billion to the Green Climate Fund during the period 2015–2018. This is the most generous per capita contribution of all donor countries. In the area of development assistance, Sweden is one of the few countries that give 1 per cent of GNI and in absolute figures as well, Sweden is a significant global actor in the development assistance area.

A generous development assistance policy, an ambitious climate change agenda and long experience of consensus politics make Sweden an important actor that many countries listen to in negotiations. The Swedish Government has three main priority areas.

Move from capital flight and tax evasion to investments in sustainable development

Tax revenues are the foundation of shared welfare and poverty reduction. Enormous sums that could have been invested in sustainable development currently disappear due to capital flight and tax evasion. Combating illicit capital flight and tax evasion is therefore a crucial issue for the conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa.

Sweden participates very actively in various forums and processes in which the common goal is to combat capital flight and tax evasion. We hope that important steps will be taken on this issue in Addis Ababa.

Steps towards a green economy

The starting point of the new sustainable development agenda is that poverty reduction is impossible without social, economic and environmental sustainability. In Addis Ababa, it will be essential to provide incentives for increased investments in sustainable energy and infrastructure, put a price on carbon dioxide and take steps towards phasing out harmful fossil fuel subsidies. Sweden is a leader, a country that must show that green growth really is possible. Through climate financing, development assistance adapted to environmental and climate considerations, and increased pressure on multilateral actors such as the World Bank and the United Nations, Sweden can contribute to enabling tangible steps towards a green economy at global level too.

Gender equality creates resources

Equality between women and men, and girls and boys, is an effective tool in creating increased sustainable growth. Sweden is making efforts to ensure that the countries of the world take decisive steps in Addis Ababa for a fair distribution of resources between women and men, and women's full participation in economic life. We can never accept the discrimination that is now widespread and the world cannot afford to have so many women prevented from contributing to economic development. Sweden will

contribute through its national experience of concrete gender equality efforts and a gender equality perspective running through all foreign policy activities, including development assistance.

The global community now faces a momentous choice. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said that we are the first generation that can eradicate poverty and the last that can prevent serious climate change. We have the chance to create a future in which no one will go hungry, gender equality has been achieved and we live within the planetary boundaries. The journey towards this future will not end before the 17 new goals have been achieved, but it begins in earnest today at the Financing for Development conference in Addis Ababa.

Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

We are taking a stand for women's rights

Published 01 June 2015 Updated 01 June 2015

The EU's voice on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights must be strengthened. "Ahead of today's meeting in Brussels, we have worked hard for the EU to be on the front line of the fight for gender equality", write ministers Margot Wallström, Isabella Lövin and Åsa Regnér in Swedish daily newspaper SvD.

Although the fight for gender equality is gaining ground globally, in many parts of the world we are seeing a growing resistance to women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This is why Sweden is working down to the wire to ensure that the new Council conclusions on gender equality to be adopted today take a clear stance. The EU ministers gathering in Brussels this afternoon have the opportunity to put their differences behind them and stand up for the fundamental right of all individuals to have control over their own bodies – at a time when a strong EU voice is needed more than ever.

In the vicinity of the EU, violent fundamentalist groups are emerging that want to deprive women of the opportunity to participate in political life, achieve economic empowerment and gain access to health care. The desire to control women's bodies is expressed in its most extreme forms in fundamentalist groups such as ISIL, which uses sexual abuse to instil fear and gain ground. But it is not just on the battlegrounds that the fight for women's rights is being fought. Resistance to and questioning of the rights of women and LGBTQ people are also seen in international negotiation rooms

and among conservative forces making headway in Europe. A study by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation and the magazine *Expo* shows how right-wing extremist and nationalist parties that are on the rise in the EU see the rights of women and LGBTQ people as a threat to the nation state and thus to their vision of society.

We are living in a time of great change in which women's economic and political influence is being strengthened and there is a growing consensus in the international community in favour of gender equality. Current resistance can be seen as a reaction to the successes achieved and proof that the fight for women's and LGBTQ people's rights must be relentless. The most controversial issue is also the most fundamental one – the right to exercise control over one's own body, sexuality and reproduction. Women's rights activists say that they can go and vote, but they cannot decide who to marry, who to have sex with or when to have children. This oppression restricts women's and girls' lives and opportunities to fully participate in society on the same terms as men.

In Sweden, we know that measures for gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights pay off. A century ago, more women died during pregnancy and childbirth in Sweden than in Namibia today. Today, maternal mortality in Sweden is among the lowest in the world. Forty years ago, Swedish women gained the right to free, legal and safe abortions. Over the last 30 years in Sweden, no woman has died from the complications of an abortion. These are successes that have helped to build the Swedish welfare society that we all benefit from today. This year, 2015, is a year of unique opportunities to move forward on gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The ground-breaking UN Conference on Women in Beijing celebrates its 20th anniversary, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security celebrates its 15th anniversary, and the world is set to agree on new development goals to ensure sustainable development and eradicate poverty and injustice. The EU plays an important role in this work.

While there is a great deal of support for gender equality in the EU, opinions on the SRHR issue are divided. Unfortunately, a small number of countries have so far blocked a strong and united position, which has weakened the EU's voice on these issues in the world.

Ahead of today's meeting, the Government has been working hard with likeminded countries in the EU to bring about a change. During the six

months we have been in government we have managed to push through changes. At our initiative, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, recently announced that she plans to appoint a high-level representative for 1325 issues, in accordance with Sweden's proposal. This will strengthen the EU's work to combat sexual violence in conflict and to promote women's participation in peace-building efforts.

We are hopeful that our hard work will bear fruit today as well. Our feminist foreign policy is yielding results. By joining forces we will continue to push for the EU to be at the forefront of the fight for human rights, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. This requires clear leadership at all levels in the EU, strengthened accountability and greater knowledge about gender equality. Cooperation with civil society must be deepened and the action plan for the EU's international gender equality work that is currently being drawn up must cover all areas of EU external action, which is not the case today. Sweden has an important voice internationally, but if we can get the entire EU on board we will increase the impact of a feminist policy that fundamentally challenges oppression, injustice and violence.



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

We will fight in the EU for women's rights

Published 27 May 2015 Updated 27 May 2015

First published in Svenska Dagbladet 26 May 2015

Although the fight for gender equality is gaining ground globally, in many parts of the world we are seeing a growing resistance to women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This is why Sweden is working down to the wire to ensure that the new Council conclusions on gender equality to be adopted today take a clear stance. The EU ministers gathering in Brussels this afternoon have the opportunity to put their differences behind them and stand up for the fundamental right of all individuals to have control over their own bodies – at a time when a strong EU voice is needed more than ever.

In the vicinity of the EU, violent fundamentalist groups are emerging that want to deprive women of the opportunity to participate in political life, achieve economic empowerment and gain access to health care. The desire to control women's bodies is expressed in its most extreme forms in fundamentalist groups such as ISIL, which uses sexual abuse to instil fear and gain ground. But it is not just on the battlegrounds that the fight for women's rights is being fought. Resistance to and questioning of the rights of women and LGBTQ people are also seen in international negotiation rooms and among conservative forces making headway in Europe. A study by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation and the magazine *Expo* shows how right-wing extremist and nationalist parties that are on the rise in the EU see the rights of women and LGBTQ people as a threat to the nation state and thus to their vision of society.

We are living in a time of great change in which women's economic and political influence is being strengthened and there is a growing consensus in

the international community in favour of gender equality. Current resistance can be seen as a reaction to the successes achieved and proof that the fight for women's and LGBTQ people's rights must be relentless.

The most controversial issue is also the most fundamental one – the right to exercise control over one's own body, sexuality and reproduction. Women's rights activists say that they can go and vote, but they cannot decide who to marry, who to have sex with or when to have children. This oppression restricts women's and girls' lives and opportunities to fully participate in society on the same terms as men. In Sweden, we know that measures for gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights pay off. A century ago, more women died during pregnancy and childbirth in Sweden than in Namibia today. Today, maternal mortality in Sweden is among the lowest in the world. Forty years ago, Swedish women gained the right to free, legal and safe abortions. Over the last 30 years in Sweden, no woman has died from the complications of an abortion. These are successes that have helped to build the Swedish welfare society that we all benefit from today.

This year, 2015, is a year of unique opportunities to move forward on gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health and rights. The ground-breaking UN Conference on Women in Beijing celebrates its 20th anniversary, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security celebrates its 15th anniversary, and the world is set to agree on new development goals to ensure sustainable development and eradicate poverty and injustice. The EU plays an important role in this work.

While there is a great deal of support for gender equality in the EU, opinions on the SRHR issue are divided. Unfortunately, a small number of countries have so far blocked a strong and united position, which has weakened the EU's voice on these issues in the world. Ahead of today's meeting, the Government has been working hard with likeminded countries in the EU to bring about a change. During the six months we have been in government we have managed to push through changes. At our initiative, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, recently announced that she plans to appoint a high-level representative for 1325 issues, in accordance with Sweden's proposal. This will strengthen the EU's work to combat sexual violence in conflict and to promote women's participation in peace-building efforts.

We are hopeful that our hard work will bear fruit today as well. Our feminist foreign policy is yielding results. By joining forces we will continue to push

for the EU to be at the forefront of the fight for human rights, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. This requires clear leadership at all levels in the EU, strengthened accountability and greater knowledge about gender equality. Cooperation with civil society must be deepened and the action plan for the EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development that is currently being drawn up must cover all areas of EU external action, which is not the case today.

Sweden has an important voice internationally, but if we can get the entire EU on board we will increase the impact of a feminist policy that fundamentally challenges oppression, injustice and violence.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation

Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Strengthening the sexual and reproductive health in Africa

Published 06 April 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Today is international World Health Day and we have much to celebrate. More and more people around the world are enjoying better health and living longer, child mortality is decreasing as is the number of people who become infected with HIV.

Fewer people are dying of malaria and maternal mortality has been halved since 1990. Swedish people contribute to this development via Swedish health aid, which last year amounted to SEK 4 billion. The Government is now allocating funds for groups that have fallen behind.

We are doing so because despite the progress that has been made, the needs and challenges remain considerable. Women are particularly vulnerable and Africa is further from the global targets on reducing maternal and infant mortality than other parts of the world. The Government will therefore shortly adopt a new strategy that better meets the sexual and reproductive health and rights challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa.

In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 400 women die every day as a result of complications in childbirth, and children here under the age of 5 also face the greatest risk of dying. At the same time, this is where the HIV epidemic is most widespread and three times as many young women as men are affected.

Lack of gender and LGBTQ rights

The lack of gender equality and men's sexual violence against women are among the causes of the problems. This explains the high number of teenage

pregnancies and the spread of HIV among young girls. Female genital mutilation also causes serious health problems and complications during childbirth. During my trip to Liberia and Sierra Leone, I was shocked at the widespread violence and the scope of genital mutilation. Almost 90 per cent of women in Sierra Leone have been genitally mutilated, and close to 70 per cent in Liberia. The most vulnerable are poor girls and women.

Unfortunately, we are also seeing that the progress made in recent years concerning sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) has slowed down, and is even moving in the wrong direction. We are concerned by developments to do with the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer persons (LGBTQ) in Africa.

Homosexuality remains illegal in many African countries and homosexual people face harassment and discrimination on a daily basis. This affects their access to health and medical care. Increased international focus on these issues is positive, but at the same time creates increasingly entrenched backlashes that must be confronted.

Strengthening the health of women and girls

Ultimately, sexual and reproductive health and rights are about gender equality and the right to decide over one's own body. They are about the right to choose a partner and choose safe sex. About the right for women and girls to have access to legal and safe abortions. The lack of SRHR not only hampers poverty reduction, it is also a question of democracy. If you cannot decide over your own body, how can you then take part in society on equal terms?

Sweden has a long history of cooperation with African countries and great credibility in gender equality work. For many years, Sweden has contributed to strengthening the health of women and girls. We are now enhancing this work by means of a new strategy that includes funding of SEK 350 million annually that will:

- put greater focus on children and young people so that they learn about how the body works, about safe sex and contraceptives and also about their human rights. Focusing on views of masculinity is also important, since these views contribute to the problem;
- prioritise access to safe and legal abortions, and access to SRHR for LGBTQ people;

- focus on preventing child marriage and female genital mutilation; and
- strengthen national health systems – which is absolutely essential if health services are to be available to everyone – including by increasing use of reliable statistics so that decision-makers are better able to ensure that health care is fair and reaches the most vulnerable people.

It is not just in Africa that there is resistance to women, girls and LGBTQ people being allowed to decide over their own sexuality and exercise their human rights. This issue is politically sensitive and meets resistance from a variety of sources, in the EU as well as the UN. Sweden therefore has an important task in actively pursuing these issues. It is a task that the Government takes with the utmost seriousness.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden increases humanitarian aid to Syria

Published 30 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

SVD 30 mars 2015 Tomorrow, the international community will come together in Kuwait for a donor conference concerning the Syrian crisis. Sweden will be there to show our strong commitment and continued support to the region and all those affected by the horrors of war.

Our message during the conference will be clear. We must not abandon people who are entirely dependent on the rest of the world for their survival. This is why we will make a pledge for increased support.

There is a fear that the donor community will tire after four years and that the spotlight will be directed elsewhere. That the endless violence and the lack of a political solution will lead to resignation among the donors. But the world must not give up. The Syrian crisis is one of the most serious crises of our time. More than 220 000 people have been killed and 12 million people – half of the country's population – have been forced to flee, often more than once; and of these, eight million are refugees in their own country. They are trapped in the terror of violence between various armed groups that are deliberately directing their attacks against civilian targets. Not least the barrel bombings of the Assad regime cause immense damage and injury in civilian areas.

Women and children worst affected by the war

As always, women and children are the worst affected by the war. This has been aggravated by the advance of ISIL. The extreme control and the terrible abuses being committed by ISIL are a cause for concern not just in

terms of security today, but also in terms of what the future may bring. All the while, we are hearing reports of how regime soldiers use rape as a military means of instilling fear into and repressing local communities. The abuses are continuing in the refugee camps outside the country's borders, where desperation and poverty are growing and humanitarian organisations report that increasing numbers of girls are being forced into marriages. And yet in the midst of this chaos, it is the women who are trying to bring normality back to everyday life, get food on the table and a roof over their heads, and care for the children and the elderly.

A real concern is the situation of children. We are witnessing a lost generation grow up before our eyes, and we must join forces to combat this. Over two million children in Syria are not attending school, and the same applies to over half of the child refugees outside the country – 600 000 children and rising. They are the future of Syria, and the growing hopelessness among child refugees risks turning into a powder keg with security implications for Sweden, too.

SEK 350 million in humanitarian support for Syria 2015

The difficulties of working inside Syria for help organisations and the protracted nature of the conflict must not deter donors. Sweden is therefore increasing its commitment in the Syrian crisis in a number of ways:

Sweden is stepping up its humanitarian operation. Because the situation is getting worse and the conflict is spreading further into the neighbouring countries, Sweden will pledge at the conference tomorrow SEK 350 million in humanitarian support for 2015 to alleviate the Syrian crisis. This is an increase on last year's initial pledge of SEK 270 million to Syria and the affected neighbouring countries. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency are following developments closely and if the situation deteriorates further there may be a need for more support. Special measures will be taken to protect women and girls from forced marriages, kidnapping and sexual violence.

Syria's neighbouring countries – Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, for example – are taking in by far the largest proportion of refugees from Syria. Three million people have so far sought refuge there. The EU must do more to support them. Sweden, together with Germany, has taken in the absolute majority of Syrian asylum seekers in the EU. Sweden has taken in some 65

000 people, including stateless people, since the war started in 2011. This can be compared with the approximately 220 000 in the EU as a whole, a figure that includes those taken in by Sweden.

New aid strategy for Syria

Sweden pushed for the adoption of the UN Security Council resolutions on improving access for humanitarian personnel, and we are now taking forceful action to ensure that these are respected. Sweden is one of the largest donors in the Syrian crisis and has a strong voice in the UN bodies. We are working systematically with the UN on the ground to find ways for help to reach vulnerable groups inside Syria. This has its problems, but many people are receiving help. Since 2011, Sweden has provided SEK 1.3 billion for everything from blankets and food to medical care and women's centres.

Sweden is adopting a new aid strategy for the Syrian crisis comprising SEK 1.5 billion over the coming years. The conflict in Syria continues to deteriorate and we therefore need a long-term and flexible strategy for how Sweden can best contribute to alleviating the suffering caused by the war, and how we can support democratic forces and mitigate the impact on neighbouring countries. It should bridge the unnecessary gap that currently exists between urgent disaster relief and long-term development work. This is about creating the conditions for a future Syria after the war, where peace can gain a foothold. Priorities will be children's schooling and support to civil society organisations that are working inside and outside the country under very difficult conditions to build confidence between people. These peaceful counterforces – often women's organisations – need the support and recognition of the rest of the world. This is crucial if there is to be a civil society that can build democracy once we have achieved peace.

Aid will not end the war or people's suffering. This will require a political solution. However, the lack of a political solution makes aid important. Used correctly, it can save lives and create better conditions for rebuilding the country. It will be a lifeline for very many people, make life that little more tolerable and give people the sense that others around the world are on their side.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden producing new strategy for Syrian crisis

Published 03 February 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Dagens Nyheter 3 februari 2015 Today, there are almost 50 million displaced people in the world. This is the highest number since the Second World War. They are fleeing from oppression, war and terrorism.

There are many trouble spots around the world, but the current situation in Syria and Iraq looks increasingly like the worst humanitarian disaster of our time. The civil war and the ISIL reign of terror have so far claimed 200 000 human lives. There are more than 10 million displaced Syrians, almost half of the country's population. Seven million remain in the country, but more than three million have managed to leave. Most are in the neighbouring countries of Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Lebanon.

Around six per cent, or 200 000, of the Syrian refugees have come to Europe. Around 60 000 people have sought asylum in Sweden.

When we meet United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres on Tuesday, our main messages will be that the world must come together to find a solution to the conflict and help the people fleeing from it. This is a human duty. We vow that Sweden will continue to take constructive action in this respect through our foreign policy, aid policy and migration policy. The work of the High Commissioner for Refugees deserves every support.

Only a political solution can end the conflict. The new Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura has our wholehearted support. He has taken a more localised approach and wants to de-escalate the violence levels and 'freeze' the conflict, starting in Aleppo. In addition, the efforts of the international community to cut off support to terrorism continue, for example by

preventing the financing of terrorism and stopping people from travelling as foreign terrorist fighters.

At the same time, ISIL ravages must be stopped so that people are not forced to flee. The flow of weapons, personnel and money to the terrorist sect must be cut off. Those travelling from other countries, such as Sweden, to fight for ISIL must be stopped. Obviously, the conflict and the war are the root problem and the cause of people being forced to flee.

The world has a clear humanitarian responsibility to help the people affected. It is chiefly Syria's neighbours who are now taking that responsibility. Sweden is providing considerable support to alleviate the suffering of people in and outside Syria who are affected by the hell of war. Since the conflict started in 2011, Sweden has contributed more than SEK 1.5 billion. We are now also one of the largest donors to both the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

Unfortunately, a political solution in Syria seems remote and the prospects of refugee repatriation are currently small. Hundreds of thousands of children in the region are growing up in camps where most cannot attend school. Families are living under extreme financial pressure and humanitarian conditions with little means of support. The frustration and vulnerability is hitting women and children hard. A generation risks being lost and the seeds of future problems are being sown.

The situation is exerting severe pressure on the neighbouring countries. Lebanon alone, which is the same size as Skåne, has taken in more than one million refugees. This creates unease and instability. It is evident that the humanitarian operations are inadequate. They must be linked to long-term support – to neighbouring countries, too. This is something the UNHCR has persistently pointed out to the leaders of the international community. Sweden supports the UNHCR appeal and the Government is now producing a new strategy for the Syrian crisis that covers both the urgent needs and the long-term measures to create better living conditions and support to public services in the neighbouring countries.

For decades, Sweden has offered protection to many people fleeing war and oppression. We have a tradition of solidarity that we should be proud of. We are still keeping up this tradition as 30 000 Syrians sought asylum in Sweden in 2014.

Sweden also works closely with the UNHCR on resettlement of quota

refugees directly from refugee camps, in for example Jordan and Lebanon, to western countries. Resettlement provides protection to individuals and also relieves the pressure on the neighbouring countries receiving large numbers of refugees. Sweden, via the Swedish Migration Board, very successfully led this work in 2014. More than 50 000 Syrians were offered a place of refuge in one of the 24 countries participating in the initiative.

This was positive, but more countries need to take responsibility for the reception of refugees. The Government is therefore working actively to encourage all EU Member States to participate in the resettlement initiative. In the EU, we are also pushing for more countries to receive refugees in a humane and legally secure manner. We welcome Mr Guterres's new proposals that all UN Member States should collectively fund part of the important work of the UNHCR through compulsory contributions.

There is no simple solution to the catastrophic situation of the world's refugees or to the bloody conflict in Syria. In order to really make a difference, taking responsibility is required within all of our respective areas of responsibility. Sweden will continue to be a close and strong partner of the UNHCR in its important work for the world's refugees. Our country will actively stand up for those people who are subjected to war and oppression, wherever they are.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation
Morgan Johansson, Minister for Justice and Migration



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

"As a generous aid donor and role model, Sweden is a voice the world listens to"

Published 05 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Sydsvenskan 5 januari 2015 In 2015, the world has no less than three opportunities to put humanity on the right track for the future. Within a six-month period, three major international conferences will be held that will affect development for decades to come.

In Paris, a new climate agreement will be signed. In New York, the new global development goals to follow the Millennium Development Goals will be drawn up, and in Addis Ababa, the first serious discussions will be held on ways to direct financial flows so that they are used for the general good.

These decisions will set the agenda for the foreseeable future and affect our lives and the lives of our children and grandchildren.

In his report on the new global sustainability objectives, *The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet*, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon states that the alignment of the stars has never been so favourable. The opportunity for mankind to embark upon a path towards dignity – to put an end to poverty, transform all our lives and protect the planet – will not return in our lifetime.

These are grand words, but hardly exaggerated.

Even so, very few people are aware of these ongoing processes – which can provide the world with the opportunity for a new start.

In the same way, very few people are aware of the role Sweden plays in

forming the new development agenda, which will not only apply to developing countries, but to all countries on the planet – both rich and poor.

Fifteen years ago, world leaders agreed on eight Millennium Development Goals to halve poverty and improve people's living conditions. The MDGs, which expire this year, show the success that can be achieved when the world works together.

The MDGs have contributed to lifting millions of people out of poverty, more children than ever before starting school, increasing life expectancy in practically the entire world, more countries holding democratic elections, and increasing the influence and power of women.

But we still face enormous challenges.

A glance at the past shows that 2014 was a dramatic year, with wider gaps and more people fleeing than at any time since the Second World War. At the same time global warming is continuing, threatening all the progress that has been made.

I think it safe to say that we will never be able to combat poverty around the world if we do not succeed in curbing climate change. To meet these challenges, the world must act now.

Sweden has a long tradition of promoting human rights issues and conflict and disaster prevention measures. Sweden is one of the world's largest aid donors and does not shrink from controversial issues. This has given us weight and credibility.

It also gives Sweden muscles, which it intends to make full use of to influence the important international agreements that will be entered into in 2015.

In the new development agenda, which will be adopted in September, Sweden will promote distinct goals – even as regards issues that meet with resistance, and with which many countries still have problems.

This involves strengthening democratic institutions, transparency and the rule of law, and promoting freedom from violence, gender equality and access to sexual and reproductive health.

All this, as well as respect for human rights, is essential to eradicating poverty.

At the same time, we find ourselves in a new and more serious situation where major parts of the earth's life-sustaining ecosystems are threatened. This requires switching to a new development model that does not exceed the planetary boundaries.

A summit will also be held in July on funding for the global development agenda.

International development cooperation is important, but on its own it can never create the conditions for the necessary change. Here, creative solutions are needed.

In 2003, Sweden was the first country in the world with a policy for global development, i.e. a plan for how all policy areas – not just development cooperation – are to promote equitable and sustainable global development.

For the whole world to meet the new sustainability objectives, all trade, investments in institutional capital, environmental, climate, tax and industrial policies must to a great degree be designed with this in mind.

Sweden must be proactive in this discussion and accordingly, one of the Government's priorities is to curb capital flight and tax avoidance in the developing countries.

In December, the new international climate agreement will be adopted in Paris.

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that emissions of greenhouse gases must be reduced to zero during this century in order to avoid extreme weather with disastrous consequences.

This is a staggering challenge.

For this reason, an important part of aid and development cooperation lies in vigorously supporting investments in renewable energy and phasing out fossil fuels.

The developing countries will be hardest hit by climate change and one of the greatest stumbling blocks in the negotiations is how to finance transition and adaptation in these countries.

The UN Green Climate Fund is therefore crucial to achieving a good agreement in December. The generous contribution Sweden recently announced of SEK 4 billion to the Fund has received a great deal of

international attention and appreciation, and has also inspired several other countries to increase, or pledge new, contributions.

Sweden has an important role to play in the global arena during the coming year. As a generous aid donor and role model – a country that has shown that economic development linked to a strong welfare state is possible – Sweden is a voice the world listens to.

This is something to be proud of, but unfortunately also something often forgotten due to domestic bickering between the political blocs.

I therefore wish to point out that 2015 is the year in which we have the opportunity to contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world. If we act together, the opportunity really does exist.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Gender equality against HIV

Published 08 December 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Upsala Nya Tidning 8 december 2014 While Ebola captures the worlds' attention the struggle against HIV and AIDS continues. Every 15 seconds a person is newly infected with HIV and every day more than 4000 people die in AIDS-related illnesses.

Globally the number of people living with HIV is three times the entire population of Sweden. This is a human tragedy that is allowed to continue despite the fact that we know how to stop the spread of HIV, and despite effective treatment being available. Now we must take vigorous action to close the gap between those who receive information, support and treatment, and those who are left behind - without access to knowledge, health care, or the power to decide over their own bodies.

A glance in the rearview mirror shows what is possible when the world joins forces. Thanks to the support and resources that countries have put in place for the AIDS response nearly 14 million people living with HIV today have access to treatment - a dramatic increase from 400 000 people in 2003. Globally, the number of new HIV infections has fallen by 38 percent since 2001.

As a result of improved methods to avoid HIV transmission from mother to child during pregnancy and child birth, over two hundred thousand children have been prevented from becoming infected each year.

But we need to do more. In southern Africa, AIDS is now the number one contributor to adolescent mortality and in several countries the number of girls and young women living with HIV is several times higher than the number of boys. A new generation risks being robbed of their future, with implications for the entire society. We know that lacking gender equality and

men's sexual violence against women increase the spread of HIV. These unequal power relationships are perhaps never as evident as when men assume control over women's bodies, and the power to decide when and where to have sex. Women's limited ability to say no or to negotiate condom use to protect themselves against HIV is compromised by their economically and socially vulnerable situation.

In many places, it is not uncommon for young girls to see it as their only option to engage in transactional sex with older boys and men, and sometimes even their teachers, in exchange for services: to get grades, school books, a new sweater or prepaid cards for their mobile phones.

To stop the spread of HIV, we need to increase women's power and influence in society as well as in their own lives.

Here it's important to address the issue from different angles. Cash-transfers, similar to the Swedish child grant, may help keep girls and young women in school and empower them through education. In a study in Malawi where poor young women and girls received a small grant of between one and fifteen dollars per month, the results showed that more girls finished their education, teenage pregnancies and early marriages fell by 30 percent and the number of new HIV infections were reduced by as much as 64 percent. Around the world we are also seeing how young women are mobilising to challenge harmful norms and values that limit their lives. Their power shows that change is not only possible, but already underway.

In the future no one should have to be infected with HIV, no one should die of AIDS and no one should be discriminated against because of their HIV status.

Sweden and UNAIDS are determined to work together to achieve this vision of the "three zeros". For that to happen, every new generation needs access to sexual education and knowledge on how to protect themselves against HIV, other sexuality transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies. Sweden and UNAIDS will work with governments, civil society and other key stakeholders to ensure that all people have access to care, support and treatment without the risk of being subjected to discrimination or violence.

At the same time, we must also break the notions of masculinity and femininity that restrict girls' and women's living spaces and block the AIDS response.

Sweden has a long tradition of working towards gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights – sensitive issues that many other countries shy away from and in some cases oppose. That is precisely why Sweden's commitment and voice is especially important in order to once and for all end the AIDS epidemic.

Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development and Cooperation, Sweden

Michel Sidibé, UNAIDS Executive Director



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Green Climate Fund is not a charity but an investment in our shared future

Published 18 November 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

The Guardian 18 november 2014 A world that does not manage to curb global warming is an insecure world. A series of recent reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change makes it abundantly clear.

If we do not succeed in staying below the target of keeping temperature rises below 2C over preindustrial levels, the consequences are likely to be far-reaching and disastrous. We will see a dramatic rise in sea levels, by up to a metre in this century alone, a greater frequency of violent storms, increased desertification, with hundreds of millions of people experiencing water scarcity, and radical changes in entire ecosystems. This will pose a serious threat to the livelihoods of large swathes of people, causing unprecedented refugee flows and, in the worst case, new conflicts and wars.

Recently, military strategists around the world have declared that uncontrolled climate change constitutes a global security threat. In February this year, US secretary of state John Kerry called climate change “perhaps the world’s most fearsome weapon of mass destruction”, and a threat to democracy and our entire way of life.

In May, 16 US generals, writing in a report entitled National Security and the Accelerating Risks of Climate Change, warned that climate change will pose at least as great a threat to national security as the Cold War or transnational terrorism. Economist Lord Nicholas Stern echoed this warning recently in The Guardian.

Many people regard the UN climate summit in Paris next year as the last chance for the world to unite on a climate agreement that will enable us to meet the 2C target.

Little time remains before then, but there are vital stops along the way for the international community to demonstrate its commitment to addressing global warming. One was the recent G20 meeting in Brisbane, another is the pledging conference in Berlin this week, which aims to mobilise resources for the UN's Green Climate Fund (GCF). The task of the GCF will be to support developing countries through measures to promote climate change adaptation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The new red-green government in Sweden has promised \$580m (£370) to the GCF. This contribution, which covers the period 2015–2018, is the most ambitious contribution per capita of the countries that have so far announced their intention to support the GCF.

It is well known that in purely factual terms, climate change will have the greatest impact on countries that are already poor: countries around the equator and small impoverished Pacific islands that face the threat of disappearing completely or being laid waste by extreme drought or flooding. It is therefore imperative to show our solidarity with those who need economic support.

At the same time, no country in the world will be immune to the consequences of climate change, and no country today can act alone to protect itself from global disasters. Sweden today is being severely tested by the strains imposed by the instability of the world around us. We receive unprecedented flows of refugees from wars and disaster, some of which have likely been caused by climate change.

This summer Sweden suffered exceptionally violent natural disasters – the largest forest fire in our history, and floods and torrential rain that destroyed houses and knocked out infrastructure. Similar disasters have occurred in the Balkans and the UK this year, while extreme waves caused astonishment this summer on the coasts of Spain and Portugal.

The GCF is pivotal in furthering international momentum to tackle climate change - by strengthening mutual confidence among all the parties involved and catalysing new capital that can help the world switch to clean, renewable energy.

We should not forget that this fund will potentially create millions of new jobs and lead to development and prosperity. The recent New Climate Economy report indicates that \$45 trillion needs to be invested in new energy infrastructure over the next 15 years, regardless of whether the energy is clean or dirty. The difference is that we will achieve a sustainable society if we choose clean.

Tackling climate change does not mean we should abstain from prosperity and development. Quite the contrary.

The GCF is not a charity; it is an investment for our collective future, for a secure world where we can all enjoy the welfare that our unique living planet can actually give us.

The Swedish government hopes and expects that many more of the developed countries will put enough money into the new GCF this Thursday to allow it to send a real signal that the world is jointly taking its responsibility and that we believe that investments in clean and renewable energy are possible. We cannot continue on the same track any longer, when both scientists and military experts warn us so emphatically what will happen if we do so.

There is another way. Let us take it.

Isabella Lövin is Sweden's minister for international development cooperation



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Convention on the Rights of the Child to become law

Published 20 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Svenska Dagbladet 20 oktober 2014 Children have rights – the right to life, play and learning. This means all children: regardless of whether your name is Maria or Mariam and whether you live in Borlänge or Bamako.

This November marks 25 years since the UN adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. So far, 193 countries have undertaken to respect, protect and promote the rights of the child. Much has improved since the Convention was adopted. But unfortunately, huge challenges still remain.

Developments in Syria, Iraq, Palestine, South Sudan and Liberia are brutal reminders of how children's rights are violated on a daily basis. Minors are cynically used as child soldiers, children are subjected to violence and exploitation, and girls are prevented from attending school, forced into marriage and subjected to life-threatening pregnancies.

A few days ago, Anna Hägg-Sjöquist and Pia Stavås Meier from the children's charity Plan Sverige urged the Government to prioritise children's rights in foreign policy and international development cooperation.

Our new cooperation government will do so, with great force and determination. Sweden must be a leading global force for the rights of the child and for gender equality. In the Statement of Government Policy, we said that Sweden's voice must always be clear and unambiguous when human dignity is violated, and that we will pursue a feminist foreign policy. Poverty reduction, sexual and reproductive health and rights and the fight against discrimination will be given high priority in the years ahead.

The UN has an important role to play in this, and the new Government will

give higher priority to UN cooperation. We will actively pursue these issues in view of the new global development agenda due to be negotiated by the UN member states ahead of the UN Summit in September 2015.

Today, we are among the very largest financiers of the UN's global development work. Via the UN, Sweden has contributed to a reduction of almost fifty per cent in the number of children dying before the age of five, down from 12.6 million in 1990 to 6.6 million in 2012. Last year alone, UNICEF provided water to 24 million people and sanitation to 7 million people, and gave 13.1 million people the possibility to wash their hands. In 2013, 3.6 million children in humanitarian crisis situations gained access to education. UNICEF has also contributed to 123 countries making all forms of sexual violence towards girls and boys punishable offences, and enabling 7 300 children with links to armed forces or groups to return to their families and communities.

At the same time, as ardent supporters of the UN we will not be afraid to criticise it if necessary. Swedish taxpayers' money must be used efficiently, and the UN needs to be reformed in order to be able to tackle the challenges of the future.

Human rights – including the rights of the child – are a cornerstone of Swedish foreign policy. But we also want to set a good example for other countries. Being a leader means leading the way. For this reason we will now take the next step, and begin the work to make the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child law in Sweden.

Standing up for children's rights and working for greater social and gender equality in the world will be the hallmarks of the new Government's work. As the ministers responsible for foreign affairs, development cooperation and children, we will shoulder our share of the responsibility for ensuring that children are able to enjoy their incontrovertible right to be just that – children.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

USD 12 million in extra support to address increased challenges to democracy and human rights in Asia and the Pacific Region due to COVID-19

Published 18 January 2021

The global trend of democratic backsliding, as well as lack of respect for human rights and the rule of law, risks being exacerbated by the pandemic. We have seen several worrying signs of this – not least in Asia and the Pacific Region. The Government has therefore decided to allocate approximately USD 12 million (SEK 100 million) in extra support to the Swedish strategy for regional development cooperation in Asia and the Pacific Region.

Democratic societal development and respect for civil and political rights have deteriorated in several parts of Asia and the Pacific Region in recent years. In several countries, civil society organisation have had their ability to take action curtailed and the media are under increasing pressure. Furthermore, corruption in several countries permeates all parts of society, including the legal system. Violence against women remains a major problem. This development has been further reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year.

“I view with concern the negative development of democracy and the lack of respect for human rights in several countries in the region. With today’s

decision, the Government wants to further strengthen support to the forces working to counter this,” says Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation.

The Swedish strategy for regional development cooperation in Asia and the Pacific Region, which applies for 2016–2021, has an integrated goal: sustainable development in Asia through mutual cooperation between human rights, democracy, gender equality, the environment and climate. In connection with the government decision of 11 June 2020 to phase out the bilateral strategy for Cambodia, a specific goal was also added regarding democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Cambodia. Today’s decision only covers the first-mentioned goal.

“Sweden must stand up for democracy and human rights where these are challenged,” says Ms Lövin.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden submits long-term climate strategy to UN

Published 15 December 2020

Sweden has submitted its long-term climate strategy to the UN. The strategy is part of Sweden's work under the Paris Agreement and contains ambitious emission targets and measures that will drive climate transition in Sweden in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The overarching objective of the Paris Agreement is to keep global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius, and preferably below 1.5 degrees Celsius. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes are required in all aspects of society. All countries are encouraged to submit long-term climate strategies in 2020 for achieving these changes. The strategies can then guide the countries' continued work under the Agreement.

“Sweden was one of the first countries in the world to adopt a net-zero emissions target, and the strategy reflects this very ambitious target. In this way we're also demonstrating international leadership and showing other countries that transition is possible,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The strategy is based on the climate policy framework with the goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2045 and negative net emissions thereafter. To ensure that Sweden achieves this goal, several interim goals have been set. The strategy summarises the national measures taken in different sectors, including industry, transport, agriculture and energy.

Developing countries are often the hardest hit by climate change. Sweden's national measures are complemented with support to help these countries

tackle climate change and drive the climate transition in these countries. Sweden is currently one of the world's largest climate donors in the and Swedish companies offer competitive solutions that can contribute to the transition in other countries.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Agreement on higher ambitions and increased international collaboration at LeadIT Summit

Published 01 December 2020

The Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT) – launched by Sweden and India to drive the climate transition in energy-intensive industries – held its Leadership Summit today. LeadIT members agreed on a range of ambitious commitments to contribute to freedom from fossil fuels and net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

LeadIT was launched by the governments of Sweden and India at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York in 2019. Its members are countries and companies that are working together to drive the low-carbon transition of energy-intensive industries and achieve net-zero carbon emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050.

“Fine words are not enough. Setting a good example is the best way to influence the rest of the world. The Leadership Group shows that it is possible for energy-intensive industries to be fossil-free,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The theme of the digital summit was how strengthened demand, investments in the green transition and a greater youth perspective can help to accelerate the transition.

At the summit, agreement was reached on concrete action by the public and private sectors to promote innovation and technology exchange, the development of roadmaps for the industry transition, and policy and

financial solutions to drive the transition. LeadIT also encourages increased international collaboration between key actors to accelerate the climate transition in energy-intensive industries.

Its commitments will be presented at the UN's event marking the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Paris Agreement and will be followed up in connection with the UN's climate negotiations, COP26, in Glasgow next year.

At the Summit, Ms Lövin announced that Sweden also intends to contribute SEK 300 million to a new and innovative industry transition programme within the World Bank's Climate Investment Funds. SEK 100 million per year will be provided between 2020 and 2022.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden supports programme for climate transition of energy-intensive industries in developing countries

Published 01 December 2020

At a summit on the climate transition of energy-intensive industries, Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin announced that Sweden intends to contribute a total of SEK 300 million to a new and innovative industry transition programme within the World Bank's climate finance mechanism, the Climate Investment Funds (CIF).

Sweden will provide SEK 100 million per year between 2020 and 2022 to help developing countries and their industries develop roadmaps and climate strategies, and enable technological innovations throughout the value chain in energy-intensive industries.

“By helping other countries develop their roadmaps to fossil fuel freedom, we can accelerate progress towards zero emissions in the whole world,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The CIF has decided to set up a new programme as part of its broader reform efforts to strengthen its funds and increase integration of climate, energy and biodiversity into its activities. Sweden's new support brings its total contribution to the CIF – up to and including this budget year – to SEK 1 110 million.

“Sweden's support of SEK 300 million over three years, 2020 to 2022, to a

new and innovative programme with the CIF is fully in line with Sweden's development cooperation priorities. This support is an important contribution to a sustainable climate transition and renewable energy in energy-intensive industries. It also means that Sweden is taking additional responsibility to assist poor countries in implementing a climate-smart industry transition and phasing out fossil fuels throughout the value chain," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment

Swedish strategy for circular economy accelerates the transition to sustainability

Published 23 November 2020

The national strategy for a circular economy sets out the direction and ambition for a long-term and sustainable transition of Swedish society. The Government adopted the national strategy for a circular economy earlier this year. The strategy is now available in English. The strategy is based on an agreement between the Government, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

The transition to a circular economy is essential/crucial if Sweden is going to achieve the environmental and climate objectives, as well as several of the Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda. Later this autumn the government will also adopt an action plan for circular economy, containing a long list of measures and instruments necessary to bring about the transition.

The core of the strategy is a vision: “A society in which resources are used efficiently in toxic-free circular flows, replacing new materials.” The strategy focuses on four areas: sustainable production and product design; sustainable ways of consuming and using materials, products and services; toxic-free and circular material cycles; and the circular economy as a driving force for the business sector and other actors through measures to promote innovation and circular business models.

The strategy is based on an agreement between the Government, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden increasing its contribution to climate action in developing countries

Published 02 October 2020

Sweden has committed to supporting the efforts of developing countries on emission reductions, climate adaptation, capacity-building and technology transfer. Since 2014, the Government has more than tripled its climate aid to developing countries. Climate financing in 2019 was 20 per cent higher than in 2018.

In total, Swedish climate financing in 2019 amounted to SEK 7.5 billion, which is 3.5 times higher than in 2014 and 20 per cent higher than in 2018. Of this SEK 7.5 billion, SEK 2.3 billion went to climate adaptation measures, SEK 1.1 billion to emission reduction measures and SEK 4.4 billion to cross-cutting financing (i.e. both emission reductions and adaptation).

“Climate leadership involves taking the lead both nationally and internationally. Through our climate action, we have shown that Sweden can lead the way with substantially reduced emissions while also helping poorer countries adapt their societies to a warmer climate and develop in a climate-smart way,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

Multilateral funds are one way of providing climate financing. Sweden is one of the biggest donors per capita to this financial mechanism within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Sweden also provides substantial funding through other multilateral climate funds, such as the Adaptation Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund. The remainder of climate financing is

via regional and bilateral cooperation and other funds. Sweden's aid is 'climate-proof'.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Infrastructure

Green recovery will lift Sweden out of dual crisis

Published 16 September 2020

Global warming continues regardless of the COVID-19 pandemic. Climate change will remain the defining issue of our generation. The Government is therefore proposing investments of SEK 9.7 billion in green recovery initiatives in the Budget Bill for 2021. The Government's proposals are based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

All of Sweden has come together to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and reduce the spread of infection. It is now crucial that a green transition forms the basis of the recovery after the crisis. Investments in industry's climate transition, sustainable transport and biodiversity will help us emerge from the crisis. Investments in climate neutral and non-toxic circular solutions throughout the country will reduce carbon dioxide emissions, lay the foundation for new jobs and strengthen our competitiveness.

Industry's transition will lead to new jobs

The Government proposes several major industrial initiatives in the Budget Bill for 2021 that can reduce emissions, create new jobs and strengthen competitiveness. Public sector investments in green transition will help us create jobs throughout Sweden and lay the foundation for industry's transition.

By means of the green credit guarantees, the Government can promote

major industrial investments that contribute to achieving the goals of the environmental objectives system and the climate policy framework. The Green Industry Leap will be developed and broadened to allow more investments in facilities that reduce industrial emissions and contribute to the transition to a fossil-free and circular society. Through shorter processing times for the expansion of electricity networks and complete tax exemption for more actors who produce their own electricity, more stakeholders will be included in the transition.

Increased biodiversity and other initiatives for Sweden's natural environment

One million species are at risk of extinction. In Sweden, the number of species at risk of disappearing has increased by 11 per cent over the past five years. This crisis is impairing the conditions for human life on our planet and is reinforced by climate change.

The Government proposes an initiative targeting Sweden's natural environment. This initiative will help stop species extinction and includes measures to protect and manage valuable natural habitats and reinforce efforts for clean seas and water. It includes funds for sustainable fisheries and a ban on bottom trawling in protected areas. The possibility of limited exceptions may be provided in the management plan.

Part of the Government's initiative will also go to restoring wetlands. Emissions from drained peatlands that were previously wetlands account for 11 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents – which is more than from private cars in Sweden. Restoring wetlands prevents the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, so that nature does the climate work for us.

Sustainable transport reduces emissions

Domestic transport accounts for about one third of Sweden's greenhouse gas emissions, and the pace at which emissions are reduced must be considerably increased until 2030. The Government proposes initiatives in the Budget Bill for 2021 so that it is easier for both private individuals and companies to reduce emissions.

The transition to a fossil-free vehicle fleet will be reinforced by means of changes to the bonus-malus system. The reduction obligation will be

tightened so that more renewable fuels are mixed in with petrol and diesel, and so that long-term conditions are created for the production of Swedish biofuels. A major investment is being made in railways in the form of greater maintenance. To continue pushing for the transfer of freight transport from roads to rail, the Government proposes extending and further developing the environmental compensation. Green Cargo is currently facing a challenging financial situation, which is further aggravated by the ongoing pandemic. Green Cargo will receive a capital injection so that necessary investments can be made and to ensure the company's long-term stability and profitability. This capital injection is given in light of the environmental compensation for rail freight transport simultaneously proposed to the Riksdag.

Energy efficiency in housing

The Government considers major investments are still needed both to achieve better energy performance and to address the renovation needs of the existing building stock. The Government will therefore provide SEK 900 million for 2021 to a new form of support for energy efficiency improvements and renovation of apartment buildings.

Initiatives for local green transition

The Government proposes initiatives to support local and regional efforts for a green transition. This includes municipal energy and climate advisory services, and measures to reduce the risk of landslides.

Improved climate projections and international climate action

The Government also proposes initiatives to support national and international environmental and climate action in the Budget Bill for 2021.



Press release from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment

Sweden transitioning to a circular economy

Published 09 July 2020

The Government has adopted a national strategy for a circular economy that sets out the direction and ambition for a long-term and sustainable transition of Swedish society. This is an important step towards Sweden becoming the world's first fossil-free welfare nation.

We need to accelerate the transition to a circular economy if we are to achieve the environmental and climate objectives, as well as several of the Global Goals in the 2030 Agenda. Using materials more efficiently increases their lifespan and value, and reduces both the extraction of new raw materials and landfill waste.

Over the last few months, the spread of the COVID-19 virus and the resulting economic crisis have had a major impact on society. The world after the COVID-19 pandemic will not be what it was before the crisis.

“It’s madness that valuable material is used just once and then thrown away. We’re going to change this now. The green recovery that society now needs will accelerate the transition to a climate-neutral and circular economy. Approximately 50 per cent of our climate emissions and more than 90 per cent of the world’s water shortages and biodiversity losses are a result of inefficient resource management. A circular economy is smarter, much better for the environment and also allows us to create opportunities for many new jobs and sustainable business,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The core of the strategy is a vision: “A society in which resources are used efficiently in toxin-free circular flows, replacing new materials.” The national work for a circular economy will focus on sustainable production and product design; sustainable ways of consuming and using materials, products and services; toxin-free and circular ecocycles; and the circular economy as a driving force for the business sector and other actors through measures to promote innovation and circular business models.

“As one of the world’s most innovative countries, Sweden has good prospects for managing this transition. This also gives us advantages in the global market and many Swedish companies can already see the opportunities in transitioning their activities. This will create more companies, new jobs and greater welfare, while reducing the environmental impact,” says Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan.

The transition to a circular economy must be conducted jointly by politicians, the business sector, the public sector, academia, private individuals and civil society. The Government’s role is to create the conditions for the good work that is already under way in regions and municipalities, the business sector, universities and other higher education institutions, and civil society. The Government will take a number of measures in this area during this electoral period. In addition to the strategy, action plans containing concrete measures will be adopted.

The strategy is based on an agreement between the Government, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

About the strategy for a circular economy

A circular economy is a tool for reducing society’s resource use and the resulting environmental impact. The strategy sets out four focus areas in which measures are necessary.

Focus areas:

1. A circular economy through sustainable production and product design.
2. A circular economy through sustainable ways of consuming and using materials, products and services.
3. A circular economy through toxin-free and circular ecocycles.
4. A circular economy as a driving force for the business sector and other actors through measures to promote innovation and circular business

models.

Each focus area contains a series of more concrete measures to aim for. These include:

- steering towards a situation in which products are designed to have a long lifespan;
- promoting greater use of toxin-free recycled materials in new products;
- strengthening the innovation and business climate so that more circular companies can grow;
- promoting the development of Sweden's bioeconomy so that bio-based, renewable and sustainably produced raw materials can replace fossil-based raw materials in products and production processes;
- improving consumer information to make it easier for individual consumers to make sustainable and circular choices in their everyday lives;
- making it simple and profitable for business operators and private individuals to share, repair and re-use products;
- contributing to resource efficiency, recycling and circular business models through public procurement;
- designing policy instruments that contribute to greater supply of and demand for circular products and services, and re-used and recycled materials;
- setting the requirement that both recycled and new materials are toxin-free; and
- promoting research, innovation and technological development in the areas of recycling, digitalisation and traceability.

Virgin materials must be replaced as far as possible by resources used efficiently in circular flows. Consideration must be given to the need for virgin materials to enable the climate transition and recycling. The strategy describes what materials will be prioritised in national action on the circular economy. All of these must be better used and taken care of than is the case today: plastic, textiles, renewable and biobased raw materials, foodstuffs, materials in the construction and property sector, and metals and minerals critical to innovation.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary Eva Svedling takes part in virtual UN high-level forum on the 2030 Agenda

Published 07 July 2020

On 7–14 July, State Secretary Eva Svedling and a Swedish delegation will take part in the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in New York. In line with the UN Secretary-General's call, this year's theme is 'Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realising the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development'. In light of the COVID-19 crisis, and for the first time ever, this year's HLPF will be held in a virtual format.

Eva Svedling, State Secretary with responsibility for Sweden's national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, will be taking part in the HLPF and heading Sweden's eDelegation comprising representatives from business, research, the public sector and civil society.

“The COVID-19 crisis has exposed many global vulnerabilities. This crisis shows that implementation of the 2030 Agenda is more crucial than ever. It is our roadmap for creating sustainable and just societies in which no one is left behind. It is particularly important to invest in the future of children, young people and coming generations,” says Ms Svedling.

At this year's HLPF, Sweden will focus on the following areas.

- The society that emerges from the COVID-19 crisis must be more sustainable than the society that entered the crisis. Sweden will work to

build back better and strengthen social, economic and ecological resilience.

- Sweden's action on the Global Goals, both nationally and globally, will seek to deliver on the 'leave no one behind' principle. The Global Goals must be achieved for everyone, all around the world. We must, in particular, safeguard opportunities for future generations.
- We must support and facilitate the meaningful participation and engagement of stakeholders.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden demands that the EU raise the bar ahead of Climate Change Conference in Glasgow

Published 04 March 2020

In a letter to the European Commission, Sweden and eleven other EU Member States call on the Commission to propose how the EU can show leadership in the climate transition and step up ambitions ahead of and during the UN Climate Change Conference at the end of the year.

On 9–19 November 2020, the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) will be held in Glasgow, UK. Ahead of the meeting, all the countries of the world have been asked to produce revised nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. If the world is to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees, it is important that the new NDCs scale up climate action ambitions.

To pursue this aim, Sweden, along with eleven other countries, has written to European Commissioner Frans Timmermans. In the letter, the countries ask that the Commission present its 2030 Climate Target Plan as soon as possible.

“The world needs strong climate leadership, and the EU has a responsibility to use the existing positive climate momentum to raise the bar. For maximum impact, it needs to be announced in good time ahead of COP26 in Glasgow,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

All parties to the Paris Agreement have NDCs that they are expected to live up to. The EU has joint NDCs, with targets to be achieved by 2030. The

European Commission has announced that later this year it will present an impact-assessed plan to increase the EU's emissions reductions target to at least 50 per cent (and towards 55 per cent) compared with 1990 levels by 2030. Sweden wants the Commission's plan to be presented as soon as possible, and no later than June 2020, to allow a decision on the EU's revised NDCs to be made in good time before COP26 in Glasgow. This is important so that the EU can influence other countries to raise their climate ambitions.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Gabriel Wikström appointed national coordinator for the 2030 Agenda

Published 21 February 2020 Updated 21 February 2020

The Government has appointed Gabriel Wikström as national coordinator for the 2030 Agenda. The appointment of a national coordinator is part of the Government's work to implement the 2030 Agenda.

The 2030 Agenda, including the 17 Global Goals, is a plan of action to end poverty and hunger, make human rights a reality for all, achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources.

“Sweden will be a leader in implementing the 2030 Agenda. We will build a sustainable world for future generations and all actors are needed for the transition to a sustainable society – in Sweden and globally. With his background, Gabriel Wikström has the broad knowledge and understanding that are needed to advance these efforts,” says Minister Isabella Lövin.

Mr Wikström has previously been Minister with responsibility for public health and health care issues. He has also been a municipal politician and engaged in youth issues.

“I am pleased and honoured to be able to take on this task. I will work to ensure that the focus on issues concerning the 2030 Agenda is strengthened in our municipalities, regions, business sector, civil society and academia,” says Mr Wikström.

As national coordinator, Mr Wikström will work to strengthen, promote and deepen the work of different actors. Joint plans will be developed through

collaboration and partnerships between different actors in society. The coordinator's work will focus in particular on the perspective and participation of children and young people, and on those in a particularly vulnerable situation.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Isabella Lövin attends World Economic Forum

Published 23 January 2020

On 22–23 January, Minister for Environment and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin is attending the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland. The theme of this year's meeting is Stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World.

During the meeting, Ms Lövin and Indian Minister of State for Shipping and for Chemicals and Fertilisers Mansukh L. Mandayiva will chair a meeting of the Leadership Group for Industry Transition, which was launched by Sweden and India at the Climate Action Summit in New York in September. The companies and governments that are members of the Leadership Group, along with other key actors, will discuss the group's priorities and how public-private partnership can strengthen the conditions for climate transition.

“I am delighted that the theme in Davos is about how businesses can contribute to sustainability and the climate transition. The Leadership Group is a way to really move this work from discussion into practice. As well as chairing the meeting with those who have already joined, in Davos I will meet many representatives from sectors such as the chemicals industry and the mining and metals industry, and I am very hopeful that more will join the Leadership Group. If there is no transition in heavy industry, the world will not be able to achieve the Paris Agreement's 1.5-degree target,” says Ms Lövin.

At the WEF, Ms Lövin will take part in meetings of the WEF Platform on Shaping the Future of Global Public Goods and of the Friends of Ocean

Action coalition, where leaders from the public, private and civil society sectors will discuss how to team up to accelerate and scale up ocean solutions beyond 2020.

She will also take part in a meeting on the Getting to Zero Coalition organised by the UN's International Maritime Organization (IMO). Actors who sign up to the initiative are committed to ensuring that zero-emission vessels are commercially available by 2030, thus contributing to the target of halving greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping by 2050.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden signs up to initiative to protect 30 per cent of oceans by 2030

Published 22 January 2020

Biodiversity in our oceans is under threat. For this reason, the Government is signing up to the UK's initiative calling for a global target of 30 per cent of the planet's oceans to be protected by 2030.

The world's oceans put food on the tables of many people, mitigate climate change and are home to a rich variety of species. Half of all the oxygen produced comes from the oceans. The ocean environment is under huge pressure from climate change, overexploitation, pollution and eutrophication. Only one per cent of international oceans are protected. The Government wants to see a global target of 30 per cent of oceans designated marine protection areas.

“We must do what we can to protect the oceans, and creating marine protection areas is one of the most important measures we can take. When well-managed and effective, such areas can protect biodiversity, make the ecosystem more resilient and contribute to more sustainable use of marine resources,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

“The global oceans are not in good shape. To save them, and to avoid overexploiting their life-giving resources, we must take better care of them. That is why this is a priority for the Government,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde.

The initiative's proposed target of 30 per cent of oceans to be protected by 2030 is global and international.

The aim of the initiative is to propose a new target under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, and also to contribute to the process of creating an instrument to protect biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction – that is, oceans that belong to everybody and nobody – under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

A coherent policy for the climate

Published 17 December 2019

For the first time, the Government is presenting a climate policy action plan to the Riksdag. The climate will be integrated into all relevant policy areas. The government bill, with its 132 measures, takes a holistic approach to how emissions will be reduced throughout Swedish society.

The development of the world's climate is alarming. Right now, the world's land-based ice sheets are melting, ocean temperatures are rising and the frequency of massive forest fires is increasing. A stable climate is essential for Earth's ecosystems and human welfare.

Sweden is now taking an important step by integrating the climate into all relevant policy areas. The first climate policy action plan contains more than a hundred measures that the Government will implement during this electoral period and that cover every sector of society.

“The climate emergency is a serious threat to global prosperity and security if we do not end our dependence on fossil fuels and build environmentally sustainable societies. Ignoring scientists' repeated warnings would be completely irresponsible. Sweden can lead the way and show that a fossil-free world is not only possible but can also promote our prosperity and our companies. In a unique move, Sweden is moving forward with an action plan and the fundamental approach that consideration of the climate must be incorporated into everything we do in society,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The Government's overarching proposal in the government bill is that greater efforts must be made to integrate climate policy into all relevant policy areas. All sectors of society need to contribute to achieve the target

that Sweden will have net zero atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 at the latest. The work of integrating climate policy will involve reviewing all relevant legislation to ensure that the climate policy framework has an impact. It will also involve the Government, in connection with the next review of each societal objective, reformulating the objectives where necessary to ensure they are in line with the climate objectives, and conducting climate change impact assessments for the proposals in the relevant areas.

This action plan contains 132 measures that the Government intends to implement during this electoral period, both within specific sectors and overall. The action plan includes such sectors as manufacturing, transport, consumption, public procurement, agriculture, forestry, financial markets and international climate action.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Climate negotiations conclude at UN Climate Change Conference COP25

Published 17 December 2019

The UN Climate Change Conference COP25 in Madrid, Spain, concluded in overtime. The Conference was challenging both technically and politically, and several issues were deferred until future meetings as the Parties were unable to agree. The main progress made at the Conference included strengthened action to address loss and damage, an updated gender action plan, strong political signals on the importance of countries raising the bar in their climate action in 2020, and the importance of strengthening the link between oceans and the climate.

One of the issues on which the Parties were unable to agree was rules on how countries can achieve parts of the targets in their national climate plans through cooperation with other countries. This can be done via emissions trading, for example, or through one country implementing climate measures in another country.

“It is unfortunate that we were unable to agree on these rules. However, both Sweden and the EU had made it very clear that we will not accept rules that risk undermining the goals and purpose of the Paris Agreement. For this reason, we would rather the negotiations on these issues continue at future meetings. For us, it is completely crucial that the rules guarantee that these forms of cooperation lead to real emissions reductions, and that climate

measures implemented in another country lead to positive developments for both the climate and the country in which the measure is undertaken,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

Another important issue at the Conference was the importance of raising the bar for global climate action, and ensuring that efforts are consistent with the latest science. The negotiations resulted in documents that will give additional weight to research from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The Parties also approved documents urging all Parties to submit updated national climate action plans in 2020.

“Important steps towards higher ambitions were taken during the Conference, not least through the presentation by the EU of the Green Deal, with its target of becoming the world’s first climate-neutral continent by 2050. Nonetheless, progress is too slow and more countries must step up the pace of their national climate action. We need to show the world that we treat the climate crisis with the utmost seriousness. The importance of greater ambition must therefore also be reflected in the climate action plans that all countries are due to submit next year,” says Ms Lövin.

Another important matter for negotiation was the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts.

“Sweden has long been a driving force for ensuring that more is done to support the countries hardest hit by climate change, and we are currently one of the largest per capita donors of climate aid. At the Conference, the Parties agreed that more financing is needed, and a working group to support this was established. A network was also established to provide technical assistance to developing countries,” says Ms Lövin.

To achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, it is important that everyone has the opportunity to participate in climate efforts. At the Conference, the Parties therefore agreed on an updated gender action plan. The new plan covers a five-year period and contains specific activities to strengthen gender mainstreaming in decision-making processes associated with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and in countries’ own climate action.

Ahead of the Conference, Chile stated that through its Presidency, it wanted to highlight the climate’s impact on the oceans. During the two weeks of the Conference, several high-level meetings were held in this area and a platform was launched to help create positive synergies between oceans and

the climate. Sweden has long been a driving force for strengthening the link between the oceans and the climate, and is co-chair of the Ocean Pathway project.

“It is gratifying that ocean issues were given additional space at this year’s conference. This is an important issue for many countries, not least for a number of the small island states that have already been hit hard by rising sea levels. As we now enter the implementation phase of the Paris Agreement, it is important to integrate ocean issues into our work,” says Ms Lövin.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Presentation of the new updated Trade and Investment Strategy for more jobs throughout the country

Published 16 December 2019

More people than ever before are now employed in exporting companies in Sweden. Exports drive the Swedish economy and keep around 1.5 million people in employment. To continue to strengthen Swedish exports, on Friday 13 December the Government launched an updated Trade and Investment Strategy to create jobs and growth throughout the country.

Since the previous export strategy was presented, the international context has changed. Threats to free trade have amplified, along with the competition for major procurements and investments.

At the same time, the previously weak export development in Sweden has turned around. In the last two years, exports from all Swedish counties have increased, and more people than ever work for exporting companies.

The 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement have in turn created new opportunities for Swedish companies to contribute to climate transition. To address these challenges and opportunities, the Export Strategy has been updated with an enhanced focus on sustainability and regional growth.

“I am proud to be able to present a strategy that so clearly involves the regions in ensuring that the whole of Sweden exports more. When we trade with the rest of the world, jobs and growth are created that strengthen

welfare throughout the country,” says Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg.

“Sweden will be the world’s first fossil-free welfare nation, and we will export solutions that lead the world to freedom from fossil fuels. We have world-leading companies in climate-smart solutions, and this will strengthen Sweden’s competitiveness as all countries are now required to adapt their economies,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

“The Export Strategy has served Sweden well. By updating and adapting the strategy to a changing world, we are ensuring that it will continue to contribute to more jobs throughout the country,” says Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan.

The five strategic goals of the new strategy:

1. Increase Sweden’s exports, both in absolute figures and as a proportion of GDP
2. Ensure that more small and medium-sized enterprises export
3. Ensure that Sweden is a driving force for free, sustainable and equitable international trade
4. Use Sweden’s innovation leadership to enhance the export capabilities and international competitiveness of Swedish business
5. Increase Sweden’s attractiveness to foreign investors, skills, talent and visitors

Sweden’s new Trade and Investment Strategy will help ensure that we meet the 2030 Agenda’s global goals for sustainable development and live up to the Paris Agreement. The decision is part of the January Agreement, which is based on an agreement between the Social Democratic Party, the Green Party, the Centre Party and the Liberals.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden hosted high-level meeting on industry transition

Published 12 December 2019

The 2019 UN Climate Change Conference (COP25) is currently taking place in Madrid. Last night, Sweden and India hosted the first high-level meeting of the global Leadership Group for Industry Transition, a joint Sweden-India initiative launched earlier this year. The group comprises countries and companies that will work together to accelerate the heavy industry and transport transition. At the meeting, Australia announced that it would be joining the group.

The meeting was chaired by Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin and India's Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar. The meeting was the first opportunity for ministers, companies and other participants to discuss challenges and opportunities presented by the industry transition, and the way forward in this endeavour.

“The heavy industry transition presents both major challenges and major opportunities. But the transition is much more difficult to achieve alone than through private and public partnerships. This is a platform where we can showcase best practice and exchange experience, not least regarding the huge benefits that the transition means for businesses,” says Ms Lövin.

During the meeting, participants offered their views and perspectives on the proposed programme of work, which focuses in particular on activities for 2020. The aim is to present the results of these activities at the climate conference in Glasgow next year.

“The time to act is now. Climate change won’t wait. It would be a great success to be able to present tangible results as early as at COP26 in Glasgow, to show how sectors that represent thirty per cent of global emissions are prepared to make the transition,” says Ms Lövin.

The countries and companies in the group are required to commit to measures to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and agree that all heavy industry sectors should take measures to reduce their emissions and strive to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. They also commit to international collaboration and public-private partnerships to accelerate industry transition.

In addition to Sweden and India, the group comprises Argentina, Australia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, South Korea and the United Kingdom. The companies that have joined the group are: Dalmia Cement, DSM, Heathrow Airport, LKAB, Mahindra Group, Royal Schiphol Group, Scania, SpiceJet, SSAB, Thyssenkrupp and Vattenfall.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden is advocating clear rules and a higher level of ambition

Published 11 December 2019

On 2–13 December, the countries of the world are gathering for the UN Climate Change Conference COP 25 in Madrid under the Presidency of Chile. There the countries will negotiate and decide on future work under the Paris Agreement.

In Paris in 2015, the countries of the world agreed on a new global and legally binding climate agreement with the goal of keeping the global rise in temperature well below two degrees Celsius, and preferably below 1.5 degrees Celsius. During COP 25, the countries will negotiate the final parts of the Paris Agreement ‘rulebook’. This guides how the countries are to plan, communicate, implement and report on their national climate plans, and how follow-up of this work is to be carried out.

The rules that have yet to be agreed deal with international forms of cooperation. Under the Paris Agreement, countries can fulfil parts of their national climate plans by cooperating with other countries. For example, this can be done by one country carrying out climate action in another country or through emissions trading. Cooperation of this kind is intended to help reduce global emissions and strengthen sustainable development.

“It is extremely important that emission reductions take place in reality, and not just on paper. We must therefore have robust rules on how international cooperation is to be reported so that emission reductions cannot be counted twice. It is also important that climate projects carried out in other countries lead to positive developments both for the climate and for the country in which the project is carried out,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

Last year's special report from the IPCC on the 1.5-degree goal showed that the countries' current climate action is far from sufficient to meet that goal. The message that the countries must substantially increase their level of ambition so that it reflects the science has therefore been an integral part of the negotiations in 2019. Sweden is negotiating as part of the EU and has particularly emphasised that the EU should come to COP 25 with a high level of ambition.

“The world is not doing enough to stop the climate emergency and we need to increase the pace. We can negotiate with one another, but we cannot negotiate with the climate,” says Ms Lövin.

Through its Presidency, Chile has stated that it wants to highlight the climate's impact on the oceans. Sweden welcomes this decision, and has long worked to strengthen the link between oceans and the climate, including by co-chairing the Ocean Pathway initiative.

Sweden's negotiating team will be led by Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin. Sweden's chief negotiator is Mattias Frumerie.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Isabella Lövin chaired high-level meeting on chemicals and waste at COP25

Published 11 December 2019

The High Ambition Alliance meeting on Chemicals and Waste took place today in Madrid under the leadership of Sweden and Uruguay. The meeting discussed the way forward for an ambitious global framework for chemicals and waste management. The current global chemicals strategy runs until 2020.

“Every year, countless people die prematurely from exposure to hazardous substances. Dangerous chemicals are also being found in unborn babies. This is frightening, and we need global action to tackle this problem. That’s why Sweden launched a high ambition alliance to move efforts forward,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The High Ambition Alliance meeting was held in connection with COP25, the UN climate change conference currently taking place in Madrid. Ms Lövin co-chaired the meeting with her Uruguayan counterpart, Eneida de León.

“Issues related to chemicals cannot be dealt with as national issues. Global trade and private imports mean that goods cross borders in ways that pose new challenges for how we regulate hazardous chemicals,” says Ms Lövin.

According to ILO estimates, two million workers die prematurely every year (three workers per minute) due to exposure to toxic chemicals, pesticides, radiation and other hazardous substances. This highlights the urgent need for countries around the world to find common solutions for a non-toxic

environment.

Background

The High Ambition Alliance for Chemicals and Waste is a Swedish initiative created in New York in 2018 by some 20 countries, a number of UN organisations and agencies. Through this Alliance, Sweden is strengthening its leadership and catalytic role in global environmental action. This increases the likelihood of reaching our national environmental quality objective of a non-toxic environment, the generational goal, and SDG target 12.4 on chemicals and waste, whose target year is 2020.

At present, there is no clear process for dealing with target 12.4 after 2020. The current global Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) runs until 2020. The High Ambition Alliance is pushing to ensure that the ongoing negotiating process under SAICM will lead to the world's countries adopting a new global framework for chemicals management in October next year.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden moving the global environment and climate agenda forward together with the UN Environment Programme

Published 05 December 2019

On 5 December 2019, the Government adopted a new strategy for Sweden's partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for 2020–2023. The strategy is guided by the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

“Through our support to UNEP, we want to strengthen the UN’s role in the environmental area and intergovernmental environmental cooperation. In times when global cooperation is being called into question, it is more important than ever to strengthen these institutions and stand up for the value of our joint efforts,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

UNEP is a key cooperation partner in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Sweden urges UNEP to take global leadership in areas including biodiversity, climate and air, chemicals and waste, and oceans, coastal areas and water. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, UNEP and countries around the world must harness the potential inherent in synergies between these areas, such as links between environment and health.

“We want UNEP to highlight the 50th anniversary of the 1972 Stockholm Conference – the first ever environmental conference – in a way that moves the environment and climate agenda forward. The world is facing major environmental challenges, and we see this as an opportunity to tackle them

together,” says Ms Lövin.

Over the next few years, several crucial decisions regarding the environment will be taken at global level. Sweden wants UNEP to actively promote the adoption of two new, ambitious global frameworks in 2020 – one for biodiversity and one for chemicals and waste. Sweden also wants UNEP to drive progress towards a global agreement on regulations on marine littering, plastics and microplastics.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden will continue working for the ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement

Published 07 November 2019

The United States announced earlier this week that it has now issued formal notification of withdrawal from the climate agreement signed in Paris in 2015. Since the United States first announced that it would give notification of withdrawal, a further 40 countries have joined the Paris Agreement.

“I truly regret the decision of the United States to begin the process of withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, by arguing that it is somehow unfair to the United States. This is not true. The agreement applies to all countries throughout the world. The countries that can talk about unfairness are the poorest countries that have not become rich off of the use of fossil fuels, but that are hardest hit by the consequences of the climate crisis,” says Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin.

Sweden and the European Union will continue to take the lead in international climate efforts, and for the ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement. At the UN Climate Action Summit in New York in September this year, Sweden announced that it will double its support to the Green Climate Fund and launched a Leadership Group for Industry Transition led by India and Sweden.

“Sweden will continue to work with all of the states, cities, corporations and sections of civil society in the United States that continue to have high climate ambitions,” says Ms Lövin.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden launches global leadership group to reduce industry emissions

Published 24 September 2019

Sweden and India have launched a global leadership group to push the climate transition in heavy industry. The initiative was presented by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven during the UN Climate Action Summit in New York.

- Substantially reducing emissions from heavy industry is crucial if we are to be able to attain the goals of the Paris Agreement. In Sweden, we have come a long way in our industry transition, and co-leading this work gives us the opportunity to share our experiences and help accelerate the transition, says Mr Löfven.

The leadership group has been developed in cooperation with the World Economic Forum and will gather both private and public actors. The countries and companies that join the group must be ready to substantially raise and pursue efforts to reach net-zero carbon emissions by mid-century. This will be guaranteed through a series of ambitious commitments that the members of the leadership group must support. The leadership group will also work to promote innovation and technology exchange, and share experiences of how governments, academic institutions and businesses can cooperate to push the transition. The group will have regular meetings to report on progress and share experiences, including in connection with the UN's climate negotiations.

- Only by working together can we solve the climate challenge. This is how we are working on industry transition in Sweden, and this is an opportunity

to share this cooperation throughout the world. Industry transition is crucial to stopping climate change, says Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin.

In addition to Sweden and India, Argentina, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, South Korea and the United Kingdom have joined the group. Several international companies have also joined, including Indian Dalmia Cement and the German steel group ThyssenKrupp. Among the Swedish companies in the leadership group are Scania, which is conducting a project to develop fossil-free heavy goods vehicle transports and SSAB, LKAB and Vattenfall, which, through their jointly owned company HYBRIT, are conducting a project to make steel without using coking coal.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment,
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Government to take part in opening of UN General Assembly 17–30 September

Published 20 September 2019

Next week, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister, Isabella Lövin, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde and Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson will travel to New York for the opening of the UN General Assembly.

Sweden's priorities during the week are to stand up for international cooperation with focus on the UN, work to tackle the challenge of climate change, intensify implementation of the 2030 Agenda and contribute to finding solutions to conflicts and humanitarian crises, such as those in Yemen, Venezuela and Syria. The week is also an opportunity to highlight democracy and gender equality issues, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and to continue work on disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Prime Minister Löfven will attend the opening of the General Assembly, take part in the Climate Action Summit where Sweden is co-chair of the industry track, and take part in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit. He will also attend an event celebrating the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, Mr Löfven will take part in a roundtable discussion with US business executives and a conference entitled 'The Future of Work'.

Ms Lövin will take part in the Climate Action Summit, the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDG) Summit and the high-level meeting on universal health coverage. Ms Lövin will be in New York on 20–25 September.

Ms Linde will take part in the opening of the General Assembly, a high -level event on climate and security and a high-level meeting on the elimination of nuclear weapons (Article IV, Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty). Ms Linde will also co-host a meeting on the situation in Yemen. In addition, she will host a meeting on women, peace and leadership and, together with South Korea, co-organise the annual dinner for female foreign ministers. Ms Linde will deliver Sweden's address in the General Assembly. Ms Linde will be in New York on 22–28 September.

Mr Eriksson will take part in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit, the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development and the High-level Review of the SAMOA Pathway, as well as meetings on Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria. In addition, his programme will focus on humanitarian issues, climate financing, women's rights, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Mr Eriksson will be in New York on 23–27 September.

All the ministers will also take part in a number of bilateral meetings with counterparts from other countries and UN representatives.

For more information and detailed programmes, please contact the relevant minister's press secretary.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Bonus car initiative and protection of valuable natural environments

Published 11 September 2019

It its autumn amending budget for 2019, the Government proposes that more money should be invested this year in the protection of valuable natural environments and in a climate bonus for cars with very low emissions. The Government's proposal for the autumn amending budget is based on an agreement between the Government, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

“The Government wants to step up the pace of efforts to protect valuable natural environments this year. We therefore propose providing additional funds that reduce the negative impact of the cutbacks made in the budget adopted by the Riksdag,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

In the spring amending budget for 2019, the Government increased the appropriation for the protection and preservation of valuable natural environments. Despite these additional funds, there are a number of cases involving nature reserves where the landowner has still not received compensation. To facilitate these payments, and since further measures for the protection and preservation of valuable natural environments are needed, additional funds must be added to the appropriation. The Government therefore considers that the appropriation for the protection of valuable natural environments should be increased by SEK 200 million in the autumn amending budget.

Furthermore, the Government proposes that in the autumn amending budget,

the climate bonus for cars in the bonus-malus system be increased by SEK 100 million in 2019 since the need for funds is greater than previously estimated, in part because the sale of climate bonus cars increased more than was previously expected.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Improved and safer hiking trails to make the natural environment accessible to more people

Published 11 September 2019

Sweden's fantastic natural environment is to be made accessible to more people. The Government is now proposing to enhance the work on hiking trails as well as a special investment in preparations for the Outdoor Activities Year 2021. The Budget Bill builds on an agreement between the Government, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

“Sweden has a fantastic natural environment that everyone should have access to. It is therefore important to invest in making it more accessible. The Government is now proposing investments in improving hiking trails in the mountains,” says Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin.

Through previous Government investments, improvement of the state hiking trail system in the mountains has begun. In recent years, for example, 257 bridges have been replaced or repaired, 90 shelters taken care of and markings on 2 000 kilometres of trails improved. The state hiking trail system in the mountains will continue to be improved and added to. The Government is proposing an investment of SEK 20 million per year in 2020–2022. State trails in the mountains increase accessibility and provide better conditions, security and safety for outdoor activities and nature tourism.

The Government considers that a special investment in outdoor recreation organisations is needed ahead of the implementation of the Outdoor Activities Year 2021 – a year when there will be a special focus on various

types of outdoor activities. The Government is therefore proposing an investment of SEK 3 million for 2020.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

SEK 70 million to benefit pollinating insects

Published 11 September 2019

Pollination is a very important ecosystem service that contributes to the production of food. In the Budget Bill for 2020, the Government is proposing a total of SEK 70 million per year in 2020–2022 for measures to benefit pollinating insects. The Budget Bill builds on an agreement between the Government, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Pollination is a very important ecosystem service – a service carried out by honey bees and other organisms in the natural environment, and one that humans totally depend on. In the Budget Bill for 2020, the Government is therefore proposing a package of measures over three years for pollinating insects.

“Around a third of the food we eat in the world depends on pollinating insects. Many of these species are today classed as threatened in Sweden. In light of this, it is the responsibility of the Government to take forceful measures. This is why we are now going ahead with a package of measures for pollinating insects in the Budget Bill for 2020,” says Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin.

To secure the pollination of plants, society needs more information on the status and significance of pollinating insects. Many actors in society can contribute to securing the survival of pollinating insects.

The package of measures includes enhancing the work on pollinating insects in environmental monitoring with SEK 20 million. It also includes increasing the appropriation Measures for valuable natural environments by SEK 50

million for the work carried out by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, in cooperation with other agencies and organisations, to benefit pollinating insects.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Infrastructure

Government proposes faster pace for climate efforts

Published 11 September 2019

The pace of climate efforts needs to speed up if Sweden is to meet its climate objectives. The Government is therefore proposing increased investments for the climate transition of the industrial and transport sectors. The Budget Bill builds on an agreement between the Government, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Green Industry Leap

The Green Industry Leap supports the industrial sector's transition to zero emissions through technological advances. This is a necessity if Sweden is to achieve the goal of net zero emissions by 2045. To support the industrial sector's transition away from fossil fuels, the Government is proposing a further strengthening of the Green Industry Leap compared with 2019. It represents a doubling of the appropriation compared with 2018, from SEK 300 million in 2018 to SEK 600 million in 2020.

“Sweden has a unique opportunity to be a climate forerunner with a green and successful industrial sector that inspires others to follow suit. And we should seize that opportunity. Through the Green Industry Leap we are taking the lead and showing the way to becoming the world's first fossil-free welfare nation, a path that other countries are inspired by,” says Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin.

The Climate Leap

The Climate Leap is a local investment programme that has contributed

funds to more than 3 200 projects throughout Sweden. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency expects it to lead to emission reductions equivalent to more than 1.45 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. The programme is important for creating significant emission reductions in all sectors of society and complements other policy instruments such as the carbon dioxide tax. The Government is proposing that the appropriation for climate investments be increased by SEK 1.16 billion, which means it will amount to almost SEK 2 billion for 2020.

New climate premium for electric lorries

To achieve the goal of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases from domestic transport (except aviation) by at least 70 per cent by 2030, compared with 2010 levels, a comprehensive and rapid transition of the vehicle fleet to low-emission vehicles is required. Electrification is an important part of these efforts. The market introduction of electric vehicles is needed in several sectors.

“It is important that all branches are involved and contribute to the Swedish climate transition. By providing support for electrically powered mobile mechanised equipment in the agricultural sector, for example, we help the whole of society to transition to a fossil-free and climate-smart future,” says Ms Lövin.

This is why a new climate premium for electric lorries and electrically powered mobile mechanised equipment is proposed. It is proposed that the premium be combined with the previous electric bus premium, and that the combined appropriation for these climate premiums be increased by SEK 20 million for 2020 to a total of SEK 120 million.

“Sweden will be the world’s first fossil-free welfare nation. The climate premium for electric lorries is a great example of how this journey is possible. Because the whole transport sector needs to adjust and become climate-smart,” says Minister for Infrastructure Tomas Eneroth.

Goods transports at sea

In addition, the Government is also proposing that the eco-bonus scheme be extended, with SEK 50 million per year until 2022. The bonus is intended to hasten the shift of goods transports from roads to shipping.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Finance

Major investments in valuable natural environments in Government's Budget Bill

Published 10 September 2019

The Government is now proposing to enhance the work for Sweden's valuable natural environments through investments in the protection of forests, more monitoring of the situation in natural environments and more robust efforts against eutrophication. The Budget Bill builds on an agreement between the Government, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

“Climate change and the rapid loss of species on Earth is taking place here and now, and this also affects us here in Sweden. We cannot leave these enormous problems to our children; need to take responsibility here and now. This is why we are again proposing historically large investments in both the environment and climate,” says Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin.

Clean sea and water

“The sea, lakes and our watercourses give us life and sustenance. It is therefore incredibly serious when parts of Sweden are affected by recurring water shortages, and lakes and the sea are polluted and become eutrophic, and when biological diversity is reduced. This is why the Government is investing in helping our sea and waters recover through the important ‘Rent hav’ (clean sea) initiative,” says Ms Lövin.

It is the Government's view that the pace of work on reaching the marine

and water-related environmental quality objectives needs to increase. The Government is therefore proposing SEK 240 million for efforts to combat eutrophication in 2020. As part of the clean sea and water investment, the Government is also proposing that work on clearing polluted sediment and environmentally hazardous wrecks be strengthened with an extra SEK 65 million in 2020, which also includes international action on chemicals.

Environmental monitoring is crucial for following the work on achieving Sweden's environmental objectives. Environmental monitoring provides information for making well-founded decisions. The Government is therefore investing SEK 80 million in environmental monitoring of sea and waters.

Protection and management of valuable natural environments

It is a clear ambition of the Government that forests that are worthy of protection should not be felled, but conserved – either through formal protection or through voluntary set-asides. The resources for the protection of valuable natural environments will be secured, which is why the Government is proposing an extra SEK 200 million for 2020 so that the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and county administrative boards can strengthen the efforts to protect valuable forests.

“We need to take care of the natural environment so that it can take care of us. The Government wants more valuable natural environments to be protected and more important wetlands to be restored. This is why we want to make major investments in the protection and management of valuable natural environments,” says Minister for Financial Markets and Housing, and Deputy Minister for Finance Per Bolund.

The Government is also going ahead with an investment of SEK 400 million for 2020 to strengthen the management of nature reserves and national parks. The investment also aims to strengthen the work against invasive species, the preservation of endangered species, game management, and the restoration and construction of wetlands.

It is important that the county administrative boards have the appropriate conditions for conducting supervision and supervision guidance under the Environmental Code. The Government is therefore proposing that the county administrative boards' administrative appropriation increases by SEK 42 million to strengthen their work on environmental supervision.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Government to consider the permissibility of Preem's planned operations in Lysekil

Published 26 August 2019

Following notification from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Government has decided to consider whether the operations that Preem AB wants to expand at Preemraff Lysekil should be permitted. This is in light of the major climate-related emissions that can be expected as a result of the planned operations.

The Riksdag has adopted a climate framework that includes new climate goals and a Climate Act. The long-term goal is for Sweden to achieve net-zero emissions by 2045, and negative emissions thereafter.

“The climate is a priority issue for the Government, which means that we must maintain a stable climate policy. Ultimately, this is about ensuring that the Government has various options with which to achieve the climate goals adopted by the Riksdag. We must now use all means available to us as we strive towards those ambitious goals. This is our responsibility towards ourselves and our children,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

During the summer, the Government received notification from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland that the operations for which Preem AB is seeking an environmental permit are such that the Government may consider whether they should be permitted. Under the Environmental Code, the Government may consider the permissibility of such operations if they can be expected to be substantial or intrusive in relation to the possibility of pursuing sustainable

development, which includes a limited climate impact.

“During the summer, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, with the support of the County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland, notified the Government of an application for expanded operations. The Government therefore wishes to consider whether or not these operations can be permitted,” says Ms Lövin.

In November 2018, the Land and Environment Court granted Preemraff a new permit. This permit was appealed against to the Land and Environment Court of Appeal, which decided to suspend the permit in December 2018. This means that no further measures to enforce the judgment of the Land and Environment Court may be taken until another decision is taken.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

International support for new chemicals framework

Published 14 March 2019 Updated 13 March 2019

Today, Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin and Uruguay's Minister of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment Eneida de León co-chaired a meeting of the High Ambition Alliance on Chemicals and Waste, with representatives from a number of countries and organisations. Participants agreed on a joint statement to work together for a new, ambitious global framework for chemicals and waste to be adopted in 2020.

Only a few chemicals are currently regulated at global level, and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) expires in 2020. It is also clear that the Sustainable Development Goal for chemicals will not be achieved by 2020.

“Sweden wants to see an ambitious global framework that eliminates the most hazardous chemicals. It is also important that we receive better information about chemicals in products. My ambition is for an alliance of countries to take the lead to advance global negotiations,” says Ms Lövin.

The High Ambition Alliance was launched by Sweden and Uruguay in July 2018 to advance global efforts to reduce the risks to health and the environment. Today's meeting took place at the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4) in Nairobi, Kenya.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release

The ministers' press contacts

Published 22 January 2019

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Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Government Offices

New state secretaries at the Government Offices

Published 22 January 2019

The Government today appointed 31 state secretaries at the Government Offices. Former state secretaries have been dismissed from their positions. Most of the state secretaries have previously held corresponding positions at the Government Offices.

Prime Minister's Office

The Government has appointed Nils Vikmång as the Prime Minister's State Secretary. The Government has also appointed Madeleine Harby Samuelsson and Karin Wallensteen as state secretaries to Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The Government has appointed Paula Carvalho Olovsson as State Secretary to Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

The Government has appointed Mats Andersson and Maria Ferm as state secretaries in the coordinating committee at the Prime Minister's Office.

Ministry of Employment

The Government has appointed Annika Dahl as State Secretary to Minister for Employment Ylva Johansson.

The Government has appointed Karin Strandås as State Secretary to Minister

for Gender Equality, with responsibility for anti-discrimination and anti-segregation, Åsa Lindhagen.

Ministry of Finance

The Government has appointed Max Elger and Leif Jacobsson as state secretaries to Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson.

The Government has appointed Ulf Holm and Elin Olsson as state secretaries to Minister for Financial Markets and Housing, Deputy Minister for Finance, Per Bolund.

The Government has appointed Alejandro Firpo as State Secretary to Minister for Public Administration Ardalan Shekarabi.

Ministry of Defence

The Government has appointed Jan-Olof Lind as State Secretary to Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

Ministry of Infrastructure

The Government has appointed Mattias Landgren as State Secretary to Minister for Infrastructure Tomas Eneroth.

The Government has appointed Sebastian De Toro as State Secretary to Minister for Energy and Digital Development Anders Ygeman.

Ministry of Justice

The Government has appointed Catharina Espmark and Lars Westbratt as state secretaries to Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson.

The Government has appointed Elisabeth Backteman as State Secretary to Minister for Home Affairs Mikael Damberg.

Ministry of Culture

The Government has appointed Helene Öberg as State Secretary to Minister for Culture and Democracy, with responsibility for sport, Amanda Lind.

Ministry of the Environment

The Government has appointed Eva Svedling and Gunvor Ericson as state secretaries to Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister, Isabella Lövin.

Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

The Government has appointed Stina Billinger and Emil Högberg as state secretaries to Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan.

The Government has appointed Per Callenberg as State Secretary to Minister for Rural Affairs Jennie Nilsson.

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

The Government has appointed Maja Fjaestad as State Secretary to Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren.

Ministry of Education and Research

The Government has appointed Erik Nilsson as State Secretary to Minister for Education Anna Ekström.

The Government has appointed Malin Cederfeldt Östberg as State Secretary to Minister for Higher Education and Research Matilda Ernkrans.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Government has appointed Annika Söder as State Secretary for Foreign Affairs to Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

The Government has appointed Per Olsson Fridh as State Secretary to Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

The Government has appointed Niklas Johansson as State Secretary to Minister for Foreign Trade, with responsibility for Nordic affairs, Ann Linde.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Paris Agreement ‘rulebook’ adopted at climate conference in Katowice

Published 18 December 2018

Over the course of two weeks, the UN Climate Change Conference, COP24, has been under way in Katowice, where the focus has been on the formulation of the Paris Agreement ‘rulebook’. At overtime, the countries succeeded in agreeing on a common regulatory framework that will govern how they implement their climate efforts under the Paris Agreement.

The result means that there is now a robust and long-term regulatory framework on how the countries are to plan, communicate, implement, report and follow up their commitments under the Paris Agreement. There are also rules on how to follow up the world's global climate effort and how it correspond to the global goals of the Paris Agreement. The Paris Agreement contains the requirement that there be rules, and that these rules be developed and decided at this year's conference of the parties. The countries have now fortunately succeeded in delivering this regulatory framework.

“It is very positive that a common, robust and balanced rulebook has now been successfully decided, where the countries are to continuously improve their climate efforts. That almost 200 countries have agreed on such strong rules in today's geopolitical climate is a success and demonstrates the strength of the Paris Agreement,” says Minister for Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin, who led the Swedish delegation in Katowice.

The only thing that the countries did not manage to negotiate in time were

rules for joint forms of cooperation to limit Climate Change. These concern, for example, how countries are to be able to implement climate measures in other countries, and how countries can trade emission rights with each other. Countries will now continue to negotiate these issues next year instead.

“We had of course hoped that we would succeed in taking a decision on this too, but there was simply not enough time to resolve many of the technical and political issues surrounding these rules. At the same time, we believe it is better to continue to develop this next year rather than adopt weak rules. It is important that the use of cooperation mechanisms actually lead to real emission reductions, and rigorous rules are therefore needed on how to count these and enter them in the books,” says Ms Lövin.

Support to developing countries

Support and Climate funding to developing countries were a crunch issue in the negotiations. One of the cornerstones of the Paris Agreement is that rich countries are to lead the way and reduce their emissions, while supporting developing countries in their transition. A difficult issue has been that the developing countries want to know in advance what support the richer countries will contribute so that they can incorporate this in their planning.

It is, in essence, a question of trust. The developing countries want to know how much support they will receive for a certain time to come. Donor countries like Sweden are trying to resolve this with their annual budget processes and the fact that we change government on a regular basis.

The parties have agreed rules for this and also that every four years, from 2020, an assessment will be carried out of what support the developing countries require in order to implement the Paris Agreement.

Isabella Lövin mediated in a sensitive issue

A controversy that arose during the meeting on how the countries should receive the special report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius has received a great deal of attention. Most countries wanted to see a clear welcoming of the report, whereas Saudi Arabia, the United States, Russia and Kuwait only wanted the report to be noted.

The Polish chair therefore gave Ms Lövin the task of leading the talks between the countries to try to find a solution. Despite the fact that it initially seemed clear that it would be difficult to achieve consensus, a joint formulation was agreed in the end.

“The starting point of talks was to depoliticise the science and content of this important report. The countries have now agreed that we should be guided by the best science available, and acknowledged that the report represents the best science we have right now,” says Ms Lövin.

The task also included leading talks on how the countries are to handle the outcome of the Talanoa Dialogue. During the dialogue, countries have evaluated how global climate efforts correspond to the 1.5 degree Celsius goal, and how ambitions can be raised.

“The Talanoa Dialogue gave visibility to much of the climate efforts taking place throughout the world, and have shown examples of how ambitions can be raised. The countries wanted to highlight this in the decision text. However, no new decisions on how the results should be used were considered necessary. This is because the Paris Agreement already states that the dialogue is to guide countries when they develop their national climate plans,” says Ms Lövin.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Chair of the Climate Change Conference gives Isabella Lövin special assignment to lead talks between countries

Published 12 December 2018 Updated 12 December 2018

The UN Climate Change Conference, COP24, is currently under way in Katowice, Poland. Since Monday, the high-level segment of the conference has been under way, with negotiations at minister level. On Wednesday, the Polish chair announced that Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin would be given a special assignment to lead the talks between countries.

As part of her assignment, Ms Lövin will lead talks on how countries are to approach the results of the IPCC's latest special report on global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius. The report states that the ambition in global climate efforts must be raised considerably, if we are to meet the Paris Agreement's goal of keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees. Ms Lövin will also lead talks on how countries are to address the results of the Talanoa Dialogue, in which countries discuss how global climate efforts correspond to the 1.5 degree goal and how the ambition can be raised.

"I am honoured to have been given this assignment by the Polish chair. It will be a challenge to get all of the countries to agree on a common response to the results in the IPCC report and how we, together, can raise the ambition of global climate efforts. The report makes it abundantly clear that what is being done today is far from sufficient," says Ms Lövin.

The assignment will be shared with Costa Rica's Minister of Environment and Energy Carlos Manuel Rodríguez.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden positive on EU long-term climate strategy

Published 29 November 2018

The European Commission has presented its strategic long-term climate vision for the EU. Sweden takes a positive view of the level of ambition in the strategy, with its aim of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The proposed EU strategic long-term climate vision contains scenarios showing how different sectors of society can contribute to achieving EU climate targets. The Commission strategy states that the EU should have net-zero atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The strategy is in line with the high level of ambition that Sweden has lobbied for.

“It is an important and positive step that the Commission’s proposal clearly points to net-zero emissions by 2050, and also that it highlights the benefits to all of society offered by such a transition. The EU must lead the way in the implementation of the Paris Agreement and should do whatever is necessary to restrict global warming,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The Government will now analyse the Commission’s proposal. Negotiations with the other EU Member States will then begin in the Council of Ministers. Under the Paris Agreement, the EU is expected to adopt a final version of the long-term climate strategy by 2020 and submit it to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat.

“The IPCC Special Report on 1.5 Degrees shows that the whole world needs to increase the level of ambition if we are to prevent the worst consequences of a warmer climate. The latest UNEP Emissions Gap Report reinforces the impression that this must be done urgently,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

By 2045, Sweden will have net zero emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and should thereafter achieve negative emissions. Sweden operates in accordance with the Paris Agreement on the rising aspirations of all countries' climate efforts.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government approves support to Global Environment Facility

Published 12 October 2018

The Government today decided to contribute more than SEK 2 billion to the seventh replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-7). Sweden will thereby increase its contribution to the GEF by more than 50 per cent for the period 2018–2022, compared with 2014–2018. This makes Sweden the sixth largest donor overall and the largest per capita donor. In total, replenishment pledges total SEK 34 billion (USD 4.1 billion). This decision reflects what was announced by the Government in the Budget Bill for 2018.

“The support to the Global Environment Facility is expected to help double global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. With this decision, Sweden will remain a leading voice in global environment and climate action,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The implementation of GEF-7 will increase integration and strengthen synergies in global climate and environment action, and increase action on biodiversity, chemicals and waste and the ocean, and enhance efforts to combat marine littering and plastic pollution. Partnership with the private sector is crucial, and will generate leverage to make more resources available to achieve global climate and environmental goals.

“Global cooperation is crucial if we are to meet the challenges facing us in the area of the environment. This applies not least to chemicals, where we see great opportunities to phase out mercury and other particularly

hazardous substances. Sweden's support for the Global Environment Facility is thus important for the future," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

Over the next four-year period (2018–2022), the agreed GEF-7 replenishment is expected to lead to:

- doubled emissions reductions; better management for almost 50 per cent more environments on land and close to water;
- more than 100 000 tonnes of persistent organic pollutants, mercury and other hazardous chemicals being phased out; and
- almost four tonnes of the world's most overexploited fish stocks approaching more sustainable levels.

The GEF was established in 1991 with the mandate to contribute to global environmental public goods through financial support to environmental and climate action in developing countries. It serves as a joint financial mechanism for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and four global environmental conventions: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), and the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

To date, the GEF has paid out more than USD 14.5 billion in grants and mobilised USD 75 billion in co-financing to more than 4 000 projects in 183 countries.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden's view of EU negotiating mandate for COP24

Published 09 October 2018

On 9 October, the EU climate ministers are due to agree on the EU's negotiating mandate for the next international climate negotiations. Sweden considers that the EU must work for an ambitious, robust and dynamic framework to implement the Paris Agreement.

At the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24) in December in Katowice, Poland, the UN Member States will adopt a joint framework to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement. At COP24, the Talanoa Dialogue will offer the first opportunity since the 2015 Paris climate conference for countries to evaluate how global climate action corresponds to the 1.5 degree Celsius goal and how ambitions can be raised. At the meeting of the Environment Council on 9 October, the EU climate ministers will adopt council conclusions on the EU's negotiating mandate for COP24.

“The research speaks for itself. The world must transition at an unprecedented pace if we are to avoid the most serious effects of climate change. Sweden considers that the EU, as a leader in global climate action, must rise to the challenge,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

Sweden considers that the draft council conclusions offer a good basis for a proactive EU stance at COP24. Sweden also wants to see a clear position taken ensuring that the EU will review its nationally determined contributions (NDCs) before 2020, in light of the results of the Talanoa Dialogue and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden launches new research collaboration for climate and security

Published 30 August 2018 Updated 30 August 2018

A new research collaboration for climate and security will be launched today in connection with World Water Week in Stockholm. The Stockholm Climate Security Hub brings together four Swedish research institutes that are world leaders in the area of climate and security. The aim is to promote knowledge development and policy dialogue in the area, not least to support the UN and other multilateral actors with evidence-based analyses.

The Stockholm Climate Security Hub comprises four world-class organisations in the area of climate and security: the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and the Stockholm Resilience Centre (SRC). The initiative is financed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

“To address climate change and its effects, political decisions need to be based on facts. Security around the world will be affected, and greater knowledge is needed about exactly what forms these climate-related security risks will take and what we should do to deal with them. This is where Sweden can contribute,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

Highlighting the link between climate and security has been a priority for the

Government. The negative effects of climate change – such as rising sea levels, flooding and long-term drought – can aggravate social unrest and instability by affecting people's access to water and food, their livelihoods and migration.

“We need to draw more attention to the link between climate and conflict. This is a priority issue for Sweden to promote peace and security internationally, not least in the UN Security Council. The Hub will be able to support the UN and other multilateral actors by providing the latest knowledge to contribute to more effective and evidence-based decision-making,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

New strategy for Sweden's cooperation with UN Women

Published 24 August 2018

The Government has adopted a new strategy for Sweden's cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) for the period 2018–2022. Sweden is a major donor to UN Women, which promotes gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and rights worldwide, at global, regional and national level. Swedish core support to UN Women will amount to SEK 536 million during the four-year strategy period.

"UN Women is a leading global advocate for gender equality. Its work is central to women's and girls' rights worldwide, so it is important that Sweden provides long-term support to the organisation," says Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate. "UN Women has helped a total of 52 countries, with a total population of more than 1.5 billion women and girls, to strengthen their legislation on violence against women and girls, including to combat impunity for gender-related and sexual violence. Furthermore, without UN Women we would not have an action plan for the gender-equal implementation of the Paris Agreement," says Ms Lövin.

During the strategy period, Sweden will primarily work to strengthen UN Women's efforts to develop and implement global norms, policies and standards for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, including women's and girls' full enjoyment of their human rights. Sweden will also work to see UN Women strengthen women's economic empowerment and political leadership, participation and influence, and help

all women and girls live free from violence. Furthermore, Sweden will work to see the organisation help strengthen the influence and meaningful participation of women and girls in peace processes, and integrate a clear gender perspective into humanitarian operations.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

One-year anniversary of the UN Ocean Conference – renewed initiatives to save the world's oceans

Published 19 June 2018

In connection with the one-year anniversary of the UN Ocean Conference in New York co-chaired by Sweden and Fiji, the Government has decided to finance a number of new international ocean projects. To continue demonstrating leadership, the Government is allocating a further SEK 80 million to contribute to improving the global marine environment.

"Action for clean and healthy oceans is a government priority. The Ocean Conference was a breakthrough for global ocean action and now it's a matter of implementing the impressive to-do list drawn up by governments, business and other stakeholders. These initiatives will contribute to this action," says Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate.

The Government's global ocean action focuses on four areas: reducing the impact of climate change on the oceans, reducing marine litter, reducing destructive and illegal fishing and strengthening the protection of marine areas.

The SEK 80 million will go to a total of 15 different international projects, related in various ways to the four priorities. Continued efforts to reduce marine litter is a particular focus area the Government is working actively in, both nationally and internationally.

"Plastics in the oceans is a huge problem. But since the Ocean Conference, things have begun to happen. More and more countries are addressing the unsustainable use of single-use plastic, the use of intentionally added microplastics in a range of products, and the need to rid beaches and coastal areas of plastic waste. A great deal remains to be done, but there is hope," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.



Press release from Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Government adopts Sweden's action plan for the 2030 Agenda

Published 18 June 2018

The Government can now present Sweden's action plan for the 2030 Agenda. Through the action plan, the Government intends to reinforce efforts to implement the Agenda and make it clear how government agencies and other actors in society can contribute.

Sweden's action plan contains key political measures for the years 2018–2020. It also highlights six cross-sectoral focus areas based on the proposal the 2030 Agenda delegation presented to the Government on 1 June 2017. The six areas the action plan focuses on are: social equality and gender equality, a sustainable society, a socially beneficial, circular and bio-based economy, a strong business sector with corporate social responsibility, a sustainable and healthy food chain, and knowledge and innovation.

"The Government is now presenting the overall policy that will keep Sweden a leader in the transition to sustainable development. The key for this to succeed is broad participation throughout society towards the common goals. The action plan is intended to make it easier for many different actors to help in implementing the Agenda," says Minister for Public Administration Ardalan Shekarabi.

The 2030 Agenda and its 17 global goals for sustainable development is a detailed agenda that was adopted by all UN Member States in September 2015. The agenda and the goals are to guide the way for both the UN and the world's countries, with the aim of jointly achieving development that is socially, environmentally and economically sustainable. The action plan now adopted is based on a national perspective, but also covers Sweden's contribution to global implementation.

"The 2030 Agenda is an action plan towards a sustainable world. Sweden's aid will help achieve the Global Goals. Sweden is showing its serious engagement in areas such as climate, gender equality and feminist foreign policy," says, Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister.

The Government recently adopted the 'Strategy for capacity development, partnership and methods' in the context of international development cooperation. This strategy supports the 2030 Agenda through capacity development, cooperation and partnership with a range of actors, and development of methods and working practices. It will also strengthen and broaden the Swedish resource base.

Tasks assigned to several government agencies

A central idea in the action plan is to encourage partnerships between the public sector, the knowledge-based society, the business sector and civil society. In connection with the decision to adopt the action plan, the Government also assigned a number of tasks to various government agencies.

- Statistics Sweden has been tasked with setting up a national monitoring system by coordinating the development and production of statistics on Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and making these statistics available.
- The National Financial Management Authority will examine the need for additional requirements concerning sustainability reports from government agencies.
- The Swedish Agency for Public Management will analyse and monitor work by government agencies on the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- Local implementation will be facilitated through voluntary key indicators for municipalities and county councils based on the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.
- A new government inquiry will be tasked with facilitating the creation of more values-based public partnerships.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden signs multiyear agreement with UN Central Emergency Response Fund

Published 14 June 2018 Updated 14 June 2018

Today, Sweden entered into a new multiyear agreement to support the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). With this support, Sweden is consolidating its position as one of the largest donors to the fund.

"CERF plays an absolutely crucial role in ensuring that fast and effective measures are taken during the early and most critical stages of a humanitarian crisis. This is why it is important that this four-year agreement gives the organisation the right conditions to do its work," says Minister for International Development and Climate Isabella Lövin.

Sweden's agreement with CERF was signed in connection with the visit to Stockholm today by Mark Lowcock, Emergency Relief Coordinator and head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). CERF is handled by OCHA.

"As a strong partner in humanitarian policy and a generous financial contributor, Sweden's role is central to meeting the urgent needs of crisis-affected people. This flexible, predictable and long-term contribution will help get life-saving assistance to the people who need it the most," says Mark Lowcock.

"When a humanitarian disaster occurs, relief efforts must begin immediately to save lives. Aid organisations should not have to contact different countries for financing support because this delays the critical relief effort in its most important phase. This is why CERF is invaluable," says Ms Lövin.

Sweden's support to CERF amounts to SEK 695 million this year, and Sweden has been the second largest donor since CERF was established. In line with Sweden's overarching priority to enter into multiyear agreements with the UN's funds, programmes and specialised agencies, a multiyear agreement for CERF has been drawn up for the period 2018–2021. Other humanitarian organisations are the WFP, UNRWA and UNHCR. The total amount covered by the four-year agreement is SEK 2.78 billion.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government wants to welcome US guest environment and climate researchers

Published 23 May 2018

Climate change is one of the Government's top-three issues, alongside jobs and education. The Government has adopted a guest researcher programme under which US environment and climate researchers can be invited to conduct research in Sweden for a period of up to three years.

"The Government gives high priority to climate change, and is concerned at the reduced importance of climate- and environment-related research in the US. Research is needed to chart the impact of climate change on society, develop adaptation measures, find effective measures to reduce emissions, and transition to a fossil-free circular economy," says Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate.

"This programme can help strengthen our cooperation with the US in an area that we are seeing is growing. Sweden already conducts prominent research in this area, but through this programme we can bring in more highly competent researchers," says Helene Hellmark Knutsson, Minister for Higher Education and Research.

The research policy bill, presented in the second half of last year, earmarked funds to tackle various societal challenges. One of these is climate change and the environment. The programme is not just a Swedish contribution to international environment and climate research – it will also boost Swedish research in this area. Marshalling resources and expertise through

international research cooperation is often an effective way to produce results and obtain a good overview of an area.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Canada to co-chair the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

Published 07 May 2018

This is a press release published by both the Government of Sweden and the Government of Canada.

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, and H.E. Isabella Lövin, Sweden's Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and, Deputy Prime Minister, today announced that Canada will replace Sweden as the co-chair of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. Sierra Leone currently serves as the other co-chair, representing the g7+ group.

The two co-chairs provide strategic direction and leadership to this forum for political dialogue, which brings together countries affected by conflict and fragility, development partners, and civil society.

Quotes

"Canada thanks Sweden for its commitment to the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. We look forward to working with our g7+ and civil society partners to continue the work on sustainable development, peace and security, which are not possible unless women and girls are empowered, participate meaningfully and have their human rights respected."

- Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie

"We are very happy that Canada and Minister Marie-Claire Bibeau has

decided to take on this responsibility after Sweden on behalf of INCAF (the International Network on Conflict and Fragility). The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding is a unique platform that gives fragile states and civil society a voice. The International Dialogue is an important and strategic platform for more inclusive approaches to peacebuilding and conflict prevention."

- Isabella Lövin, Minister of International Development Cooperation and Climate and, Deputy Prime Minister

Quick facts

- Established in 2008, the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding is composed of members of the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), the g7+ group of fragile and conflict-affected states, and member organisations of the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding.
- Sweden has been the INCAF co-chair of the International Dialogue since 2015.
- Other previous co-chairs include Denmark, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Finland, the Netherlands, Timor-Leste, and the United Kingdom.

Associated links

International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

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Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Conflict prevention measures and Sweden's mediation role in focus at peace conference in Stockholm

Published 04 May 2018

'The Politics of Peace' will be the theme when the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) host the fifth annual Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development on 7–9 May. The Forum will gather a number of international experts for discussion and debate on how global cooperation on conflict prevention and sustainable peace can be strengthened. The speakers include Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

Although the number of armed conflicts has fallen in the last five years, the need for conflict prevention measures and mediation is greater than ever. The capacity to identify and stop potential conflicts at an early stage around the world through international cooperation is becoming more and more important, not least in a time when conflicts originate in increasingly complex environments.

"Inclusive discussion and debate on how different policy areas, countries and actors can contribute to conflict resolution are vital if we are to achieve sustainable peaceful solutions. It is clear that the work done by Sweden as a member of the United Nations Security Council and our experience gained

there will be important in conversations during the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development," says Ms Wallström.

Both Ms Wallström and Ms Lövin will participate in the Forum and give opening speeches. The ambition with the theme of this year's Forum, 'Politics of Peace', is to strengthen international cooperation on conflict prevention and sustainable peace.

"In recent years, we have seen a worrying rise in violent conflicts. If we are to succeed in reversing this trend, we must increase our capacity to prevent violence through cross-border and long-term cooperation. We cannot continue to 'put out fires'," says Ms Lövin.

Other high-level participants at the Forum will include President of the United Nations General Assembly Miroslav Lajčák, SIPRI Chair and former Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Jan Eliasson and ministers from Afghanistan, Liberia and Somalia. In addition to these, the Forum will be attended by 250 international participants from a number of partner countries.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

SEK 34 billion to global climate and environmental efforts

Published 27 April 2018

Sweden has today made pledges of more than SEK 2 billion towards the Global Environmental Facility. This entails an increase of Sweden's contribution to the fund of more than 50 per cent for the period 2018–2022, compared with the period 2014–2018.

Sweden hosted the last and conclusive negotiation meeting on increased funds to the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The meeting ended today and 29 donor countries made donation pledges representing a strengthening of the fund by a total of SEK 34 billion (USD 4.1 billion). The money will primarily go towards financing the most ambitious programme of work in the fund's history. The agreement reflects the donors' strong support for the GEF and means that approximately 140 developing countries will receive increased resources to achieve global environmental goals.

As a result of the agreed increase in resources, the GEF is expected, compared with current operations, to be able to contribute to:

- emissions reductions that are twice as large;
- better management for 50 per cent more environments on land and close to water;
- more than 100 000 tonnes of persistent organic pollutants, mercury and other hazardous chemicals being phased out; and
- almost 4 tonnes of the world's most overexploited fish stocks approaching more sustainable levels.

"It is particularly pleasing that the GEF now has resources to strengthen the work for living oceans and combating marine littering and plastics. In

addition, the fund will have an increased focus on innovative financing models. Thus we hope to see a leverage effect that can produce greater dividends per Swedish aid krona," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The GEF is responsible for the primary financing of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and a number international environmental conventions. It is an important partner to Sweden in the implementation of the Government's development policy objectives and in work to improve living conditions for poor people locally and strengthen environmental and climate-related public goods in developing countries. Sweden is currently the largest per capita donor and the eighth largest overall.

"A strong Global Environmental Facility means that we can contribute more effectively to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda," says Ms Lövin.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

SEK 1 billion to Government's first global gender equality strategy

Published 13 April 2018

Funds totalling SEK 1 billion will be used to enhance gender equality for women and girls around the world. This was decided by the Government at its meeting on 12 April. It is the first time that Sweden's Government has adopted a global thematic strategy for gender equality.

"We are making this investment at a time when gender equality work is meeting resistance in various places around the world. Activists and women's organisations working for gender equality often face strong opposition in their fight for human rights. The opportunities to work independently are reduced when funding and democratic space shrink," says Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate.

In 2018–2022, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) will be tasked with allocating the funds to initiatives in the area of gender equality. These may cover everything from strengthening normative frameworks for gender equality and increasing safety for organisations working with gender equality to better access to sex-disaggregated statistics. Under the strategy, Sida will work on innovative initiatives and with boys and men as actors for gender equality.

The Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality will be held on 15–17 April. It is being organised by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish Institute, in cooperation with Sida and the Folke Bernadotte Academy. The event will take place at the Stockholm City Conference Centre.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality to bring together top names from more than 100 countries

Published 28 March 2018

Award-winning author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner and human rights counsellor Colin Gonsalves are some of the 500 gender equality actors who will participate in the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality on 15–17 April. The global forum is about strengthening women's and girls' rights, representation and access to resources.

The Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality will bring together just over 500 participants from more than 100 countries, from grassroots to ministerial level. They include politicians and representatives of academia, the business world and civil society. Representatives of international organisations will also participate, including the heads of several UN bodies, commissioners from the European Union and African Union, and the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. The purpose of the forum is to mobilise the work on global gender equality through alliance-building and exchange of methods and results.

The Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality is being organised by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish Institute, in collaboration with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA). Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot

Wallström, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin, Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde and Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Lena Hallengren will represent the Swedish Government. The ministers will share their experiences of working on the Government's feminist foreign policy.

The programme has been developed in cooperation with a number of Swedish and international gender equality actors and covers a wide range of topics. These include methods to increase the participation of women and girls in peace processes, the importance of gender equality for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, how we are to ensure the right of women and girls to decide over their own bodies, and how various actors can pave the way for women's economic empowerment. The participants will also hear witness accounts from Colombia about the work on what is sometimes called the world's most gender equal peace agreement, and be able to hold interactive discussions about threats and hatred against women on the internet.

The full programme and detailed press and accreditation information is available at www.genderequalworld.com.

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Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Billions can be saved by preventing violent conflicts, says Swedish-financed study by the UN and the World Bank

Published 13 March 2018

Violent conflicts throughout the world cause enormous human suffering, and they also have a major economic impact. A new study by the UN and the World Bank – Pathways for Peace – shows that violent conflicts cause a drop in global GDP of 13.3 per cent per year. According to the study, investments in conflict prevention measures can mean savings of between USD 5 billion and 70 billion per year.

"The study clearly shows the importance of conflict prevention measures. At the same time, it highlights the need for a combination of diplomacy, mediation, development cooperation and security-building measures to prevent violent conflicts from breaking out. These are also the conclusions we can draw from our work as a member of the UN Security Council," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Pathways for Peace, which will be launched in Stockholm on Wednesday, is the first joint study the UN and the World Bank have conducted on conflict prevention. The two authors – Alexandre Marc from the World Bank and Jago Salmon from the UN – identify several causes of the large number of violent conflicts throughout the world. The main causes mentioned include denying people the opportunity to influence developments in their community, and people's right to natural resources, security and justice.

"The UN's and the World Bank's conclusions are consistent with the strategy for sustainable peace that the Swedish Government adopted last year. Successful conflict prevention work can free up resources for poverty reduction and improved welfare in vulnerable parts of the world. Multilateral bodies such as the UN and the World Bank play a key role in this work," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The launch of Pathways for Peace will take place on Wednesday 14 March at 15.30–17.00 at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs International Press Centre. The authors Alexandre Marc and Jago Salmon will attend the launch, along with State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Annika Söder and State Secretary Ulrika Modéer.

Journalists interested in attending the launch should register by emailing lina.eidmark@gov.se by 12.00 on Wednesday 14 March.

The Pathways for Peace study can be downloaded at www.worldbank.org.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden, Jordan and Egypt to hold an extraordinary ministerial meeting to mobilise support for Palestine refugees

Published 03 March 2018 Updated 03 March 2018

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is facing the most difficult financial situation since its inception in 1949. Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs and the co-chairing Foreign Ministers of Jordan and Egypt are therefore convening an extraordinary ministerial conference in Rome on 15 March to mobilise both political and financial support for the Agency, and to find ways to assure sustainable forms of financing for UNRWA.

"Sweden has a long history of close cooperation with UNRWA. In 2017, we were the Agency's fourth largest donor," says Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Today, UNRWA provides humanitarian aid for 5.3 million refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. The Agency provides basic education for more than half a million refugee children, primary health care for 3.5 million refugees, cash and food support for the abject poor and special programmes for vulnerable women.

"UNRWA carries out important humanitarian work and has a stabilising effect on a region severely affected by conflict and extremism," underscores

Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

UNRWA has faced recurring budget shortfalls in recent years, while at the same time the occupation, the situation in Gaza and the war in Syria have led to deteriorating conditions for Palestine refugees in the region. The financial support from the international community has not increased at the same rate as the humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees. The Agency is now facing a budget shortfall of USD 446 million. Sweden and its co-chairs are therefore convening this extraordinary ministerial conference to secure the financial means that UNRWA needs to fulfil its important mandate, pending a peaceful and just solution to the Middle East conflict.

Background

The ministerial conference will be held on 15 March at the premises of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations in Rome. Invitations have been sent to around 90 countries, including some Member States of the League of Arab States and the European Union Member States. The US has also indicated that it will be represented.

UNRWA was established by the UN General Assembly in 1949, after many Palestinians fled or were expelled from their homes amidst the unrest following the establishment of the State of Israel. The Agency was mandated with providing humanitarian aid to Palestine refugees pending a just and peaceful solution to the conflict. Today, UNRWA supports more than 5 million refugees, one third of whom still live in refugee camps.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden to host global gender equality conference 15–17 April

Published 14 February 2018

Leaders from all over the world will gather in Stockholm to intensify international efforts for gender equality. The Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality brings together close to 500 key representatives from civil society organisations, governments, business, and academia. The aim is to find solutions, take new initiatives, and strengthen co-operation in the international fight for gender equality.

Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms Margot Wallström, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, Ms Isabella Lövin, and Minister for EU Affairs and Trade, Ms Ann Linde, as well as the Director-General of the Swedish Institute, Ms Annika Rembe, will host the forum, which is organised by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish Institute.

The conference is taking place at a decisive moment. Despite some progress, inequality and discrimination of girls and women remains one of the greatest human rights challenges in our time. The forum mobilises forces to achieve the global goals under Agenda 2030 and will focus on critical issues related to women's and girls' rights, representation, and access to resources.

"More rights, representation, and resources for women and girls means more peace, security, and prosperity for the world. A feminist foreign policy is the way forward. With this conference, we create a possibility for grassroots and high-level participants from all over the globe to meet, share knowledge, and inspire political leaders," says Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign

Affairs

"When we empower women and girls we empower nations and eradicate poverty. It starts with giving every woman and girl the right over her own body," says Isabella Lövin, Minister International Development Cooperation and Climate.

"Gender equality contributes to growth in all countries, regardless of the level of development. This has to guide all economic policy-making, including trade," says Minister for EU Affairs and Trade, Ms Ann Linde.

"We see successes but also movements that seek to limit women's and girls' rights and range. That's why the forum is so important. We need to gather forces, share experiences, and disseminate breakthroughs that make a difference for the individual as well as for society at large," says Annika Rembe, Director-General of the Swedish Institute.

Approximately 500 participants are expected from around the world. During the forum, participants will identify the biggest challenges, as well as possible solutions, for the fight for gender equality today. They will share experiences and good examples as well as build networks. Results as well as new initiatives will be brought into local contexts.

Date: 15–17 April

Location: Stockholm City Conference Centre, Stockholm, Sweden

For further information and media accreditation, please visit:

genderequalworld.com

#GenderEqualWorld

#StockholmGenderForum

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Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden and WFP sign landmark agreement bringing hope to millions in forgotten crises

Published 02 February 2018

The Swedish Government and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) today signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement, with Sweden making a historic commitment of approximately US\$370 million in flexible funds to WFP over the next four years (2018 to 2021). The contribution is the largest ever made by a donor within a WFP Strategic Partnership Agreement.

"Sweden's extremely generous contribution provides WFP with one of the largest amounts of flexible and predictable funding any country has ever given us, enabling us to save lives at any given place and at any given time," said WFP Executive Director David Beasley. "The people and the government of Sweden help us bring hope to millions of people, including the most vulnerable people caught up in some of the world's most heart-breaking crises. When it comes to saving lives and changing lives, Sweden is a global leader."

The Swedish contribution comes at a moment of unprecedented needs. The world is facing the worst humanitarian crisis since the end of World War II, with multiple large-scale hunger emergencies occurring across the planet. For the first time in a decade, the number of hungry people in the world is increasing. Today, the majority of world's hungry people live in countries affected by conflict, with ten of the thirteen largest food crises driven mainly by conflict.

"Sweden is a longstanding donor to WFP, since food assistance is one of the

most critical ways to respond to famine and to save lives in acute emergency situations," said Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin. "As part of our partnership, we are working closely with WFP to develop sustainable approaches to save livelihoods by promoting new methodology and policy."

For nearly a decade, Sweden has been the largest donor of flexible – or unearmarked – funds to WFP. Sweden's leadership in providing flexible funding stands out at a time where more than 90 percent of government contributions to WFP are earmarked for specific operations or activities.

In addition to its consistent funding, Sweden stands as one of WFP's strongest advocates for reduced earmarking among donors. Under the agreement known as the Grand Bargain, concluded at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, Sweden and other leading donors committed to progressively reduce earmarking, with an aim of achieving a global target of 30 percent of humanitarian funding that is unearmarked or softly earmarked by 2020.

"The Swedish Government is a humanitarian champion and leading on the global level to increase flexible humanitarian funding for the most pressing needs. Flexible funding is crucial to kick start operations and fund neglected crises, which has been the case in many situations like Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Rohingya crisis," said Minister Lövin.

The Government under the Grand Bargain concluded in 2016 committed to progressively reduce earmarking of humanitarian funding, with an aim of achieving a global target of 30 percent of humanitarian funding that is unearmarked or softly earmarked by 2030;

To learn more about Sweden's partnership with WFP, visit:

www.wfp.org/sweden2018 (English version)

www.wfp.org/sverige2018 (Swedish version)

High-resolution photos that illustrate the Sweden/WFP partnership can be downloaded here:

Photos

About WFP

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to

improve nutrition and build resilience. Each year, WFP assists some 80 million people in around 80 countries.

Follow WFP on Twitter @WFP_Media @WFP @WFPGovts

For more information, please contact:

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Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government investing SEK 800 million to combat humanitarian crises in the Horn of Africa

Published 29 January 2018

The Government has decided to allocate SEK 800 million over four years (2018–2021) to the Strategy for Sweden's regional development cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa. The strategy has been updated to more clearly focus on the link between humanitarian assistance and long-term development, particularly in the Horn of Africa countries. The Government considers that there is considerable potential for Sweden to contribute to increased resilience to crises and disasters, and to conflict prevention and conflict management regionally.

- "We know that strong resilience to climate change and natural disasters saves lives. Sweden wants to contribute to long-term sustainable solutions to combat famine and other humanitarian crises in the Horn of Africa. By providing additional funds, Sweden can help to increase food and water security, improve the productivity of small-scale farmers, increase the use of renewable energy and counter deforestation," says Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation.

The decision is part of the Government's focus on strengthening engagement in the Horn of Africa countries aimed at countering recurrent humanitarian crises. The Government has previously decided on a new strategy for Sudan and the Government Offices is now working on new strategies for Somalia,

South Sudan and Uganda.

Following the decision, the total allocation for the Strategy for Sweden's regional development cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa amounts to SEK 3 500 million, of which SEK 3 470 million is for Sida activities and SEK 30 million for Folke Bernadotte Academy activities.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

As of today, Sweden has a new Climate Act!

Published 01 January 2018 Updated 01 January 2018

Sweden's new Climate Act enters into force today. For the first time, Sweden will have an act stating that each government has an obligation to pursue a climate policy based on the climate goals adopted by the Riksdag.

The Climate Act establishes that the Government's climate policy must be based on the climate goals and specifies how work is to be carried out.

"This is the most important reform for our children and grandchildren. From now on it will be illegal not to prioritise the climate. This is a day I will tell my stepgrandchild about when she gets a little older," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

The Climate Act states that the Government must present a climate report every year in its Budget Bill and draw up a climate policy action plan every fourth year to describe how the climate goals are to be achieved.

The new Climate Act enters into force today, 1 January 2018.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

New climate decision to reduce industry and transport emissions

Published 21 December 2017 Updated 21 December 2017

By 2045, Sweden will have achieved net zero greenhouse gas emissions. Several of the Government's proposals in the Budget Bill for 2018, such as the 'charge-at-home' support, the Green Industry Leap and investments for international cooperation, will now be implemented.

"We are now making good on our promise and implementing an ambitious policy to help Swedish society make the transition. We are taking the major initiatives needed to ease the transition for industry and transport, while also making it easier for people to have a sustainable lifestyle," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

Transport currently accounts for one third of Sweden's greenhouse gas emissions. To increase the pace of vehicle fleet electrification, a special 'charge-at-home' grant is being launched. This will make it easier and cheaper for households to install charging points for electric vehicles at home and in this way transition to sustainable means of transport. The ordinance will enter into force on 1 February 2018 but will apply to charging points installed from 1 January.

People installing a charging point may receive a grant of up to 50 per cent of eligible costs, such as charging unit and electrical wiring costs. The maximum amount, however, is SEK 10 000 per property.

Emissions from industrial incineration and processes make up another third of Sweden's total emissions. The Swedish processing industry is very efficient by international standards, but to reduce emissions and achieve

Sweden's climate objectives, businesses need to invest in technology shifts and often unproven technologies. This is why the Government is investing SEK 300 million per year until 2040 to help Swedish industry take the leap towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions. The Government's decision today will enable the Swedish Energy Agency to decide on support to measures to reduce climate impact.

"Industrial transformation is one of the major challenges we face in bringing emissions down to zero. The Green Industry Leap will support industry to develop tomorrow's climate-smart solutions and jobs," says Ms Lövin.

The Government has also decided to provide additional support worth SEK 30 million for investments in international climate cooperation. This will contribute not least to reducing emissions in middle-income countries. Support in 2018 will amount to a total of SEK 235 million.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

A new strategy for human rights, democracy and the rule of law 2018–2022

Published 16 December 2017 Updated 16 December 2017

The Swedish Government has adopted a new strategy for human rights, democracy and the rule of law that will apply to Swedish development cooperation between 2018 and 2022.

"We are seeing worrying trends around the world. The space for civil society is shrinking. It is becoming more and more difficult for human rights defenders and civil society actors in general, and journalists too, to do their work and scrutinise those in power. These dangerous global trends must be combated," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

The strategy is based on three areas: inclusive and democratic societies, equal rights for all, and security, justice and responsibility. It will serve as a development cooperation toolbox to fight negative global trends.

Human rights are an integral part of international law and a prerequisite for upholding peace and security, and for just, gender-equal and sustainable development. They are key to upholding democracy and the rule of law. But, at the same time, they in turn require systems of democracy and the rule of law to be fully enjoyed.

Democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law are goals in and of themselves, but also a means of achieving other goals. Women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights is central to all three dimensions of sustainable development, democracy and adherence to the rule of law.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government to attend climate summit in Paris

Published 08 December 2017

On Tuesday 12 December, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin will attend the international climate summit 'One Planet Summit' in Paris.

The One Planet Summit is being organised in light of the fact that it is now two years since the historic climate agreement was adopted in Paris in 2015. The aim of the Summit is to raise the level of ambition regarding climate change and implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Prior to the Summit, Mr Löfven will attend a lunch with invited heads of state and government at the Elysée Palace.

Earlier in the day, Ms Lövin will meet France's Minister for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition Nicolas Hulot and take part in a high-level panel on the theme 'Strengthening Policies for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition'.

Minister for Financial Markets and Consumer Affairs Per Bolund will attend the high-level Climate Finance Day conference on 11 December.

Mr Löfven and Ms Lövin will hold a press conference at the residence of the Swedish Ambassador in Paris on 12 December at 09.30.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Several constructive decisions at UN Climate Change Conference COP23 in Bonn

Published 23 November 2017

Negotiations on the rules for implementing the Paris Agreement have been constructive, but have been marked by tough discussions, especially regarding how countries are to report their emissions. Countries have now submitted their views on the rules, and work is now continuing to ensure a decision on the rules can be taken next year.

Negotiations on the rules for implementing the Paris Agreement have been constructive, but have been marked by tough discussions, especially regarding how countries are to report their emissions. Countries have now submitted their views on the rules, and work is now continuing to ensure a decision on the rules can be taken next year.

Alongside negotiations on the rules, decisions have also been reached on several important issues. The Fijian Presidency put forward a proposal for the 'Talanoa Dialogue', which will be the first opportunity since Paris for countries to evaluate how global climate action corresponds to the 1.5 degree Celsius goal and how ambitions can be raised.

Sweden also announced that it is concluding its ratification of the Doha Amendment that establishes the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

"Sweden is now leading the EU in concluding its ratification of the Doha

Amendment. We are pleased that the EU has also announced that it will conclude ratification before the end of the year," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

The Doha Amendment means 20 per cent joint emission reductions compared to 1990 levels by 2020, when the first commitment period of the Paris Agreement begins.

"We are also providing an additional SEK 185 million each to the Adaptation Fund and Least Developed Countries Fund, which is an important signal to many developing countries that we are prepared to resolve the issue of financing climate action," says Ms Lövin.

At the conference, the UK and Canada launched the 'Powering Past Coal Alliance', a global coalition to phase out traditional coal power. Sweden and more than 20 other countries have already joined the alliance.

"Coal accounts for a large share of global emissions, and a rapid phase-out of coal power is essential to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. Sweden therefore wholeheartedly supports the alliance," says Ms Lövin.

A two-year gender action plan (GAP) for gender-responsive implementation of the Paris Agreement was also adopted at the conference. The GAP will ensure women's participation in negotiations and decision-making processes.

It is also gratifying that the 'action agenda', which gathers civil society actors, is larger than ever and has contributed positive momentum to the negotiations. The first Yearbook of Climate Action, capturing climate actions taken since 2016, was launched at the conference. The Yearbook shows that 70 per cent of the initiatives have launched new commitments since 2016 and that around half of these have set emissions reduction targets. The participation of civil society in reducing emissions will play a vital role in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden increases climate support to the most vulnerable countries

Published 16 November 2017

Financing climate action in developing countries has been an important issue during the climate negotiations in Bonn. The Paris Agreement contains commitments that lead to a need to scale up support.

Sweden already provides considerable support to international climate action and is the largest per capita donor to several climate-related funds, including the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund and the Global Environment Facility. Funds are to go to concrete action to reduce emissions and adapt societies to a changing climate.

The Government has raised its level of ambition and, to strengthen efforts, is now providing additional funds of SEK 185 million each to the Adaptation Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund.

"Climate change is having devastating effects around the world. The least developed countries, which do not have sufficient resources to adapt their societies, are the most vulnerable. Countries with high levels of greenhouse gas emissions must increase their support to live up to the Paris Agreement. Sweden's Government is taking responsibility and is now providing additional financing," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden and France join forces for speedy implementation of the Paris Agreement

Published 20 October 2017

Swedish deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin and the French State Secretary Brune Poirson met today in Stockholm to agree on joint efforts to speed up the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement. The meeting took place one week after the EU agreement on Member states' climate objectives and just after the closing of the pre-COP-meeting in Fiji preparing the coming global climate negotiations.

Sweden and France agree on the urgent need for implementation of the Paris agreement and green innovation development. The importance of next weeks' IPCC meeting aiming to bring forward a scientific underpinning of the climate targets of the Paris agreement was highlighted.

"Scientific studies show that the stability of life support systems are still at risk. Countries, regions, cities and business now all need to step up and move beyond commitments in the Paris agreement. Otherwise we will fail on our joint global goal to limit warming to well below two degrees and make efforts to stay below 1,5 degrees" said Ms Lövin and Ms Poirson.

Sweden and France agreed to work more closely to find ways to reinforce EU climate leadership. To do so, they envisage to develop a permanent dialog in the framework of the Green Growth Group (a block of 16 countries within the EU).

The two countries agreed on the need for the EU to be ready to raise its climate ambition in conjunction with the facilitative dialogue 2018. In this GGG framework, Sweden and France wish also to work towards ensuring that the post 2020 European budget (Multiannual Financial Framework) is aligned to the temperature goals in the Paris Agreement. In particular, both Ministers agreed that over the coming decade it will be of utmost importance for the EU to bring down vehicle emissions. Sweden and France will cooperate with the aim to speed up action and policies within EU to develop a real European industrial policy to develop competitiveness in sustainable technologies.

The coming EU Commission's proposal for new CO₂ standards for cars needs to be very ambitious and include clear targets for 2025 and tentative targets for the long term, around 2030, aiming at pursuing a shift to zero-emissions vehicles. Electrification of transport also needs to speed up.

In the perspective of the Paris Climate Summit scheduled on 12 December, they also agreed to coordinate their action on green finance to speed up initiatives to shift financial flows towards a low carbon economy.

Ms Lövin and Ms Poirson both declared that these measures were not only in the interest of EU citizens' protection against climate risk but also in the interest of EU's own competitiveness as green economy opportunities are being missed.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government meets one per cent goal – aid increasing

Published 19 September 2017

This autumn, the Government will present Sweden's largest aid budget ever. In a time when aid is needed more than ever, the money will be used to address the biggest challenges of our time: the humanitarian crisis, sustainable development, peace and human rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality and achieving the 2030 Agenda.

World need is great. Some 135 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. Climate change is affecting the poorest people in the form of drought, flooding and more natural disasters. The oppression of women and girls is continuing, and the space for human rights and democracy is shrinking in many parts of the world.

This autumn, the Government will present Sweden's largest aid budget ever. This has become possible because the development assistance framework is receiving a further injection of SEK 500 million aimed at increasing the level of aid from 0.99 to 1 per cent of gross national income (GNI). At the same time, the costs that can be offset for asylum reception in 2018 are expected to fall from SEK 8.1 billion to SEK 2.8 billion in the Budget Bill for 2017, which is the lowest share of the development assistance framework in ten years.

"I have seen the immense benefit Swedish aid can have. When Somalia teetered on the edge of a new famine at the start of the year, Sweden acted swiftly and resolutely and was therefore able to help prevent a catastrophe. We ensured that resources could quickly be made available to help UNICEF to save children, and the UN's World Food Programme to hand out food and

strengthen the humanitarian operation," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

"But aid is not just a matter of immediate emergency relief. Thanks to increased resources, we can now strengthen efforts for peacebuilding, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights, human rights and for the expansion of renewable energy in rural Africa. Our support enables people to lift themselves out of poverty and create a better life," says Ms Lövin.



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government ministers at the United Nations General Assembly

Published 15 September 2017

Next week, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will travel to the opening of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The Swedish priorities are sustainable development and inclusive growth, the fight against climate change and strengthening the UN's conflict prevention and peacekeeping efforts. The Swedish ministers are scheduled to meet representatives of countries on the Security Council agenda.

During the visit, Mr Löfven will participate in a meeting on peacekeeping missions in the Security Council and meet with a number of leaders and the Secretary-General to discuss current foreign and security policy issues. Mr Löfven will also participate in a climate summit and speak about the efforts for inclusive growth and the Global Deal initiative at the World Economic Forum's Sustainable Development Impact Summit. Mr Löfven will be in New York between 18 and 20 September.

Ms Lövin will participate in the Conference on the Global Pact for the Environment and co-host an event on climate financing with French Minister for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition Nicolas Hulot. Ms Lövin will also participate in a summit on the humanitarian situation in South Sudan and meet with UN Women and UNFPA to discuss how access to sexual and reproductive health and rights affects women's economic empowerment. Ms Lövin will be in New York between 19 and 20 September.

Ms Wallström will participate in high-level discussions on conflict prevention, children and armed conflict, women, peace and security, as well as meetings on Yemen, Syria and South Sudan. As Sweden is a member of the Security Council, Ms Wallström will also attend a number of meetings during the week on issues currently on the Security Council's agenda. Ms Wallström will be in New York between 17 and 23 September.

For more information and detailed programmes, please contact the relevant minister's press secretary.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Finance,
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Largest ever investment in climate

Published 05 September 2017

In the Budget Bill for 2018, the Government presents the largest ever investment in climate and the environment. In 2018, the Government wants to invest an additional SEK 5 billion in environment and climate efforts in Sweden and around the world to reduce emissions and create jobs and economic development in Sweden.

"We are now making major structural investments to adapt Sweden, including those targeted at industry and the transport sector. But we are also making investments so that sustainability is a natural part of everyday activities. These include investments in solar cells, charging points and electric bikes," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The initiatives cover a large number of measures that include country-wide investments to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, adapt to renewable energy and safeguard biological diversity in oceans and on land. Special measures are also being presented to ensure flourishing and sustainable urban areas.

"Our generation must be able to pass on to our children a society in which the major environmental problems have been solved and where there are flourishing urban areas with healthy environments to grow up in. A lot remains to be done if we are to succeed with this – investments in sustainable development have been insufficient for far too long," says Ms Lövin.

The Government proposes historically large investments in the area of

climate and the environment. For 2018, this means:

- An increase of 109 per cent in expenditure area 20 (General environmental protection and nature conservation) compared with 2014. This means that we have more than doubled investments.
- The budget includes a total of SEK 5 billion for investments in the area of climate and the environment in 2018.

The Budget Bill for 2018 is based on an agreement between the Government and the Left Party.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Major investment in clean seas

Published 30 August 2017

Robust measures are needed to tackle eutrophication, environmental toxins, littering and other threats against Sweden's lakes, seas and coastlines. As early as next year, the Government will invest an additional SEK 600 million in measures for clean seas. With this fresh funding, the Government wants to clean up environmentally hazardous ship wrecks, finance projects to combat eutrophication and strengthen protection of marine areas.

"The threats to our seas are numerous and serious, but we do have solutions. There is a great deal we can do to ensure that we have healthy and clean seas that can provide us with everything from food and jobs to bathing areas and coastal walks. With this budget, Sweden will take a major step forward in these efforts," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The Budget Bill for 2018 is based on an agreement between the Government and the Left Party.

Getting rid of environmental toxins

There are some 17 000 ship wrecks off the coast of Sweden. Thirty of these are thought to represent an acute environmental hazard. This is often because of bunker oil and other fuel that risks leaking, or that is already leaking. The Government proposes that SEK 25 million per year over a ten-year period be invested in tackling the environmental risks of the wrecks posing the biggest threat to the marine environment. This will enable the

authorities to clean up between one and three hazardous wrecks per year.

It is very important to address the accumulations of environmental toxins in the Baltic Sea. For this reason, the clean-up appropriation is being increased and funds have been earmarked so that known sources can gradually be dealt with. The appropriation will be increased by SEK 80 million in 2018, SEK 100 million in 2019 and SEK 145 million in 2020.

Pharmaceuticals are vital for health and medical care. But when pharmaceutical products are produced, used and disposed of, there is a risk of pharmaceutical residues entering the environment. The Government now wants to invest SEK 50 million in 2018, SEK 55 million in 2019 and SEK 75 million in 2020 to reduce the amount of pharmaceuticals ending up in the environment.

Vigorous measures to prevent eutrophication

The eutrophication of lakes, coastal areas and seas is still one of our biggest environmental problems. Eutrophication is largely caused by nutrients running off the land and into the sea through watercourses. This is why measures on land are important to address the problem of eutrophication.

The Government is investing SEK 60 million in 2018 to reduce the inflow of nutrients that have gathered at the bottom of lakes and seas, and other measures to limit eutrophication.

In June, the Government presented an investment of SEK 200 million per year in wetlands to secure the supply of drinking water and wetland ecosystems. Aside from the fact that this investment will improve the landscape's ability to store water, it is also an important measure to reduce the inflow of nutrients from the land.

Better protection of marine areas

The Government's previous investments to protect marine areas have enabled Sweden to double the area of protected marine environment – from 6.7 per cent to 13.6 per cent – in just one year. Sweden has thus achieved the goal of protecting at least 10 per cent of our marine areas by 2020. But protection in each area must be improved and the various areas must be

better linked.

The Government therefore proposes an increase in the appropriation for marine protected areas of SEK 50 million in 2018 and SEK 67 million in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

Seas free of plastic

In May, the Government presented a package of measures to combat plastic pollution of over SEK 100 million per year until 2020, with the aim of reducing the spread of microplastics and other plastic products, reducing littering from plastic products, and carrying out beach clean-ups.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government adopts new development strategy for Iraq

Published 29 June 2017

The Government today adopts a five-year development strategy for Iraq, thereby increasing its engagement in the country. The strategy is intended to contribute to peacebuilding and strengthening gender equality in the difficult and crucial situation the country is now in.

With this new strategy, Sweden is taking an entirely new approach to long-term engagement in cooperation with Iraq. Sweden has previously had a country strategy for Iraq, but it was decided in early 2014 to phase this out. Since the situation in the country has changed considerably in the last three years, the Government has decided on this new engagement.

"Iraq is standing at a hugely important crossroads as the military fight against Daesh in the country nears its end. The challenges are enormous and require broad engagement to prevent Iraq relapsing into conflict," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The development strategy for Iraq encompasses more than SEK 200 million annually between 2017 and 2021. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) will implement the strategy.

The strategy will take account of the difficult political, economic and humanitarian situation in Iraq. In this way, it will contribute to stabilisation, increased respect for human rights and gender equality, and, in the long term, improved conditions for sustainable peace- and state-building and reconciliation.

"When I visited Fallujah in March I saw for myself the immense devastation caused by the advance of Daesh. It is very important that we contribute to

building up these areas so that the local population can return, not least minority groups who have been hit hard. Bringing about national reconciliation and a sustainable peace requires support for efforts in which the entire Iraqi population – naturally including women – participate actively," says Ms Lövin.

The strategy supplements extensive humanitarian support to Iraq, totalling SEK 145 million so far in 2017, and Sweden's contribution to the military training mission operated by the Global Coalition against Daesh.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Riksdag passes historic climate policy framework

Published 15 June 2017

The Riksdag has passed a climate policy framework for Sweden. The Climate Act and new climate goals will give Sweden an ambitious, long-term and stable climate policy. The Climate Act will enter into force on 1 January 2018.

On 14 March, the Government presented a bill on a climate policy framework. The bill contains new climate goals, a Climate Act and a climate policy council. The aim is to create order and stability in climate policy. The framework is based on last year's agreement within the Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives.

"All countries need to actively demonstrate how they are taking responsibility on climate change. Today's decision shows that Sweden will continue to be a leading country in global efforts to achieve the ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement", says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The Climate Act contains provisions on the Government's climate policy efforts. In its annual Budget Bill, the Government is to submit a climate report to the Riksdag and draw up a climate action plan for each electoral period. This means that each government has an obligation to report on how work to achieve the climate goals is progressing. The first climate report will be presented in the second half of 2018, and the first action plan will be presented in 2019.

As a new long-term climate goal, Sweden will have no net emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere by 2045. The Riksdag has also passed

new intermediate targets for the years 2030 and 2040.

The Government has begun the work of establishing a climate policy council to assist it by providing an independent assessment of how the overall policy presented by the Government is compatible with the climate goals. The council will be in place before the Climate Act enters into force on 1 January 2018.

The climate policy framework is based on the agreement presented by the Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives in two interim reports in 2016. The agreement is backed by the Social Democratic Party, the Green Party, the Moderate Party, the Liberal Party, the Centre Party and the Christian Democrats, and in some parts also by the Left Party.



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Prime Minister to welcome Aung San Suu Kyi to Stockholm

Published 09 June 2017

On Monday 12 June, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will welcome Myanmar's State Counsellor, Aung San Suu Kyi, to Rosenbad. They will meet to discuss bilateral relations between Sweden and Myanmar.

During her two-day visit to Sweden, Ms Aung San Suu Kyi will have bilateral talks with Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin. She will also give a speech in the Riksdag at the invitation of Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin.

Programme points

Monday 12 June

Morning Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström receives Ms Aung San Suu Kyi at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Initial talks are followed by a working lunch. Photo opportunity on arrival.

Early afternoon Prime Minister Stefan Löfven receives Ms Aung San Suu Kyi at Rosenbad. Photo opportunity at the entrance to Rosenbad. Photo pool at the start of the meeting. Joint press conference.

Late afternoon Meeting with Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, followed by a meeting with Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin.

Tuesday 13 June

Morning Ms Aung San Suu Kyi gives a speech in the Riksdag. Photo opportunity on arrival. Media representatives with Riksdag accreditation have the opportunity to be present during the speech.

Advance registration

Media representatives must register and/or apply for a place in the photo pool. Please register/apply via the International Press Centre at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs no later than 15.00 on Sunday 11 June. More detailed information about times and venues will be sent to media representatives concerned.

Advance registration/application for place in photo pool



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Wallström and Lövin open SIPRI Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development

Published 03 May 2017

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) are co-hosting the fourth annual Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development on 3–4 May.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin are delivering the Forum's opening address, together with other ministers from countries including Somalia and Liberia.

"In this context, SIPRI helps to bring together various actors from around the world to exchange experiences and provide practical advice on how to strengthen conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts," says Ms Wallström. "It is very important, not least for our work on the UN Security Council, to learn about good practice from those working on the ground in countries affected by conflict."

"Development cooperation plays a key role for countries seeking peaceful conflict resolution. Our experience from the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding may be an inspiration for many countries, and for the multilateral system," says Ms Lövin.

The Forum provides an opportunity for academics, politicians and civil society organisations to come together to discuss current research, develop policy and share good practice.

The theme of this year's Forum is 'Sustaining peace: what works?' The

Sustaining Peace Agenda and the 2030 Agenda reflect global consensus and joint commitments from the UN at policy level. The Forum aims to identify how these commitments can be carried out at country level.

Forum participants include Jan Eliasson and a number of ministers from various conflict and post-conflict countries, as well as experts from the World Bank, the EU and the UN system. Many civil society representatives and academics are also attending.

For further information on SIPRI's Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development:

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Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Government increases support to middle-income countries receiving large numbers of refugees

Published 21 April 2017

Sweden is increasing support to middle-income countries that receive many refugees, such as Jordan and Lebanon. During a panel debate in connection with the World Bank's spring meeting in Washington, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin announced that Sweden will increase its support to the Global Concessional Financing Facility (GCFF) by almost SEK 90 million (USD 10 Million) in additional funds.

The GCFF supports middle-income countries that receive refugees through concessional loans. At present, support via the GCFF is given to Jordan and Lebanon, which have received a large number of Syrian refugees, but in the future this support may also be available to other middle-income countries that take in refugees.

Over the last ten years, global humanitarian needs have increased considerably, mainly as a result of serious conflicts that have often led to protracted refugee situations. It is estimated that there are more than 60 million displaced people around the world. In the long term, the international community must resolve the root causes of conflicts and poverty that force people to leave their homes. While the acute need for life-sustaining measures has increased, there is also a growing need for more long-term

measures.

“We must work to break the chronic refugee status that millions of people find themselves in. On average, it takes 17 years before a refugee returns to their home country or receives protection in another country. This is completely untenable. In the short term, the challenges are naturally enormous, but experience shows that prompt action to organise jobs and education is crucial to starting a new life and building a future,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

In 2016, four projects were granted support from the GCFF, three in Jordan and one in Lebanon. The projects are aimed at job creation and dealing with the increased strain on sewage management, transport and energy. Within the framework of one of the projects in Jordan, 36 000 work permits were issued to Syrian refugees. Reforms to make it easier for Syrian refugees to enter the labour market create an opportunity to build a future, while the project contributes to Jordan’s economic development.

Swedish support to the GCFF

Of the Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR, some 650 000 are in Jordan and some 1 million are in Lebanon (figures from April 2017 and December 2016, respectively). There is also a large number of people who are not registered with UNHCR.

In the 2016 autumn amending budget, the Government allocated some SEK 180 million (USD 20 million) to the regional part of the GCFF, with focus on Jordan and Lebanon. At the same time, Sida is providing additional support of SEK 180 million (over a three-year period). Besides Sweden, contributors to the GCFF are Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway the UK, the US and the European Commission. Sweden is the fourth largest donor in terms of pledged contributions and the second largest donor in terms of contributions actually paid. The new support amounting to some SEK 90 million for the 2017 budget year will target other middle-income countries that receive many refugees.

Normally, middle-income countries borrow from the World Bank and other development banks on more expensive terms, but an extremely large refugee reception puts a great strain on the countries’ public finances and impacts infrastructure and public services, such as water, education and housing. The GCFF will therefore help ensure that recipient countries are better able to

manage these expenses so that they can continue to pursue their own development agendas at the same time as the situation for refugees improves.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden and California strengthen cooperation on climate action

Published 20 April 2017

Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin and California Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr has signed a letter of cooperation focusing on climate change. During a meeting in state capital Sacramento Ms Lövin also announced Sweden's support for California's Under2 Coalition initiative.

The letter of cooperation is a first step towards deeper Swedish-Californian cooperation on climate action. Sweden and California will work together to raise global ambitions in the climate area for example by focusing on supporting non-state actors in the lead up to coming climate negotiations.

"California is the world's sixth largest economy and an important force in global efforts to tackle climate change. We look forward to constructive and enhanced cooperation in areas such as research, innovation, trade and industry, policies, policy levers and measures to reduce climate emissions," says Ms Lövin.

The Under2 Coalition, which Sweden supports, is an initiative that California and the German state of Baden-Württemberg launched ahead of the Paris Climate Conference. The Coalition is based on a commitment to reduce climate emissions by 80–95 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050, which corresponds to the level considered necessary to keep global warming below 2 degrees Celsius. At present, 167 regions and countries have signed or endorsed the Coalition, which corresponds to more than a third of the global economy.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Reduced offsets mean more international development assistance

Published 18 April 2017 Updated 18 April 2017

In the spring amending budget for 2017, it is proposed that SEK 1.3 billion be restored to the development assistance budget as a result of reduced offsets for asylum costs. The money will be used to meet the growing humanitarian needs following the drought in sub-Saharan Africa, and to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and international climate efforts. This is part of an agreement between the Government and the Left Party.

“Aid is needed more than ever as the world is currently facing several difficult challenges simultaneously. War, conflicts and drought, which have been exacerbated due to climate change, have caused the worst famine in sub-Saharan Africa in modern times,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

“Following the US government’s announcement that they are reducing support to sexual and reproductive health and rights and climate efforts, it is important that Sweden remains committed to providing strong support and cooperates with other countries to mobilise more support to this important work,” says Ms Lövin.

The Government’s political priorities in the Budget Bill for 2017 remain firm. In its spring amending budget, the Government wants to draw particular attention to the following areas:

- that worldwide humanitarian needs remain at record level;
- the particularly serious situation in fragile and conflict-affected states;
- a lack of respect for human rights and the decreasing democratic space around the world;
- the need to strengthen everyone's full enjoyment of their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); and
- the steadily increasing global need for international environment and climate action, including seas and marine resources.

In the Budget Bill for 2017, the costs of asylum reception within the development assistance framework were estimated at SEK 8.1 billion for 2017, but in the spring amending budget for 2017 these costs are estimated at SEK 6.8 billion. The reason for this is that the number of asylum seekers has decreased from 51 200 people in the Swedish Migration Agency's July 2016 forecast to 34 700 people in the February 2017 forecast. The total development assistance framework for 2017 amounts to SEK 46.1 billion.



Press release from Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Magdalena Andersson and Isabella Lövin to attend Spring Meetings of World Bank and IMF in Washington

Published 13 April 2017 Updated 13 April 2017

Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister, Isabella Lövin will attend the Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on 20–23 April in Washington D.C. The main themes of the meetings are the state of the global economy, inclusive growth, and the future role and resources of the World Bank.

The Spring Meeting of the IMF will address the state of the global economy and the measures that should be taken by the IMF and its Member Countries to strengthen recovery. Ms Andersson will take part in the discussions between finance ministers and heads of central banks, the subjects of which will include how to promote issues linked to inclusive growth.

The Spring Meeting of the World Bank Group will focus on the Group's role as a development financier, the question of Member Countries' influence in the Group, and the need to strengthen financial capacity.

In connection with the Spring Meetings, Ms Andersson will host an event on inclusive growth, with a panel discussion on how to turn words into action in the promotion of inclusive growth. She will also deliver an introductory address – alongside Canadian Minister of Finance Bill Morneau – at a

seminar on promoting gender equality in access to financial services.

Events attended by Ms Lövin will include a meeting on how climate efforts can be stepped up, also attended by World Bank President Jim Yong Kim and others. She will also co-host a round-table discussion, together with the World Bank, on support for the development of social security systems. Ms Lövin will also take part in a panel discussion on the refugee situation with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva, and in meetings about the acute and serious famines in Africa and Yemen.

In connection with the Spring Meetings, Ms Lövin and the Embassy of Sweden in Washington will host a seminar on climate-smart growth and the role of the private sector in climate change adaptation. Seminar participants will include Honorary Chair of the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate and former President of Mexico Felipe Calderón, representatives of the World Resources Institute and the Haga Initiative and several business executives.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin to California

Published 13 April 2017 Updated 13 April 2017

On 18 April, Minister for Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin will travel to California, USA. The purpose of Ms Lövin's visit is to find out about California's climate efforts and discuss experience exchange and collaboration.

During the visit, Ms Lövin will meet California Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr and representatives of the California Air Resources Board (CARB). Ms Lövin will inaugurate the Swedish Energy Agency's cleantech hub in San Francisco, and meet representatives of companies at the vanguard of climate-smart technologies. She will also take part in a roundtable discussion at the University of California Davis on the future of fossil-free transport systems, alongside prominent experts and researchers from California. Various visits will take place during the trip, with a focus on climate adaptation and ongoing innovation collaboration between Sweden and California.

On 21-22 April, Isabella Lövin will be in Washington to attend the Spring Meeting of the World Bank Group.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Global Press Release - Human Development Report 2016

Published 21 March 2017 Updated 21 March 2017

Press release from UNDP. World's most marginalized still left behind by global development priorities: UNDP report Millions of people are not benefiting from progress, with the gap set to widen unless deep-rooted development barriers, including discrimination and unequal political participation, are tackled.

Stockholm, 21 March 2017 – A quarter-century of impressive human development progress continues to leave many people behind, with systemic, often unmeasured, barriers to catching up. A stronger focus on those excluded and on actions to dismantle these barriers is urgently needed to ensure sustainable human development for all.

These are the findings of the Human Development Report 2016, entitled 'Human Development for Everyone', released today by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The report finds that although average human development improved significantly across all regions from 1990 to 2015, one in three people worldwide continue to live in low levels of human development, as measured by the Human Development Index.

"Leaving no one behind needs to become the way we operate as a global community. In order to overcome the barriers that hamper both human development and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, inclusiveness must guide policy choices," said Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, speaking at the launch of the report in Stockholm today, alongside UNDP Administrator Helen Clark and the report's lead author and Director

of the Human Development Report Office, Selim Jahan.

"The world has come a long way in rolling back extreme poverty, in improving access to education, health and sanitation, and in expanding possibilities for women and girls," said Helen Clark. "But those gains are a prelude to the next, possibly tougher challenge, to ensure the benefits of global progress reach everyone."

This is a concern in developed countries too, where poverty and exclusion are also a challenge, with over 300 million people – including more than one-third of all children – living in relative poverty.

Left behind and unable to catch up: systemic discrimination against women, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, among others

The report notes that not only are deprivations high, but disadvantages disproportionately affect some groups.

"We place too much attention on national averages, which often mask enormous variations in people's lives," stated Selim Jahan. "In order to advance, we need to examine more closely not just what has been achieved, but also who has been excluded and why."

The report shows that in almost every country, several groups face disadvantages that often overlap and reinforce each other, increasing vulnerability, widening the progress gap across generations, and making it harder to catch up as the world moves on.

Women and girls, rural dwellers, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, migrants and refugees, and the LGBTI community are among those systematically excluded by barriers that are not purely economic, but political, social and cultural as well.

In the case of women, the largest of these groups, the report notes that while global gender disparities are narrowing slowly, longstanding patterns of exclusion and lack of empowerment for women and girls remain pressing challenges.

Women tend to be poorer, earn less, and have fewer opportunities in most aspects of life than men. In 100 countries, women are legally excluded from some jobs because of their gender, and in 18 countries, women need their husband's approval to work. Dangerous practices like female genital mutilation and forced marriage continue.

Populations living in rural areas also face multiple barriers. For instance, children from poor rural households attending school are less likely to be learning reading, writing and mathematics.

Moreover, migrants and refugees often face barriers to work, education and political participation and more than 250 million people in the world face discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity, the report notes among other examples.

It is time to face up to deep-rooted barriers to development

"By eliminating deep, persistent, discriminatory social norms and laws, and addressing the unequal access to political participation, which have hindered progress for so many, poverty can be eradicated and a peaceful, just, and sustainable development can be achieved for all," Helen Clark said.

Marginalized groups often have limited opportunities to influence the institutions and policies that determine their lives. Changing this is central to breaking the vicious circle of exclusion and deprivation.

For example, indigenous peoples account for five percent of the world's population, but 15 percent of people living in poverty. And members of the LGBTI community cannot actively advocate for their rights when same-sex acts between men are illegal in more than 70 countries.

The report calls for far greater attention to empowering the most marginalized in society, and recognizes the importance of giving them greater voice in decision-making processes.

The report also calls for a more refined analysis to inform actions, including making a shift toward assessing progress in such areas as participation and autonomy. Key data, disaggregated for characteristics such as place, gender, socioeconomic status and ethnicity, is vital to know who is being left behind.

Moreover, the report warns, key development metrics can overstate progress when they focus on the quantity, rather than the quality, of development. For instance, girls' enrolment in primary education has increased, but in half of 53 developing countries with data, the majority of adult women who completed four to six years of primary school are illiterate.

Human development for everyone is attainable

"Despite progress gaps, universal human development is attainable," said

Selim Jahan. "Over the last decades, we have witnessed achievements in human development that were once thought impossible."

Since 1990, one billion people have escaped extreme poverty, and women's empowerment has become a mainstream issue: while as recently as the 1990s, very few countries legally protected women from domestic violence, today, 127 countries do.

The report stresses the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to build on these gains, noting that the agenda and human development approach are mutually reinforcing.

The report includes recommendations to reorient policies to ensure progress reaches those furthest behind, and urges reforms of global markets and global institutions to make them more equitable and representative.

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ABOUT THIS REPORT: The Human Development Report is an editorially independent publication of the United Nations Development Programme. For free downloads of the 2016 Human Development Report, plus additional reference materials on its indices, please visit: <http://hdr.undp.org>

2016 Human Development Report <http://report.hdr.undp.org/>

Full press package in all UN official languages <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2016-report/press>

UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that

can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in 177 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Human Development Report 2016 to launch on 21 March 2017 in Stockholm, Sweden

Published 14 March 2017

Media Advisory from UNDP.

Who: Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden
Helen Clark, United Nations Development Programme Administrator
Isabella Lövin, Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden
Selim Jahan, Director of the Human Development Report Office

What: Launch on UNDP's Human Development Report 2016 'Human Development for Everyone'

Event will include formal launch and a media Q&A.

When: Tuesday, 21 March 2017, at 3 pm in Stockholm, Sweden (2 pm GMT)

Where: The Pillar Hall, Norra Latin, Drottninggatan 71B, Stockholm, Sweden. Admittance via Marmorvalvet.

Please bring your press credentials.

Follow livestream at <http://hdr.undp.org>

'Human Development for Everyone'

The Human Development Report 2016 'Human Development for Everyone' will be launched on 21 March in Stockholm with the Prime Minister of Sweden, Stefan Löfven; the United Nations Development Programme Administrator, Helen Clark; Isabella Lövin, Deputy Prime Minister of

Sweden and the Director of the Human Development Report Office and lead author of the report, Selim Jahan.

In past decades, there have been significant gains in human development levels in almost every country; but millions of people have not benefitted from this progress. Who has been left behind and why? The Human Development Report 2016 looks into these two questions. It identifies and recognizes that in every society certain groups are far more likely to suffer disadvantages than others and identifies deep-rooted, and often unmeasured, barriers to development.

The report also looks to what societies should do to advance human development for everyone. It sets forward policy recommendations at the national level and also looks at ways in which the global development landscape could be made more effective in the fight to leave no one behind and achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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About this report: Human development is about expanding the richness of human life, rather than simply the richness of the economy in which human beings live. This idea focuses on people and their choices and opportunities. The Human Development Reports use this approach to analyse some of the most pressing challenges facing humanity to achieve sustainable progress. More information at <http://hdr.undp.org>



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government increasing support to sexual and reproductive health and rights

Published 02 March 2017

At the 'She Decides' conference in Brussels today, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin will announce an increase of SEK 200 million in support to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

"Sweden's feminist government remains one of the strongest international voices for the universal right to sexual and reproductive health and rights. We need international leadership that stands up to the forces that seek to restrict women's and girls' rights," says Ms Lövin.

Together with Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands, Sweden is co-organising the 'She Decides' conference taking place in Brussels on Thursday. Representatives of some 50 countries are expected to take part, as well as parliamentarians and organisations from Asia, Africa, Europe and America, as well as UN bodies. She Decides is intended to mobilise financial and political support for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

"No country can lift itself out of poverty without access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Today's conference is the start of a progressive alliance for women's and girls' right to decide over their own bodies," says Ms Lövin.

The Government will support and strengthen the current systems and organisations that are turning SRHR into a reality for millions of people around the world. This investment will go to the United Nations Population

Fund (UNFPA) and via the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to organisations that give women and girls access to advice, sex and relationship education, contraceptives, maternity care and safe abortions.

Maternal mortality around the world has declined by almost 50 per cent since the early 1990s. But one woman or girl still dies every other minute because of complications in pregnancy or childbirth, many as a result of an unsafe abortion. Decisions such as the Mexico City Policy – which the US administration has recently re-introduced and which stops US aid from financing organisations that advocate or offer abortions – jeopardise progress.

Sweden's support to sexual and reproductive health and rights

Globally, Sweden is one of the largest donors of support to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Support to SRHR accounts for over 60 per cent of Swedish health aid through Sida, and approximately 7 per cent of Swedish international development cooperation, totalling some SEK 2.3 billion in 2015.

Sweden is, for example, the largest donor of core support to the UNFPA. The UNFPA estimates that Swedish core support to the organisation in 2014 and 2015 prevented over 200 000 unsafe abortions and approximately 1 000 cases of maternal mortality, and has given over 1 600 000 people across the world access to contraceptives. The Government has decided to increase Swedish core support to the UNFPA for 2017 from SEK 515 million to SEK 545 million.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

EU Member States agreed on future of EU Emissions Trading System

Published 01 March 2017

At the environment minister meeting on 28 February, the EU Member States agreed on the design of the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) post-2020. The agreement includes important measures for strengthening the EU ETS price signal and adapting the system to the Paris Agreement. The Swedish position in favour of raising the price of emissions gained support following tough negotiations at the ministerial meeting.

"At a time when the world needs climate leadership more than in a long time, it is important that the EU delivers in the area of climate. An efficient emissions trading system with a strong price signal is crucial if the EU is to achieve its climate targets under the Paris Agreement," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

A key part of the agreement is that more emission allowances will be removed from the market between 2019 and 2023. There is currently a large surplus of emission allowances amounting to almost 1.7 billion tonnes. This large surplus has also led to constantly low prices within the EU ETS. The new proposal involves an initial stage in which almost one billion emission allowances are removed from the market between 2019 and 2023. Today's decision means that a large volume of emission allowances in the market stability reserve will be cancelled in 2024 and subsequently at regular intervals, following a proposal from Sweden.

"It is very positive to see the Swedish proposal receive support in the Council. This means a doubling of the number of emission allowances being cancelled compared with the proposal that was on the table this morning. It must pay to be climate-smart and it must cost to put off the necessary transition that we must now undertake," says Ms Lövin.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Press invitation to the conference #Shedecides in Brussels co- hosted by Sweden and Minister Isabella Lövin

Published 22 February 2017 Updated 22 February 2017

Belgium's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Development Cooperation Alexander De Croo is hosting on 2 March 2017 the Brussels International Conference SHE DECIDES. This conference is coorganised with Lilianne Ploumen, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands, Isabella Lövin, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate of Sweden and Ulla Tørnæs, Minister for Development Cooperation of Denmark in support of the Global Fundraising Initiative SHE DECIDES.

Tid: 2 mars 2017 at 08.15

Plats: Petit Sablon 8 bis, 1000 Brussels

SHE DECIDES is a strong statement in support of women's human rights, in particular their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Each woman should have the right to decide freely for herself when and how many children she wants to have.

This international conference will take place at the Egmont Palace in Brussels (Place du Petit Sablon 8, 1000 Brussels). Like minded countries, NGOs and international organizations will give their support to organizations working on sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls.

The press is invited to cover the entire event. At 8.30 there is a press point by ministers Alexander De Croo, Lilianne Ploumen, Isabella Lövin and Ulla Tørnæs. At 13.00 opportunity for cameras to take a group photo.

Appointment for the press: 8.15 at Petit Sablon 8 bis, 1000 Brussels

Mandatory registration through <mailto:michael.vlamijnck@diplobel.fed.be> before Monday 27 February 2017 at 12.00 at the latest. Please mention:

- Name, given name
- Media + function
- Number of press card.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark will hold the She Decides conference in Brussels on 2 March 2017

Published 09 February 2017 Updated 09 February 2017

Sweden's Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin, together with the development cooperation ministers of Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark, is to convene an international conference entitled She Decides on 2 March in Brussels.

"She Decides is taking a stand for women's rights, in particular their obvious right to decide over their own bodies. We will mobilise political and financial support and show that there is a counterweight to the worrying developments we are seeing in the US and in other parts of the world," says Ms Lövin.

The conference will mobilise political impetus and financial support for organisations realising sexual and reproductive health and rights for millions of women and girls throughout the world. This includes providing access to counselling, evidence-based information and sex and relationship education, contraception, maternity care and safe abortions.

Government representatives from some 50 countries around the world will be invited to the conference, along with intergovernmental organisations, civil society and private actors. Participants will talk about practical efforts for women's health and rights, including access to safe abortions. Women and girls will bear witness to the crucial impact this has had on their lives.

Sweden is co-organising the conference to contribute to a global partnership on these issues of gender equality and rights.

Sweden welcomes additional support for the She Decides initiative via www.shedecides.eu.



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment

Government proposes historic climate reform for Sweden

Published 06 February 2017 Updated 06 February 2017

The Government today adopted a proposal on a climate policy framework for Sweden. The climate act and new climate goals will give Sweden an ambitious, long-term and stable climate policy.

A proposal for a new climate policy framework was adopted today. It consists of new climate goals, a climate act and a climate policy council, and is based on an agreement reached last year in the Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives. The proposal has now been sent to the Council on Legislation.

"The climate act is historic and represents an epochal shift for Sweden. Just as we must keep our fiscal house in order, we must also put our house in order regarding climate policy. This is the most important reform that our generation of politicians will carry out for Sweden's young people, our children and grandchildren. Sweden will be one of the world's first fossil-free welfare nations," says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The climate act contains fundamental provisions on the Government's climate policy efforts. In its annual Budget Bill, the Government is to submit a climate review to the Riksdag and draw up a climate action plan for each electoral period.

"There will be no more arbitrariness in climate policy. The large majority of the Riksdag supporting the framework enables a long-term approach and stability, which is exactly what climate policy needs. The transition presents enormous opportunities in the form of jobs, better health and competitiveness," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin to attend UN climate summit

Published 14 November 2016 Updated 14 November 2016

Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin will travel to the COP22 UN climate summit in Marrakech today to lead the Swedish delegation. Negotiations are already under way on how the Paris Agreement should be implemented in practice, and since the Agreement has now entered into force, the first Meeting of the Parties will be held this week.

"There is no time to lose. Now we have to gather all positive forces and use the current global impetus to implement the Paris Agreement. Following the US elections, Sweden and the EU have an increased responsibility to push the work forwards," says Ms Lövin.

As well as leading the delegation's negotiating activities, Ms Lövin will also take part in a number of ministerial meetings, side events and new initiatives to accelerate countries' emissions reductions and secure financing for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries. She will also take part in the first official Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, to be held on Tuesday. Leaders from all countries that have so far ratified the Agreement will be in attendance.

The major issue at COP22 is developing the Paris rule book.

Sweden's three priorities are ensuring that:

- **the review mechanism** contributes in the best possible way to the parties increasing their ambitions over time;
- a transparent **strengthened reporting system** is developed in a way that

makes it possible to monitor and compare all parties' commitments over time, globally and individually;

- **and a good balance is struck between investments in renewable energy and investments in climate change adaptation in developing countries.**

Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog is also a member of the Swedish negotiating delegation. COP22 in Marrakech runs from 7 to 18 November.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Paris climate agreement enters into force today

Published 04 November 2016 Updated 04 November 2016

The Paris climate agreement enters into force on 4 November 2016, which means that the framework adopted by the world's countries in Paris in December 2015 becomes binding for the countries that have ratified it.

To date, 97 countries – representing nearly 70 per cent of the world's total emissions – have ratified the agreement. These include the EU and 11 EU Member States, including Sweden. Sweden ratified the agreement on 13 October, which means that we become party to it 30 days later, on 12 November.

"I note that the world's countries have shown that they take the issue of climate change seriously when almost half of all countries have already ratified the Paris Agreement. Entry into force has gone very quickly, considering that less than one year has passed since the agreement was reached in Paris," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties (COP22) will begin in Marrakech on Monday 7 November. On 15 November, during the second week in Marrakech, the first Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA1) will open.

The comprehensive work on implementation of the agreement and developing its regulatory framework began during the year. Emphasis is now focused on the technical work needed to support implementation and follow-up of the climate agreement.

The global 'stocktake' is a key part of the agreement and aims to inform the countries of what is needed to achieve the temperature targets and so provide the basis for scaling up the national contributions. This requires a transparent system where the countries openly report their estimates and measurements of greenhouse gas emissions and removals.

"At the first meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, we are now meeting as countries with common long-term objectives. I will try to ensure that we achieve a shared high level of ambition in the work ahead and that we design a robust regulatory framework for the Paris Agreement," says Ms Lövin.

The Paris climate agreement



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government increases support to Iraqi people

Published 27 October 2016 Updated 27 October 2016

The Government is planning to give almost SEK 90 million in additional development aid to areas liberated from Daesh. At the same time, work has begun on a new multi-year aid strategy for Iraq.

"It is extremely important to provide assistance quickly to fill the vacuum that otherwise could easily arise. People who have lived under Daesh's grip of terror must be given the opportunity to establish a future for themselves and live a dignified life without threats or violence. Hopefully these measures will help many of those forced to flee to other parts of the country to return home as soon as possible," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The offensive to liberate Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul, Daesh's most important remaining stronghold in the country, started just over a week ago. The advances of Daesh in Iraq have had enormous consequences for the civilian population and resulted in a large number of internally displaced people. The destruction in the cities they fled is extensive. To strengthen and stabilise areas liberated from Daesh, Sweden plans to provide almost SEK 90 million of additional funding to the UNDP's Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilisation (FFIS). As a large donor, Sweden also sits on the FFIS steering committee. The needs are great in these areas and measures include repairing water and sewage systems, restoring clinics and schools, increasing access to electricity and creating job opportunities.

Work is also starting now on drawing up a new five-year aid strategy for Iraq. The decision to phase out the previous aid strategy was taken by the former Government on the grounds that Iraq was a middle-income country.

The situation since then has deteriorated drastically, with ongoing armed conflict against Daesh, increased political instability and religious clashes, human rights violations and a deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

"Developments in Iraq are deeply troubling and the country is in great need of national reconciliation and long-term stabilisation. The world cannot cease its support to Iraq or fall into the trap of focusing only on emergency assistance. We must manage to do both – provide assistance here and now and support democratic and inclusive development," says Ms Lövin.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) will be instructed to produce background material for a strategy. The aim is that the overall focus will be on peacebuilding, statebuilding and gender equality, areas in which Sweden is considered to have clear added value. The plan is to launch the strategy, encompassing around SEK 130 million a year, in mid-2017.

Sweden is also one of the largest humanitarian donors to Iraq. The targeted humanitarian support for 2016 currently amounts to around SEK 155 million. In recent weeks, Sida has decided to contribute more than SEK 12 million to measures in the Mosul area.

Sweden also gives major non-earmarked core support to several humanitarian organisations working in Iraq.



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government presents historic climate and environment budget

Published 13 September 2016 Updated 13 September 2016

The Government wants to further strengthen Sweden's position as a climate leader. The Budget Bill for 2017 proposes the largest investment budget in the area of climate and the environment in Sweden's history.

The Government's efforts to build our society are accelerating the transition to a more sustainable society. In the budget for 2017, the Government is proposing SEK 12.9 billion in new investments in climate action, fossil-free travel and renewable energy sources for the period 2017–2020. These investments will primarily be made in four areas: the transition to renewable energy, fossil-free travel, the 'Involving all of Sweden' initiative and international climate investments.

Climate Leap and urban environment agreements

Through the Climate Leap, the Government is investing a total of SEK 3.5 billion in regional and local initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is being matched by at least 50 per cent co-financing by businesses, municipalities, county councils and tenant-owner associations, thus enabling SEK 7–9 billion in climate investments in Sweden during the period 2015–2020.

The Government proposes increased investment in urban environment agreements. These agreements were launched to contribute to sustainable urban environments through support for public transport investments. This support will now be expanded to include investments in cycling infrastructure as well. The SEK 500 million per year in 2015–2018 that

previously applied will be increased by SEK 250 million in 2017 and SEK 500 million in 2018.

Fossil-free travel

As a step in breaking free from fossil fuels, the Government is continuing to strengthen the railways to improve the possibilities for more journeys and transports to take place by train. The Government is allocating SEK 5.9 billion to augment resources for the operation and maintenance of railways during the period 2019–2020, and intends to present an infrastructure bill to the Riksdag proposing an economic framework for a national plan during the period 2018–2020.

A special investment of SEK 200 million will be implemented in 2017 to increase railway capacity and make the system more robust.

International investments

The Government is also introducing a programme for purchasing and cancelling emission allowances in the EU. The intention is to invest SEK 300 million each year in the programme during the period 2018–2040. The initiative is a concrete measure to reduce the total amount of carbon dioxide that may be emitted within the EU Emissions Trading System. SEK 500 million will be added to the development cooperation framework during the period 2017–2020. The proposed increase will improve opportunities for climate financing in low and middle income countries.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

New aid initiative focusing on displaced children

Published 31 August 2016 Updated 31 August 2016

Humanitarian needs in the world are huge. In the autumn amending budget for 2016, which is based on an agreement with the Left Party, the Government proposes that SEK 6.4 billion be fed back to development assistance. SEK 2.5 billion of this will go to new initiatives focusing on displaced children, and SEK 3.9 billion will restore initiatives previously subject to cuts.

In the spring amending budget for 2016, the Government proposed a reduction of SEK 4.1 billion in the development assistance appropriation due to the increased costs of asylum reception. The forecast for the number of asylum seekers has since decreased, which means that funds can be restored to the development assistance appropriation.

Today, 65 million people around the world have fled their homes, and 130 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. There is little indication that the humanitarian situation will improve. Half of displaced people are children. Children are particularly vulnerable in refugee situations. UNICEF estimates that 15 million children in Nigeria, South Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Malawi need immediate support. At the same time, like many other parts of the humanitarian system, UNICEF is suffering from a serious lack of funds for its humanitarian operations.

"The world needs countries that demonstrate leadership in acute humanitarian situations. I am proud that Sweden is now shifting up another gear to help children fleeing from war, conflict and disasters," says Minister

for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

A large proportion of the extra funds set aside in the autumn amending budget for 2016 will be allocated to core support to humanitarian organisations' budgets. Core support enables these organisations to react quickly and flexibly to sudden crises and deteriorations in existing situations without having to wait for donors to approve targeted funds.

While the acute need for life-sustaining measures such as deliveries of food and medical supplies has sky-rocketed, there is also a growing need for more long-term measures. For this reason, measures are also needed to help displaced people to find work and ways to support themselves, even in difficult environments. It is also important that children have the opportunity to go to school. More than three million children in Syria have been forced to stop attending school as a result of the war, for example.

"It is not enough to provide food, blankets and medicines, there must also be more long-term measures to build faith in the future among people who are stuck in refugee camps. And we must strengthen work on peacebuilding and statebuilding, democracy and human rights, to prevent conflicts breaking out in the first place," says Ms Lövin.

The Government will also raise its level of ambition with respect to achieving the Global Goal target of improved access to sanitation for 60 million people by 2030. Access to water and sanitation generates many positive effects for the economy, people's health and gender equality.

The SEK 6.4 billion will be allocated as follows:

- Humanitarian aid focusing on children: SEK 1.6 billion (SEK 500 million to UNICEF, a total of SEK 600 million to the UNHCR, CERF, the WFP, etc., and SEK 500 million to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency's humanitarian funding)
- Fragile states (including Iraq) and long-term efforts: SEK 500 million
- Gender equality, SRHR, environment/climate and civil society organisations: SEK 400 million
- Restoration of previous cuts and appropriation credits: SEK 3.9 billion



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden, France and Germany in future initiative for the EU

Published 12 July 2016 Updated 12 July 2016

On Monday 11 July, Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde is meeting the French and German EU ministers in Berlin to jointly raise the level of ambition for EU job creation efforts and to step up the important climate efforts that the world has undertaken since Paris. Together, they will sign a declaration that shows a higher level of ambition and strengthened cooperation on a few specific issues.

– The world is facing major challenges, in which cooperation and solidarity are essential for our shared success. Climate change, the refugee crisis and unemployment are just a few examples of challenges that must be solved together, across national borders. The European Union was formed with the aim of a more peaceful and stronger Europe, and its most important tasks lie ahead of it, says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

– Brexit does not mean a pause for European cooperation – quite the reverse – political engagement for a united, democratic and open Europe must be strengthened. Sweden also needs to find new partnerships, as we will lose an important partner – the UK – in EU cooperation, says Ms Linde.

Monday's meeting is about creating new jobs, transitioning to a fossil-free Europe and integrating millions of new people in our societies. It is also about standing up for values that have characterised post-war European cooperation, such as gender equality, openness and diversity, at a time when these values are being challenged from many different quarters. It is more

important than ever for European politicians to act responsibly and work for a Europe that is able to meet the challenges of the future instead of creating more division.

As a leader, Sweden plays, and will increasingly play, a key role in the EU. Today we already have more influence than many other Member States of equivalent size. We will work actively to ensure that the EU is better at solving the issues that people expect – contributing to people's daily lives. It is particularly important that the EU focuses, through trade, on creating conditions for more jobs with decent conditions and is able to realise the goals that were adopted at the climate change conference in Paris. If the EU succeeds in this, people will see results in their daily lives and thus the EU's legitimacy will also increase.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sida Director-General is new chair of OECD-DAC

Published 11 July 2016 Updated 11 July 2016

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) today appointed Director-General of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Charlotte Petri Gornitzka, as its new chair.

– The election of Ms Petri Gornitzka as new chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee is a success for Sweden and international aid. This shows that Sweden is an important actor in the area of aid and has considerable international support, says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

As chair of the DAC, Ms Petri Gornitzka will lead the Committee's meetings and represent the donor community in international forums, such as the UN, and in meetings with developing countries and other development actors.

– I am proud of Sweden's efforts in international development and of the confidence shown in Sweden and Ms Petri Gornitzka with this important nomination. In addition to her broad knowledge of development issues, Charlotte will bring with her the long tradition of high-quality and well-reputed Swedish development cooperation to the DAC, says Ms Lövin.

Ms Petri Gornitzka will be the first Swede to take on the role of chair, and the first woman to lead the DAC since the Committee was founded more than 50 years ago.

The OECD-DAC brings together the world's largest donors to develop aid and ensure its quality. It conducts regular examinations of donors' aid and compiles statistics on aid flows.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Real emission reductions and more pressure on the EU due to new Swedish EU ETS policy

Published 02 July 2016 Updated 02 July 2016

The Swedish government today unveiled a new program with the aim to buy and cancel allowances in the EU emissions trading system. The government will annually invest 300 million SEK in allowances. The program is set to run throughout the period 2018-2040. At the current price, emissions of approximately 7 million tons of carbon dioxide will be purchased and cancelled annually.

The new program will not be netted against Sweden's commitments under the EU effort sharing decision or against the national climate target. The cancellation indicates more ambitious Swedish climate actions.

- EU ETS is the EU's key climate policy instruments, but the system has not worked as intended because of the huge surplus of allowances. Sweden will continue to work hard to reform and strengthen the EU ETS in the ongoing negotiations within the EU. By launching this program, we show that Sweden wants to see a strong emissions trading system and we also contribute to the higher level of ambition of the EU's climate policy needed in order to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement, says Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate.

A checkpoint will be set up in 2025 and evaluations of possible further measures in the program in relation to the development of the EU's total emissions will be conducted every five years. The Swedish government will

invite more countries to participate in the program. Individuals and businesses are invited and encouraged to purchase and cancel allowances. Consequently, the government will propose that companies be given greater incentive to do so through tax deductions in its autumn budget.

- Through this action, we can annually cancel another several million tons of emissions, and the overall effect will be considerably less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, says Isabella Lövin.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

New strategy for Sweden's regional development cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia and the Pacific Region 2016–2021

Published 23 June 2016 Updated 23 June 2016

Yesterday, the Government adopted two new strategies for regional development cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa and regional development cooperation in Asia and the Pacific Region.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Sweden's new regional strategy in sub-Saharan Africa will contribute to strengthened capacity to face cross-border challenges and opportunities at regional level. The strategy focuses on four areas: democratisation, human rights, human security, and climate change and environmental adaptation measures.

"Climate change and armed conflicts are two examples of challenges that transcend national borders and demand increased regional cooperation. The new strategy shows Sweden's broad commitment to development, security and climate in the region," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The new regional strategy amounts to SEK 450 million per year. In total, the strategy encompasses SEK 2.7 billion until 2021. The strategy will be implemented by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Folke Bernadotte Academy.

Asia and the Pacific Region

Regional development cooperation in Asia and the Pacific Region will focus on strengthening regional actors and states to take greater responsibility concerning the environment and climate, human rights, democracy and gender equality. The focus is to be on cross-border challenges, where solutions can best be sought in regional cooperation.

"We focus regional development assistance in Asia and the Pacific Region to the places in the region facing the greatest challenges – in the human rights area and with regard to the effects of climate change and environmental damage," says Ms Lövin.

Asia and the Pacific Region will be hardest hit by climate change. The effects are particularly evident for small island states in the Pacific Ocean.

"We now have the opportunity to contribute to strengthened regional cooperation on adaptation, renewable energy and other matters."

The new regional strategy amounts to SEK 300 million per year. In total, the strategy encompasses SEK 1800 million for the strategy period.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Proposals for new goals and measures for climate and air policy

Published 23 June 2016 Updated 23 June 2016

The Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives has submitted its report to the Government. It contains proposals for several new goals for climate and air policy. In a previous interim report from February, a new climate policy framework and a climate act were proposed.

One of the new proposed climate goals is that emissions from domestic transport is to be reduced by 70 per cent by 2030 compared with the level in 2010. Previously, no quantified emissions targets for the transport sector had been set.

The Committee also proposes goals for emissions reductions in other areas: emissions outside the EU Emissions Trading System must be reduced by at least 75 per cent by 2040 compared with 1990.

The Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives proposes a strategy for a cohesive and long-term climate policy. The strategy covers transports, machinery, industry, housing, agriculture, forestry and other areas. Sweden's ambition to be a leader in climate adaptation should be an overarching objective for industrial and innovation policy.

"I am pleased that a broad majority of the Riksdag supports the report. Sweden is to be a leader in the work to realise the ambitious goals of the Paris climate agreement, and this requires a strategy with clear goals," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives also includes a strategy for a coordinated clean air policy. In its report, the Committee proposes four new intermediate targets. The targets cover road traffic, small-scale wood burning, the import of air pollution from other countries and the commitments that follow from the NEC Directive. The Committee also provides concrete proposals for policy instruments and measures in each area.

"Air pollution in Sweden contributes to some 5 500 premature deaths each year and entails significant socioeconomic costs. The Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives' proposals can help manage specific challenges in the area of air quality and also reduce our climate impact," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Karolina Skog and Isabella Lövin take part in Environment Council meeting in Luxembourg

Published 21 June 2016 Updated 21 June 2016

20 June 2016: EU climate and environment ministers are meeting today in Luxembourg. The agenda includes negotiations on the EU's emissions trading system, the National Emission Ceilings Directive and ratification of the Paris climate agreement. Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin are taking part in their first Environment Council meeting.

The ministers will discuss the ongoing negotiations on new targets for the National Emission Ceilings Directive (NEC Directive). The NEC Directive regulates emissions of various air pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxide in the Member States. The Council and the Parliament have for some time been engaged in difficult negotiations. At the Environment Council meeting, the ministers are expected to receive information on the Presidency's plan regarding continued negotiations.

"Sweden wants to see an ambitious agreement on how air pollution in the EU is to be reduced. We hope for a speedy resolution to this drawn-out process," says Ms Skog.

The negotiations on how to reform the EU's emissions trading system have been ongoing for nearly a year. The ministers will receive a status report at the Environment Council meeting and provide input for the continued

negotiations. The European Commission will also present two additional legislative proposals this summer: one on a division of responsibilities for emission reductions in the non-ETS sectors, and one on emissions and removals of emissions from land use and forestry. Together, the three negotiations will show how the EU intends to achieve its climate objectives by 2030.

"Sweden takes a positive view of the fact that the EU is now seriously considering how to achieve the objectives, and is pushing for a higher level of ambition in all matters," says Ms Lövin.

The issue of how the EU should regulate endocrine disruptors remains relevant. Last week, the European Commission presented a proposal on how to develop criteria for identifying these substances. The Government considers that the European Commission's proposal is insufficient and will not provide the strong effect necessary to eliminate endocrine disruptors from products. Sweden wants to see a more incisive proposal that applies the precautionary principle, i.e. that a substance suspected of having an endocrine-disrupting effect is to be completely prohibited even if research has not completely proven these suspicions.

The ministers are also expected to adopt a statement on the EU's ratification of the Paris climate agreement. They will also agree on Council conclusions on two different action plans presented by the European Commission – one on a circular economy and one on trade in endangered species of animals and plants.

The meeting is the last Environment Council meeting during the Netherlands Presidency. On 1 July, Slovakia will take over the Presidency of the EU.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

New strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Mali, 2016–2020

Published 17 June 2016 Updated 17 June 2016

The Government has adopted a new five-year strategy for Swedish development cooperation with Mali. The new strategy for development cooperation will focus on democratisation, human rights and human security, and climate change and environmental adaptation measures. In total, the new development strategy for Mali amounts to SEK 1.2 billion over the period 2016–2020.

Mali is one of the ten poorest countries in the world. The security situation continues to be a major challenge and Mali's population needs to see concrete results in the areas of security and development.

"Our new strategy focuses on human rights and peace and reconciliation mechanisms, at both national and local level. At the same time, we give priority to the transition to renewable energy," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

Sweden has had bilateral development cooperation with Mali for 16 years. In addition to development cooperation, Sweden is also one of the largest humanitarian donors to the Sahel region, including Mali.

"The strategy shows Sweden's broad commitment to development, security and environment. We contribute to a strengthened social contract and reduced vulnerability to relapse into conflict. Sweden will also contribute to

more sustainable use of natural resources and strengthened resilience against climate change," says Ms Lövin.

The three priority areas of the strategy are:

- Strengthened democracy and gender equality, and greater respect for human rights
- Human security and freedom from violence
- A better environment, limited climate impact and greater resilience to environmental impact, climate change and natural disasters

The new strategy includes annual support averaging SEK 240 million, which is an increase compared to the current strategy, which amounts to SEK 200 million per year.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin discusses peace at UN Security Council

Published 07 June 2016 Updated 07 June 2016

Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin is visiting the United Nations headquarters in New York from 7 to 10 June. There she will take part in a debate in the UN Security Council on protection of civilians and peacekeeping operations, and a seminar on the UN Global Goals and education, together with Minister for Education Gustav Fridolin.

"At a time when large parts of the world are experiencing war and conflict, as well as the largest refugee flows since the Second World War, I will talk about the importance of respecting the fundamental humanitarian principles. This also applies to the UN's own peacekeeping troops, who must be well prepared for the operations they are to undertake and trained in ethics, gender equality and human rights. The world must be able to trust the UN to do its job," says Ms Lövin.

Her speech to the Security Council will be delivered in connection with an open debate on 10 June. Alongside Minister for Education Gustav Fridolin, Ms Lövin will also take part in a seminar on the UN's new Global Goals and Sweden's First Generation campaign, which is about highlighting the particularly important role of young people and teachers in achieving the goals, on 9 June.

On 8 June – World Oceans Day – Ms Lövin will take part in a ceremony to welcome the Polynesian voyaging canoe Hōkūle'a alongside UN Secretary

General Ban Ki-moon. Alongside a number of small island nations, Sweden has taken the lead on a follow-up mechanism to ensure the global implementation of Global Goal 14 on sustainable seas. Sweden and Fiji will jointly host a conference on sustainable seas in Fiji in June 2017.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice

Government reshuffle, 25 May 2016

Published 25 May 2016 Updated 01 June 2016

Newly appointed ministers

Minister for the Environment (Ministry of the Environment and Energy):
Karolina Skog (Green Party)

Minister for Housing and Digital Development (Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation): Peter Eriksson (Green Party)

Minister for EU Affairs and Trade (Ministry for Foreign Affairs): Ann Linde (Social Democratic Party)

Changes by ministry

Prime Minister's Office

- Minister for Policy Coordination and Energy Ibrahim Baylan will be responsible for policy coordination and energy issues.
- Minister for Strategic Development and Nordic Cooperation Kristina Persson leaves the Government.
- The Government will establish a Committee for Strategic Development under the Prime Minister's Office.

Ministry of Employment

- Ylva Johansson's title is changed to Minister for Employment and

Integration.

Ministry of Finance

- Minister for Public Administration Ardalan Shekarabi will be responsible for eGovernment.

Ministry of Justice

- Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson will be responsible for arms export control issues.

Ministry of the Environment and Energy

- Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog takes office as head of Ministry, with responsibility for environmental issues and urban environment agreements.

- Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson leaves the Government.

Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

- Minister for Housing and Digital Development Peter Eriksson takes office, with responsibility for housing and digital development issues.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

- Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin will be responsible for international development cooperation and climate issues and is Deputy Prime Minister, but will not substitute for the Prime Minister.

- Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde takes office, with responsibility for EU affairs and trade issues.

- Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will be responsible for Nordic affairs.

Press contacts for the Prime Minister and newly

appointed ministers

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Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Wallström and Lövin to attend global summit in Istanbul

Published 23 May 2016 Updated 23 May 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin will take part in the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) on 23 and 24 May. Some 150 countries will take part in the Summit, which is being held at the initiative of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Summit is taking place at a time in which there are more, and more extensive, humanitarian crises than the world has seen for some time. If all of the 125 million people around the globe in urgent need of humanitarian assistance were gathered in a single country, that country would be the eleventh largest in the world. At the same time, UN appeals are underfunded and there is inadequate respect for international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles.

At the Summit, Ms Wallström will lead a round-table discussion on the situation of women and girls in humanitarian crises. She will also take part in discussions on humanitarian financing. Ms Lövin will take part in discussions on political leadership and how war and conflict can be prevented. The ministers will also take part in a number of side events on topics including international humanitarian law, sexual and gender-based violence, and the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding.

Sweden has produced around 50 specific actions, encompassing all seven round-table subject areas, which will be presented at the Summit. Sweden's main priorities at the WHS are strengthening international humanitarian law, ensuring the influence of women and girls, promoting new forms of financing, and generating hope and a future for all women, men and children

trapped in protracted crises.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden among the largest donors of development aid in the world in proportion to its GNI

Published 13 April 2016 Updated 13 April 2016

New figures from OECD DAC for 2015 show that Sweden is one of the countries in the world with the highest level of development aid as a percentage of GNI. This applies whether costs for asylum reception are included or not.

In 2015, Sweden's development aid budget amounted to 0.96 per cent of GNI. In the OECD DAC outcome data, Sweden ends up with a much higher figure: 1.4 per cent of GNI. The figure is high because Sweden, as in previous years, reports total costs for reception of asylum seekers from developing countries in accordance with applicable DAC principles on what can be counted as development aid. This also includes costs financed through parts of the central government budget other than development aid. Neither the development aid budget nor development aid activities have been affected by the increased costs of asylum reception in 2015. The figure 1.4 per cent also includes advance payments to a number of UN bodies and a capital subscription in the form of a note to the Green Climate Fund, which results in a higher outcome.

In the development aid budget for 2015, 22 per cent of the 0.96 per cent of GNI went to costs for asylum reception. For 2016, the Government has set a limit – a maximum of 30 per cent of the development aid budget may go towards asylum costs. According to the spring amending budget, presented today, asylum costs in 2016 will amount to 28.3 per cent of the development aid budget, which totals approximately SEK 43.4 billion.

The DAC data also shows the percentage of total reported development aid funds that went to asylum costs at home, which in Sweden's case was 33.8 per cent. However, this includes costs financed through other parts of the central government budget. It is therefore important to underline that in 2015, 22 per cent of the Swedish development aid budget went to asylum reception.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Delegates agree major political commitments

Published 05 April 2016 Updated 05 April 2016

Stockholm, 5 April, 2016. - Over 40 countries agree new commitments to support fragile and conflict affected states - Commitments focused on tackling root causes of conflict through the 'New Deal' - The New Deal is an action plan and guide for prioritising investment in peacebuilding and statebuilding - Since launching in 2008 the New Deal has been 'pilot tested' in 8 countries including Somalia, Sierra Leone, and Timor Leste with notable success.

Today, 1.5 billion of the world's poorest live in countries grappling with conflict or fragility. By 2030, without coordinated international action to tackle the root causes, two thirds of the world's poor will be living in countries and regions plagued by endemic violence, and fragility. This will undermine any prospect of achieving the UN's ambitious goal of eradicating extreme poverty in Agenda 2030, which the world signed up to last September. And, crucially, it could further precipitate the global humanitarian and refugee crises and heightened threats of terrorism with increasing repercussions on a global scale.

Recognising the urgency of this challenge, members and supporters of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, from over 40 countries, gathered in Stockholm today to commit to speeding up and scaling

up their efforts to prevent conflict by tackling its root causes.

Speaking at the end of the meeting, Sweden's Minister of International Development Cooperation AND Co-Chair of the International Dialogue, Isabella Lövin summed up the challenge:

"This high level meeting comes at a critical time. Increasing refugee flows, violent extremism, a rise in wars and conflicts as well as climate related disasters have changed the global landscape. It is now more important than ever to tackle the root causes of conflict, to fight against extreme poverty and to work on resilience. Agenda 2030 and the Global Goals provide us with an opportunity for action - we need a New Deal for Peace!"

What is the International Dialogue?

The International Dialogue is a unique multi-stakeholder partnership between the 'g7+' group of countries affected by conflict and fragility, donors from OECD countries, and civil society organisations.

Founded in in 2008 out of the belief that externally imposed solutions do not work and often actually undermine prospects of recovery of states weakened by war and other forms of fragility, the International Dialogue, spearheaded the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States in 2011.

What is the New Deal?

The New Deal is essentially an action plan and guide for how to prioritise investment in peacebuilding and statebuilding in fragile environments. 'Implementing the New Deal', as it came to be known, meant investing financially and politically in the 5 peacebuilding and statebuilding goals (PSGs) - inclusive politics, security, justice, jobs and basic social services, but in line with basic aid effectiveness principles and nationally defined priorities. This meant rebuilding broken down national institutions (statebuilding), but at the same time rebuilding broken down relations between states and citizens, a common feature in conflict-affected and fragile settings. The New Deal provided a step-by-step guide as to how to do this practically, in ways that donors could then agree to collectively underwrite.

Progress so far – the case of Somalia

After just a few years, where the New Deal has been 'pilot tested' (Somalia, Sierra Leone, Timor Leste), there have been notable successes. After 20 years of war and incoherent international approaches, although not out of the woods yet, inspired by the New Deal, Somalia has made huge strides. Both Government and International donors, since 2013 have united behind the same priorities, working in partnership, prioritising peacebuilding and statebuilding and pulling actors together across diverse sectors (security, justice, defence, diplomatic) to join forces to build peace.

While much has been achieved, the International Dialogue acknowledges that much remains to be done to turn New Deal commitments, into concrete results on the ground and across the board. In some countries, progress has been slow and erratic; in others there has been little progress at all, as initial international and national enthusiasm has waned.

Today's Declaration:

The Stockholm Declaration outlines what members must do now to revive commitment to the New Deal and take it the next level, and fast if the UN's ambitious 2030 Agenda for sustainable development for all is to be realised, particularly in fragile and conflict affected environments.

The International Dialogue recognises it cannot do this alone but must work with new stakeholders that can carry its message. At this, its 5th Global Meeting, the Dialogue joined forces with new allies from the humanitarian community, other countries also grappling with conflict and fragility, and a wider network of like-minded stakeholders. Together as part of the 'Stockholm Declaration' they called for stepped commitment to prevention and tackling the root cause of conflict and fragility. Next month, with the International Dialogue, they will send a strong message to World Humanitarian Summit about how to forge stronger collaborative partnerships between humanitarian and development actors based on shared commitments to these goals.

Statement highlights:

The members of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding concretely committed to:

- accelerating and improving the effort to address root causes of fragility, conflict and violence. And to use the New Deal Peacebuilding and

Statebuilding Goals as tools to guide their interventions

- strengthening women's active participation in peacebuilding by linking the implementation of the New Deal to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions, in particular UNSCR 2250 on the need to increase representation of youth in decision-making at all levels;
- developing coherent approaches to make politics inclusive; and building effective structures for conflict management and reconciliation.
- Using development aid more effectively and coordinated. Target development support in fragile and conflict –affected settings, especially in protracted crisis, and bridge the gap between humanitarian aid and long-term development aid.
- Build stronger partnership in order to build trust and share experiences between countries as well as donors and civil society organisations.

Implementing the 2030 Agenda by using New Deal principles

The New Deal is the preferred framework for achieving resilience and development results in fragile and conflict-affected environments and for meeting our commitment to 'leaving no one behind'. Within this context the members of the IDPS agreed that they will:

- increase political and financial efforts to operationalise and implement the 2030 Agenda in line with the New Deal principles and according to the special needs of fragile contexts;
- strengthen multi-stakeholder dialogue at country level; and
- streamline bureaucratic procedures to increase timely delivery of development support.

The IDPS members also committed to using development aid in more innovative ways to better respond to protracted crises. They will:

- aim to increase the investment of country programmable aid in countries affected by fragility, violence and conflict;
- strengthen national public financial management systems and adopt proven risk management strategies in order to reduce fiduciary risks so that the wider use of country systems becomes possible;
- implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development by scaling up the levels of development support invested in domestic resource mobilisation by 2020, with a special focus on

tackling tax avoidance schemes in line with the Addis Ababa Tax Initiative

About the Ministerial Meeting, the Dialogue, and the New Deal

- The meeting was chaired by the Government's of Sweden and Sierra Leone and was attended by Ministers from International Dialogue signatory states plus major multilateral development organisations including the World Bank and the UN.
- The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding is unique. It is the only peacebuilding and statebuilding forum that brings together donors, fragile and conflict affected states and civil society, to collectively forge transitions out of fragility and towards peace and development.
- By promoting its 'New Deal' principles as a guide to effective engagement in fragile environments, it is rebuilding state capacity and facilitating country-led and country owned pathways out of fragility and conflict in countries as diverse as Somalia, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan.
- The International Dialogue's New Deal is endorsed and supported by 40 signatory states, as well as the major development actors such as the World Bank, UN, and the EU.

For further information on the International Dialogue and the New Deal please refer to the enclosed media briefing note.

Notes to editors:

For further information and interview requests please contact:

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Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

New version: High-level meeting in Stockholm adopts the Stockholm Declaration against war and conflicts

Published 30 March 2016 Updated 30 March 2016

On 5 April, leaders from countries affected by conflict, donor countries, the UN and civil society organisations will meet in Stockholm. Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin will host the meeting, where some 40 countries and organisations are set to agree on a declaration – the Stockholm Declaration – on how to strengthen efforts to prevent conflicts and create the conditions for lasting peace.

In her capacity as chair of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, Ms Lövin is hosting the meeting together with East Timor's deputy Minister of Finance and Economic Development Helder Lopes. Participants will include UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, and ministers and government representatives from a number of countries including Somalia, Liberia, Timor-Leste, the UK, Belgium and Germany.

High-level meeting on 5 April: Addressing Fragility and Building Peace in a Changing World

Press briefing: 14.10–14.40, with the possibility for individual interviews. UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and Sweden's Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin. Please state whether

you are interested in interviewing other participants.

Registration is required; please contact Press Secretary Annika Flensburg via email.

Venue: Münchenbryggeriet, Stockholm. Room: Fågelström.

The number of armed conflicts in the world is increasing. Not since the Second World War have so many people been displaced, and the need for urgent disaster relief has doubled since 2012. Poverty is increasingly concentrated in conflict-affected countries and it is estimated that, by 2030, two thirds of the world's poor will be living in these countries. In order for the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the world last autumn to become a reality, there must be a greater focus on countries affected by conflict.

"Efforts to prevent war and conflicts are currently not satisfactory. The international community has to get better at working in these environments. Coordination is lacking on the part of the donor countries and support to affected countries is fragmented. In Stockholm we will agree on a new plan to hone these efforts. The world cannot afford any more wars," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding is an association of some 40 countries and organisations working together to ensure the more efficient use of aid in conflict-affected countries and fragile states.

The ministerial meeting will take place in connection with the Stockholm Forum on Security and Development, which is organised by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Press invitation: High-level meeting in Stockholm on new plan to combat war and conflicts

Published 23 March 2016 Updated 23 March 2016

On 5 April, leaders from countries affected by conflict, donor countries, the UN and civil society organisations will meet in Stockholm. Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin will host the meeting, where participants are set to agree on a declaration about how to strengthen efforts to prevent conflicts and create the conditions for a lasting peace.

The number of armed conflicts in the world is increasing; not since the Second World War have so many people been displaced, and the need for urgent disaster relief has doubled since 2012. Poverty is increasingly concentrated in conflict-affected countries and it is estimated that, by 2030, two thirds of the world's poor will be living in these countries. In order for the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the world last autumn to become a reality, there must be a greater focus on countries affected by conflict.

"Efforts to prevent war and conflicts are currently not up to standard. The international community has to get better at working in these environments. Coordination is lacking on the part of the donor countries and support to affected countries is fragmented. In Stockholm we will agree on a new plan to hone these efforts. The world cannot afford any more wars," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

In her capacity as chair of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, Ms Lövin is hosting the meeting together with Sierra Leone's

Minister of Finance and Economic Development Kaifala Marah. Participants will include UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) Helen Clark, and ministers and government representatives from a number of countries including Somalia, Liberia, Timor-Leste, the UK, Belgium and Germany.

High-level meeting on 5 April: Addressing Fragility and Building Peace in a Changing World

Press briefing: 14:10-14:40, with the possibility for individual interviews. Registration is required; please contact Press Secretary Annika Flensburg via email.

Venue: Münchenbryggeriet, Stockholm. Room: Fågelström.

The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding is an association of some 40 countries and organisations working together to ensure the more efficient use of aid in conflict-affected countries and fragile states.

The ministerial meeting will take place in connection with the Stockholm Forum on Security and Development, which is organised by the Government and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden adopts strategy for gender equality and sustainability within the UN World Food Programme

Published 21 March 2016 Updated 21 March 2016

The Government has adopted a new two-year strategy for the UN World Food Programme (WFP), which highlights the issues Sweden is to pursue to further strengthen the organisation's activities. Increased local procurement, use of cash cards and coupons, and gender equality are some of our priorities. Another priority is the introduction of an environmental management system.

The WFP is the world's largest humanitarian organisation. Its primary goal is to save lives and fight hunger in disaster and emergency situations, using food assistance.

"The WFP plays an extremely important role in helping women, men and children in need. To tackle the challenges that are at record levels, where the need for urgent disaster relief has doubled in just four years, it is necessary for the WFP's work to be honed further," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

Eighty per cent of the needs exist in areas affected by war and conflict. Many of these crises are becoming increasingly protracted, and many people are dependent on urgent disaster relief from the WFP and other actors for many years, sometimes decades.

"As the world's largest humanitarian organisation and a major purchaser, the WFP has huge potential to influence matters in the long term as well. By purchasing more locally and giving those in need of help more cash cards and coupons, the WFP can strengthen local markets, agriculture and women's economic position. If the WFP produces a plan for how to work in a more environmentally sustainable way, I am convinced it can work more efficiently, find synergies and free up resources," says Ms Lövin.

The strategy is also part of Sweden's efforts to ensure more strategic governance of the UN bodies to ensure long-term sustainable results.

In 2014, the WFP delivered 3.2 million tonnes of food assistance to approximately 80 million people in more than 80 countries. Sweden's total support to the WFP in 2015 amounted to approximately SEK 725 million, of which SEK 550 million was core support. For 2016, core support will amount to SEK 600 million, but the total is not clear yet as payments may be made during the course of the year to specific crises.



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government appoints delegation for Sweden's implementation of 2030 Agenda

Published 17 March 2016 Updated 17 March 2016

Today, Minister for Public Administration Ardalan Shekarabi, Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin and Minister for Strategic Development and Nordic Cooperation Kristina Persson presents the delegation that has been instructed by the Government to support and stimulate Sweden's implementation of the UN's 2030 Agenda and its Global Goals for Sustainable Development. The delegation will produce an overarching action plan for Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda and draw attention to examples of best practice in the area.

"The Government's ambition is for Sweden to be a leader in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda and the 17 Global Goals are largely in line with the objectives set by the Riksdag in various policy areas. In several areas, there are already initiatives, action plans and strategies today that will help achieve the 2030 Agenda goals. Sweden has a strong starting position and our work on the 2030 Agenda will enhance sustainable development in Sweden, as well as in the rest of the world. The delegation will have a very important role to play in this work," says Minister for Public Administration Ardalan Shekarabi.

The aim of the delegation is to promote, facilitate and stimulate the work of

implementing the 2030 Agenda. The remit includes conducting a survey and assessment of the extent to which Sweden fulfils the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda; submitting proposals for an overarching action plan for Sweden's implementation; and disseminating information on examples of best practice in the area of socially, economically and environmentally sustainable development, and working to ensure these win attention.

"One of the strengths of the Global Goals is that they apply to all countries. This is the world's chance to eradicate poverty and oppression, and transition to sustainable societies. Development aid will play a central role in reaching the most vulnerable people of all, but decisions must come from every policy area to help overcome obstacles and create opportunities for sustainable development. The delegation is essential for advancing this work. We as a Government have a special responsibility, but broad public engagement is needed to ensure the 2030 Agenda becomes reality," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

The Chair and members of the delegation together have a wide range of skills and experience. Issues they have worked on include human rights, CSR, culture, the environment, local government, public authorities, business, civil society, research and international development work.

The following people will make up the delegation:

Parul Sharma (Chair)

Head of CSR Compliance at Advokatfirman Vinge and Dean of the Academy for Human Rights in Business.

Ida Texell

Director and head of rescue operations at Attunda fire brigade.

Mattias Klum

Photographer, filmmaker and author, specialising in nature, culture and global environmental issues.

Ingrid Petersson

Director General of the Swedish Research Council Formas.

Johan Hassel

CEO of Global Challenge, an independent Swedish think tank.

Johan Rockström

Professor of Environmental Science at Stockholm University and Executive

Director of Stockholm Resilience Centre.

Johanna Sandahl

Chair of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for International Development Cooperation to South Sudan

Published 08 March 2016 Updated 08 March 2016

Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin will arrive in South Sudan today for a two-day visit. The aim of the visit is to promote both the peace process in the country and women's rights.

Ms Lövin will meet representatives of the Government, the opposition and civil society, and discuss how Sweden can support implementation of the peace agreement. Today, on International Women's Day, Ms Lövin will take part in an event with UN Women and local women's organisations, where a central issue is women's participation in peace efforts.

"The civilian population in South Sudan has been subjected to appalling atrocities during the prolonged conflicts in South Sudan. Women and children have been particularly vulnerable. The peace agreement contains promising mechanisms for prosecuting criminals and bringing about national reconciliation. At the same time, it is important that women are not seen merely as victims of the violence of war, but also as actors for peace," says Ms Lövin.

Ms Lövin will also meet actors working with the peace process in South Sudan, particularly the UN UNMISS mission and the newly established Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (JMEC).

"The ceasefire must be respected, violence against the civilian population must cease and help must be permitted to reach those in distress. It is of vital importance that last year's peace agreement is not delayed any further," says Ms Lövin.

Sweden provided SEK 144 million in long-term development assistance to South Sudan in 2015. Ms Lövin's agenda includes visiting internally displaced persons and the Juba Teaching Hospital, where Sweden has financed a newly established programme for midwives. Sweden is also a major donor of emergency relief to South Sudan, which amounted to SEK 310 million in 2015.

South Sudan takes part in the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) forum, of which Ms Lövin is one of two co-chairs. For this reason, peacebuilding and statebuilding issues will be highlighted during the visit.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Increased development aid to Ethiopia to strengthen human rights and prevent natural and climate-related disasters

Published 03 March 2016 Updated 03 March 2016

The Government will today approve a new five-year aid strategy for Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous country. The previous strategy dates from 2003 and there was a major need for a relaunch.

Despite economic progress, Ethiopia is still one of the world's poorest countries, with a rapidly increasing population. The challenges are substantial. Climate change is exacerbating the drought and creating recurrent humanitarian crises, the human rights situation is serious, and the scope for civil society is restricted. At the same time, Ethiopia is Africa's largest contributor of troops to peacekeeping operations, and the country has taken in 700 000 refugees from neighbouring countries and has one of the continent's most ambitious climate policies.

"It is high time that we update our support to Ethiopia. Sweden's engagement for the Ethiopian people goes back half a century. We will use this unique position to strengthen efforts for human rights and a free civil society," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

The ongoing drought caused by the el Niño weather phenomenon is the worst in 30 years, and risks causing a famine affecting millions of people.

"The recurrent humanitarian crises are bringing the Ethiopian people to their knees. We must both assist them in this acute situation and also work with a more long-term perspective to ensure that in the future, people there –

including the hundreds of thousands of refugees – are better equipped against drought and extreme weather events that are being exacerbated by climate change," says Ms Lövin.

The three priority areas of the strategy are:

- Strengthened democracy and gender equality, and increased respect for human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Strengthened resilience to environmental impacts, climate change and natural disasters.
- Improved opportunities for poor people to improve their living conditions, access to livelihoods and work.

Ethiopia was the first country to which Sweden gave development assistance: cooperation began in 1954. The new strategy includes annual support averaging SEK 200 million.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden's development assistance is of world class according to new OECD review

Published 02 February 2016 Updated 02 February 2016

Sweden is described as a global leader in development issues in a mid-term review by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The review states that Sweden is increasing its role as a leader in the work to help people who are suffering due to war, conflicts or natural disasters.

The review also points out Sweden's leading role to implement the new global goals for sustainable development and that Sweden continues to be one of the most generous donors in the world, with its development assistance goal of 1 per cent of GNI.

"We have every reason to be extremely proud. The review shows that Sweden's development assistance is of world class. This refers to both size and quality. The Swedish people are helping to alleviate the suffering of people in distress, to get at the fundamental causes of war and conflicts so that people are not forced to flee, and to make it possible for women and girls to go to school, work and live a free life," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

In addition, the review highlights Sweden's work to relaunch its Policy for Global Development, which involves all policy areas contributing to development. The review states that Sweden is one of the European countries that has received most refugees in 2015. The OECD-DAC notes that in-donor refugee costs have increased in recent years, but that in 2015 the Government decided to cap refugee costs at 30 per cent of the

development assistance budget for 2016. The review praises Sweden for maintaining, in most cases, its current commitments of aid to organisations and countries at the same levels as the support provided in 2015. Whether in-donor costs for refugee reception reach 30 per cent depends on the number of refugees that come to Sweden in 2016, and the adjustment will be made in the spring amending budget.

"The cap shows that Sweden is safeguarding aid. Aid plays an important role in meeting the global challenges that face us," says Ms Lövin.

The OECD-DAC mid-term review is a follow-up of the larger review that the OECD-DAC carried out of Sweden's development assistance in 2013. That review contained proposals consisting of a number of recommendations on how Swedish aid could be improved. The OECD-DAC states that Sweden is well on the way to implementing all its recommendations.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government to adopt new strategies for the large development banks

Published 02 February 2016 Updated 02 February 2016

The Government will adopt new strategies for Sweden's cooperation with the World Bank Group, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Asian Development Bank (AsDB) and the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). These strategies mean that the Government is raising its ambitions regarding work by the development banks on environment and climate issues.

Important points of departure for the strategies are the new Global Goals for sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and work to improve gender equality around the world.

"We will push for the banks to develop plans with timetabled goals for scaling up renewable investments and, in the longer term, phasing out fossil fuels. The development banks have an important role to play in helping developing countries skip the fossil stage and instead directly enter the energy market of the future. The needs are pressing; 1.3 billion people currently do not have electricity. The banks should be an engine to change this," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

"We will also give special priority to work by the development banks in the area of gender equality, so that gender equality is truly integrated into all activities and outcomes in the area are followed up and evaluated. There is

great potential for growth – and therefore potential to combat poverty – in more gender-equal societies," continues Ms Lövin.

The strategies also emphasise that the development banks are to raise their ambitions regarding work with sustainable and inclusive economic development, as well as peace and statebuilding.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden behind resolution to save world's oceans

Published 22 December 2015 Updated 22 December 2015

The United Nations General Assembly will today adopt a resolution to give impetus to the work to protect the world's oceans. Sweden and Fiji initiated the resolution, which has received backing from more than 90 countries from all continents, including small island nations.

"It is very gratifying that the resolution will be passed with such broad support. This is an important step towards creating a global partnership to save the world's oceans," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

"Flourishing, healthy oceans are fundamental if we are to combat poverty and create prosperity for millions of people," Ms Lövin continues.

In September, the UN Member States adopted 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development, of which SDG 14 aims to conserve oceans and marine resources. Sweden and Fiji are working together to give impetus to the implementation of this goal, and to ensure that there is a structure for follow-up in place. The resolution is a first step in the creation of an international partnership. It establishes that a global High-level United Nations Conference will be held in Fiji in June 2017. The conference is intended to result in concrete recommendations on how the work to implement SDG 14 will continue. Political leaders and representatives of the business sector and civil society will be invited to attend.

"The High-level Conference will serve to maintain the political pressure. We also hope to address the current lack of coordination between marine

stakeholders," says Ms Lövin.

The state of our oceans is very serious, and this is an issue that transcends national borders. Populations of fish and marine vertebrates in the world's oceans are now half what they were in 1970. Climate change, unsustainable fisheries, ocean acidification and environmental pollutants affect marine ecosystems. The deteriorating marine environment has the harshest impact on people in the poorest countries.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government adopts a new strategy for the Syria crisis

Published 17 December 2015 Updated 17 December 2015

The Government has today adopted a new five-year aid strategy for the Syria crisis that aims to alleviate the effects of the conflict both inside Syria and on vulnerable groups in the neighbouring countries. The Government is reinvigorating its efforts and will increase support by almost SEK 300 million per year.

"The challenges are enormous and disaster relief is not enough. We also have to find new ways of helping people, building hope for the future and improving the prospects for future peace," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

Sweden is the first donor country to take a long-term comprehensive approach to improving the lives of people in Syria and of refugees from Syria, and other vulnerable groups in neighbouring countries. The strategy for the Syria crisis will provide a total of SEK 1.7 billion (MUSD 200/MEUR 180) between 2016 and 2020. This means that development assistance will increase from SEK 50 million to SEK 340 million per year.

"Two million children in Syria are not going to school and people cannot support themselves. We risk creating lost generations that will make the reconstruction of Syria more difficult. We must try to reverse these developments," says Ms Lövin.

The strategy will prioritise the following:

- improving access to school, health care and public services for people in Syria and for people in the neighbouring countries, including refugees

from Syria, who are in a vulnerable situation due to the Syria crisis,

- improving job opportunities for people in Syria and in the neighbouring countries, including refugees from Syria, who are in a vulnerable situation due to the Syria crisis,
- combating and preventing gender-based violence in Syria and in Syria's neighbouring countries,
- strengthening Syrian civil society organisations and independent Syrian media, and
- increasing knowledge about democracy and human rights.

The strategy complements the humanitarian support that Sweden provides. To date, Sweden has approximately SEK 1.9 billion (MUSD 264/MEUR 210) in humanitarian support to the Syria crisis.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

New initiative to protect women and girls against violence in Myanmar

Published 10 December 2015 Updated 10 December 2015

Today, in connection with International Human Rights Day, Sweden is launching a new initiative to safeguard the rights of women and girls in Myanmar. The project will be conducted jointly with Finland and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and will encompass SEK 100 million over a three-year period. Sweden's contribution will amount to SEK 20 million.

The 'Women and Girls First' project will be implemented in cooperation with local and international partners and focus on the most vulnerable women and girls in the remote and conflict-affected provinces of Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan. The aim of the initiative is to prevent and respond to the violence committed against women and girls in Myanmar, and to improve their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The initiative covers preventive measures in the areas of reproductive health and emergency medical care, as well as care, support and treatment for women subjected to violence and rape. Another aim is to increase women's and girls' knowledge about their rights, and also to mobilise men and boys in gender equality work. Improved health for women and children, with a special focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights, is also one of three focus areas in Sweden's bilateral cooperation strategy for the country.

"I welcome the launch of this initiative together with our cooperation partners, UNFPA and Finland, to address violence against women and girls. This is particularly important in areas of conflict and where certain ethnic

groups, such as the Rohingya, experience discrimination and lack protection and care in the event of abuse," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. "The recent elections show that the people of Myanmar voted for a change towards democracy, and we look forward to working closely with the new government," she adds.

One important step in the democratisation process is to increase respect for the human rights of all people in Myanmar, regardless of ethnicity, religion or sex. This is why it is important to change men's attitudes, increase women's knowledge about their rights and contribute to the building of a state under the rule of law, where everyone is given protection.

"This initiative is an important part of Sweden's support to Myanmar. Promoting gender equality and women's and girls' enhanced possibilities is a prerequisite for Myanmar being able to move towards a more democratic society. 'Women and Girls First' aims to enable just this kind of development," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

COP21: Sweden increases support to renewable energy in developing countries

Published 08 December 2015 Updated 08 December 2015

Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin is attending COP21 in Paris and will announce new strategic support that will increase access to renewable electricity in the least developed countries. SEK 15 million will go to the UN Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative and SEK 20 million to the Scaling Up Renewable Energy Programme in Low Income Countries.

More than one billion people currently lack access to energy, of whom more than 600 million live in sub-Saharan Africa. The Government is committed to further increasing its support to the development of renewable energy in the developing countries.

"Access to energy is a key issue in fighting poverty and stopping climate change. The solution is small-scale renewable electricity that is produced outside the large grids," says Ms Lövin.

"A revolution is already under way when it comes to the transition to renewable energy. Extra support to the least-developed countries and to the Sustainable Energy for All initiative are important components to help low income countries skip the fossil stage," says Ms Lövin.

During COP21, it will be announced that SEK 20 million will go to the World Bank Scaling up Renewable Energy Programme (SREP) and SEK 15

million to the UN Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative. SE4ALL gathers leaders from the political world, the business community and civil society to exchange experiences, find solutions and give advice to developing countries. SE4ALL is maintaining the political pressure to increase access to electricity in low income countries by promoting a significant increase in renewable energy and energy efficiency.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

SEK 2 billion to development cooperation

Published 03 December 2015 Updated 04 December 2015

The Government and the Left Party today agreed to make an additional payment of some SEK 2 billion to development cooperation in 2015. The money will go to humanitarian aid, refugee and other similar organisations.

"I welcome this agreement. It is very positive for Swedish development cooperation and shows that Sweden takes responsibility and is leading the way in these times of difficult global challenges," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

"The global humanitarian situation has seriously deteriorated in recent months. There are currently more than 60 million refugees around the world and more people than ever before are seeking asylum in Sweden. This is a serious and unprecedented situation," says Ms Lövin.

The Government and the Left Party have agreed to make advance payments of some SEK 2 billion to organisations involved in humanitarian and conflict prevention, including the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The agreement means that the Government will propose that the Riksdag increase the development cooperation appropriation by the corresponding amount over the next few years by reducing the amount of aid used to support refugees.

The Government has previously decided that the costs for refugee reception must not exceed 30 per cent of the development cooperation budget.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received President Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan in Stockholm

Published 30 November 2015 Updated 30 November 2015

On Friday 4 December, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received the President of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani, in Stockholm. They met to discuss topics including developments in Afghanistan, Swedish support and the international refugee crisis. A cooperation agreement between the two countries was also signed.

Invitation to press conference

Mr Löfven will receive President Ghani in the entrance to Rosenbad.
Photo opportunity.

Discussions.
Photo pool.

Signing of cooperation agreement.
Photo pool.

Joint press conference with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and President Ashraf Ghani in Bella Venezia Language: English.

The press conference will be webcast live on www.regeringen.se

To editorial offices

Special media accreditation obtained via the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is

required to follow the programme. Please apply to the International Press Centre at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs no later than 18.00 on 2 December.

Apply for accreditation

The assembly place and time for each programme point will be announced to the media representatives concerned.

Programme points, 4 December

During his visit to Sweden, President Ghani will also hold bilateral talks with Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist, and meet Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin. He will also meet Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin, and have a meeting with Crown Princess Victoria at the Royal Palace. He will also undertake a visit to the KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Morning

Visit to the KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Meeting with Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin.

Late morning

Bilateral talks between President Ghani and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Photo pool.

Afternoon

Bilateral talks between President Ghani and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

Photo pool.

Crown Princess Victoria receives President Ghani at the Royal Palace.

Photo pool.

Mr Löfven receives President Ghani in the entrance to Rosenbad as above.



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden increases its contribution to climate change adaptation in the most vulnerable countries

Published 30 November 2015 Updated 30 November 2015

At the opening of the COP21 climate conference in Paris today, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will announce the Government's intention to provide an additional SEK 250 million in support for climate change adaptation to the poorest and most vulnerable developing countries. This contribution encompasses SEK 150 million to the Adaptation Fund and SEK 100 million to the Least Developed Countries Fund. For developing countries, financing for climate change adaptation is one of the most important issues in the negotiations.

Financing for climate change adaptation is extremely important, particularly for small island nations and least developed countries that are already forced to deal with the consequences of climate change. This support shows that Sweden is taking great responsibility and continuing to lead the way in support to the most vulnerable countries, says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) observes that the effects of the climate-related extreme weather events of recent years, including heat waves, droughts, flooding, cyclones, and forest and brush fires, show how vulnerable and exposed societies and ecosystems really are. People living in poverty are particularly vulnerable. Preventive measures and adapting societies to climate change are crucial to save lives and safeguard opportunities to earn a living.

The Adaptation Fund offers support to measures to, for example, develop climate-resilient agricultural methods, warning systems and flood defences, and secure access to water, while the LDCF primarily focuses on supporting the least developed countries in preparing and implementing national action plans for climate change adaptation.

The support announced today supplements previous support from Sweden. Sweden is the largest per capita donor to the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility, and also contributes to climate financing in various developing countries via the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

COP21 in Paris begins today, 30 November, and is scheduled to continue until 11 December. Sweden's ambition is that the negotiations will result in a global, fair and legally binding climate agreement that over time helps keep global warming as far below two degrees as possible.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden increasing aid to Iraq and Syria

Published 26 November 2015 Updated 26 November 2015

Today, Sweden is taking a decision on support to the areas in Iraq that have been liberated from ISIL, as well as to areas in Syria controlled by the opposition and in affected neighbouring countries. The increased support totals SEK 79 million.

“This support to Iraq and Syria is important to enable a long-term solution to the conflicts. Sweden continues to work on both the political and the military track, as well as through aid measures,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

“These decisions must be seen as part of Sweden’s broad commitment in the Iraq and Syria crisis. This support to Iraq confirms Sweden’s intention to step up and take responsibility to meet the serious threat that ISIL represents today. Through the Syria fund we can help to ensure that more people in the areas of Syria seriously affected by war gain increased access to water and electricity, and we can contribute to food security,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

The UN’s stabilisation measures in Iraq will receive a contribution of almost SEK 35 million. This money will go to a fund managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support the civilian population in the areas liberated from ISIL, thus making it easier for internally displaced persons to return to their homes.

Sweden is providing a new contribution of SEK 16 million to the **Syria Recovery Trust Fund**, which finances rebuilding and the provision of basic social services in the areas of Syria controlled by the opposition.

Syria's neighbouring countries are being subjected to major strains as a result of the very large number of refugees from Syria who have sought protection in these countries. The Government has therefore decided to contribute SEK 28 million to **the Madad Fund**. This fund collects contributions from the EU budget and the Member States for support to refugees and host communities in Syria's neighbouring countries, primarily Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt. Certain countries in the Western Balkans will probably also receive support. In addition, aid can be given to activities within Syria.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to attend Nordic Council in Reykjavik on 27–28 October

Published 27 October 2015 Updated 27 October 2015

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will be in Reykjavik on 27–28 October for the annual session of the Nordic Council. His schedule includes meetings with the Nordic prime ministers, the Nordic Council Presidium and the three self-governing territories of Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland. Subjects including migration, climate, the environment and Syria will be on the agenda.

On Tuesday 27 October, the Prime Minister will take part in the award ceremony for the Nordic Council prizes.

While in Reykjavik, Mr Löfven will also attend a meeting of the Nordic and Baltic prime ministers, focusing on security policy cooperation in our neighbourhood.

In connection to the Nordic Council session, the Nordic–Baltic heads of government will also meet the Prime Minister of the UK within the Northern Future Forum.

Attending alongside Mr Löfven will be Minister for Strategic Development and Nordic Cooperation Kristina Persson, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist, Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson, Minister for Culture and Democracy Alice Bah Kuhnke and Minister for International

Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin. For details of the respective programmes, please contact the relevant press secretaries.

Press briefings

Wednesday 28 October

11.15–11.45 Press conference with the Nordic prime ministers.

Venue: Harpa – Kaldalón

14.00–14.30 Press conference with the Nordic and Baltic prime ministers.

Venue: Harpa – Kaldalón



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Press release: Sweden and Fiji take initiative to protect oceans

Published 26 September 2015 Updated 26 September 2015

The 17 global goals for sustainable development, including the goal on the sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources, have just been adopted in New York. Today, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, together with Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin and Fiji's Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama, is announcing a joint initiative to push forward the implementation of this goal and ensure a follow-up system is put in place.

“The world's oceans and seas are a unique resource under threat. One of the biggest reasons for their continued deterioration is a lack of resources and global coordination. This is a major challenge we are now addressing,” says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

“Healthy, thriving seas and oceans are fundamental to combating poverty and creating prosperity for millions of people. The deterioration of marine environments hits the poorest countries hardest. Fish are an important source of nutrition in many developing countries. Marine ecosystem services are crucial for our entire planet,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

The initiative was taken during a meeting between Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin and Fiji's Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama. The first step will be to present a resolution to the General Assembly of the United Nations on how to implement the global goal on the sustainable use of oceans, seas and

marine resources. It is crucial that a system is put in place to ensure the goal is followed up and its implementation is advanced.

Our oceans are in serious trouble and this is a matter that knows no national borders. Since 1970, half of all marine fish and mammals have disappeared. Climate change, unsustainable fishing, ocean acidification and environmental pollutants are impacting marine ecosystems.

In the long term, unsustainable management of marine environments and their resources could become a threat to peace and security. For example, it is a question of survival for small island states, whose economic development is closely linked to the oceans and their resources.

Background

Goal 14 on oceans is one of the 17 sustainable development goals in the new global development agenda and focuses on conserving oceans, seas and marine resources. A resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations is necessary to bring about an inclusive international process for implementing goal 14.



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government to sign international cooperation agreement for workers' rights in the textile industry

Published 26 September 2015 Updated 26 September 2015

Sweden, Bangladesh and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) will sign a cooperation agreement at a meeting in New York today, aimed at improving the conditions of workers in the textile industry in Bangladesh and promoting union rights.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will participate, together with Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin, who will sign the agreement on behalf of Sweden. The project is part of *A Global Deal* – Mr Löfven's initiative to promote better conditions for workers throughout the world.

“It is in everyone's interests that union rights are respected and decent working conditions upheld. The workers win more influence and participation in their workplace. Employers get better qualified staff and can increase their productivity. Society escapes costs for ill health, fatalities and social conflicts. It's a matter of making sure that competition takes place on equal terms and human rights are respected,” says Mr Löfven.

“We are proud to be working with Bangladesh and the ILO to strengthen workers' rights in a vulnerable industry in which 80 per cent of those employed are women. This project will put women in a stronger economic position and improve their working conditions,” says Ms Lövin.

The project will involve an investment of SEK 45 million, to be funded by Sweden and implemented by the ILO between 2015 and 2020. It is expected to result in better dialogue between employers and employees, and better negotiating and dispute resolution mechanisms in the labour market. Four million people work in the textile industry, the overwhelming majority of whom are women. Their interests will be at the heart of the project.

Other participants in the signing ceremony are Secretary Mikhail Shipar of the Ministry of Labour and Employment of Bangladesh and ILO Director-General Guy Ryder, who welcomes the project as a very valuable contribution.

A Global Deal will be discussed in New York in the presence of the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, the Director-General of the ILO and the Secretary-General of the OECD. The discussion will focus on how states, trade unions, employers and international organisations can take joint responsibility for promoting good working conditions.



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment,
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Swedish Government initiates High-Level Group in UN

Published 25 September 2015 Updated 25 September 2015

World leaders are meeting in New York today to adopt 17 global Sustainable Development Goals, which are to be achieved by 2030.

The true test of the entire 2030 Agenda and the global goals is not the adoption of the goals, but that they are implemented throughout the world. The importance of maintaining strong political momentum to realise the new goals cannot be overstated.

The Swedish Government has therefore taken the initiative to start a High-Level Group consisting of nine leaders from various parts of the world to ensure that the 17 global goals and the 2030 Agenda are implemented at all levels of society.

The High-Level Group will work in various ways to promote exchange of experience and discussions on challenges and solutions between governments, civil society, the private sector and international organisations.

Through personal discussions with other world leaders, the High-Level Group will contribute to far-reaching and genuine commitment to implementing the global goals and the 2030 Agenda.

The following are members of the High-Level Group:

- Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff
- Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos
- Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
- Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Löfven

- South Africa's President Jacob Zuma
- Tanzania's President Jakaya Kikwete
- Germany's Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel
- Tunisia's President Beji Caid Essebsi
- Timor-Leste's Prime Minister Rui Maria de Araújo



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Development cooperation budget 2016: More resources for the Syrian crisis, climate issues and humanitarian work

Published 21 September 2015 Updated 21 September 2015

In the Budget Bill for 2016, the development cooperation framework will increase by nearly SEK 3 billion due to increased GNI and additional funding of SEK 886 million. This means that the development cooperation framework amounts to SEK 43.4 billion and that appropriation increases are possible in a number of areas.

The critical situation in the Middle East and the increased humanitarian needs have had an impact on the budget.

“We are strengthening our commitment in the Middle East and increasing the appropriation by SEK 335 million. We will soon have new strategies in place for both the Syrian crisis and the region as a whole that will allow us to work effectively with urgent needs as well as in the long term to strengthen the opportunities for peace and democracy,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

The climate is another priority issue in which Sweden is playing an important role in helping bridge the differences between poor and rich countries ahead of the climate summit in Paris.

“Poor countries, which are responsible for the least amount of emissions, are now being hit the hardest by climate change. We are therefore dramatically

increasing the appropriation to climate financing via a number of organisations. If we do not tackle climate change, we will never be able to eradicate poverty,” says Ms Lövin.

The following areas are among those covered by increased appropriations in the development cooperation framework for 2016:

Humanitarian: In all, funding to humanitarian work will be increased by SEK 485 million to SEK 5.34 billion. The increased appropriations go to UN bodies and to Sida’s humanitarian appropriation. Also, the appropriation to UNHCR will be increased by SEK 75 million.

Climate: The additional SEK 886 million includes SEK 500 million for climate financing in developing countries. In addition, Sweden’s development financier Swedfund will be given a capital injection of SEK 400 million within the framework of the regular development cooperation budget to enable investments in the area of environment and climate.

Country strategies: Increased funding for Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. The amount for the Middle East will be increased by 45 per cent, which is the largest percentage increase – from SEK 735 million to SEK 1.07 billion.

The Government sees that greater effort must be put into three global development issues: environment and climate, gender equality, and peace and statebuilding. Greater emphasis must be placed on these areas in strategies that govern development assistance to individual countries, thematic areas and via multilateral organisations.

Deductions for refugee costs amount to nearly SEK 8.2 billion, which corresponds to 19 per cent of the development cooperation framework. This is a decrease from 2015, when it amounted to 22 per cent. The estimate is based on the Swedish Migration Agency’s forecast from July.

The development cooperation framework of SEK 43.4 billion corresponds to 1.02 per cent of GNI according to the model that has been used to date. Under the EU’s new GNI model, which was introduced in 2014, the development cooperation framework corresponds to 0.98 per cent. Sweden uses both models to report to the OECD/DAC, and it is the Government’s ambition to achieve 1 per cent under the new GNI model during this electoral period.

Under both models, Sweden is one of the world's largest donors of development assistance. Only five countries fulfil the UN goal of 0.7 per cent of GNI.

“We are pushing for more countries to give more and remain committed to Sweden's one per cent target. We will work in the long term to combat poverty and oppression, and in the short term to take responsibility to meet the needs arising from the increasing number of crises around the world,” says Ms Lövin.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government decides on support to UN bodies for 2015

Published 04 September 2015 Updated 04 September 2015

The Government today decided on organisational support, known as core support, to 15 multilateral organisations, primarily UN bodies that provide crucial assistance to refugees, promote women's rights and improve the living standards of children.

Several of the UN bodies work to help people in need of humanitarian assistance, fleeing war and disasters. These include the UN's refugee agency (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP) and Children's Fund (UNICEF). As the largest donor of core support to the UNHCR, Sweden has helped it to provide rapid and vital protection and assistance to people in places such as Ukraine, South Sudan and Ethiopia, and those affected by the Syrian crisis.

“Distressed and desperate people should not have to wait for each individual donor's analysis, grant management and, in the worst case, policy decisions before the response can be set in motion. Sweden's support enables immediate assistance for women, men, girls and boys who, in many cases, are fighting for their lives,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

A large proportion of Sweden's contributions to multilateral organisations, such as the UNHCR and the WFP, is composed of core support rather than earmarked contributions. This gives them greater flexibility and the possibility to plan their activities over the long term, while still being able to act quickly in the event of a crisis.

Sweden's involvement in multilateral organisations also gives Sweden access to decision-makers in virtually every country in the world and the

opportunity to influence the shape of strategies and work plans. Sweden is, for example, the largest donor of core support to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), which works to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights, focusing on women, girls and young people.

“Due to our extensive support, Sweden has a strong voice in the UN system and plays a key role in promoting gender equality work. This is of vital importance at a time when women’s rights are encountering resistance,” says Ms Lövin.

The full list of organisations covered by the decision for 2015 is available on the Ministry for Foreign Affairs website



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment,
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Government to take part in global summit and UN General Assembly

Published 02 September 2015 Updated 10 September 2015

Reminder. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin and Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson will take part in the opening of the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in late September.

This year, the week will begin with the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit. On 25–26 September, the new global Sustainable Development Goals, that are to replace the Millennium Development Goals, will be adopted by all UN Member States in the presence of representatives of civil society organisations and enterprises. Mr Löfven will give an address at the Summit, take part in seminars and roundtable discussions and hold bilateral meetings with other heads of government. Directly following the Summit, the General Assembly will open the General Debate of the 70th session since the United Nations was founded. Mr Löfven will deliver a speech on Swedish priorities in the UN and participate in panel debates on UN peacebuilding operations.

President Barack Obama, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and Pope Francis will also take part during the week.

Mr Löfven and Ms Lövin will be at the UN on 25–30 September. Ms Wallström will be in New York between 25 September and 3 October. Ms

Romson will take part in the Summit on 25–27 September.

Press briefing

Ahead of the Swedish delegation's trip to the Summit and the UN General Assembly, we will hold a press briefing, where State Secretary Hans Dahlgren and State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Annika Söder and others will describe the Government's objective for the trip and the programme.

Time: Thursday 17 September at 16.00.

Venue: Rosenbad

Registration (required) to the press briefing via Dan Lundqvist Dahlin:
dan.lundqvist.dahlin@regeringskansliet.se

Accreditation

Accreditation for the Summit closes on 9 September.

Information on accreditation is available on the following web page:
<http://www.un.org/en/media/accreditation/UNGA70.shtml>

For questions about accreditation, please contact Jeanette Mattsson, Press and Communication Officer at Sweden's Permanent Representation at the UN: jeanette.mattsson@gov.se, tel: 001 212 583 2591.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Relaunch of Swedish support to Latin America

Published 27 August 2015 Updated 31 August 2015

The Government has decided to relaunch support to Latin America. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has been tasked with producing new aid strategy proposals for Bolivia, Colombia and Guatemala. The previous government had decided to phase out support to Bolivia, a process which is now being stopped.

“These countries find themselves at crucial stages and Swedish aid makes a difference. We have therefore decided to continue our support and strengthen our relations,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

All three countries face a number of challenges. In Guatemala, presidential and parliamentary elections are set to take place at the same time as a serious corruption scandal has given rise to major protests. In Bolivia, climate change has caused glaciers to melt, impacting access to water. In Colombia, scars run deep from decades of civil war, but there is now hope that peace negotiations are entering their final phase. Swedish support can contribute to sustainable democratic development in these countries.

“The ongoing peace process in Colombia offers a unique opportunity to promote women’s political participation in the country. In Guatemala, the Public Prosecutor’s Office and the UN International Commission Against Impunity need continued support in their determined efforts to combat the corruption that is impoverishing the country. In Bolivia, Sweden can help curb climate change and better equip people to deal with natural disasters and the effects of environmental damage,” says Ms Lövin.

The strategies will cover the period 2016–2020 and include a total of SEK 500 million per year. Sida will now produce strategy proposals that the Government will decide on during the autumn. The priority areas for these countries are:

- Bolivia: A better environment, reduced climate impact and greater resilience against natural disasters and environmental impacts. Strengthened democracy and gender equality, and greater respect for human rights.
- Colombia: Strengthened democracy and gender equality, and greater respect for human rights. Human security and freedom from violence.
- Guatemala: Strengthened democracy and gender equality, and greater respect for human rights. Better opportunities and tools to enable poor people to lift themselves out of poverty, such as sustainable and climate-resilient food security. Safeguarding human security and freedom from violence.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government extends bilateral aid to Iraq

Published 12 May 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

The Government has decided to extend the phase-out period of bilateral aid to Iraq in view of the serious situation in the country. The previous government decided to phase out support completely in 2015.

Support is now being raised by SEK 10 million, from SEK 60 million to SEK 70 million in 2015, and in 2016 an additional SEK 30 million will be provided. The money will go to strategically selected projects that will help central and provincial agencies to re-establish their presence and start up community services in areas that ISIL has held or that have been affected by ISIL's advance.

“Sweden has a major commitment in and close contacts with Iraq. The Government feels a responsibility to help the population in this very serious situation,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

The increased support will supplement the extensive humanitarian aid that Sweden gives to Iraq. This aid totalled SEK 203 million in 2014 and goes to both UN bodies and civil society organisations to assist in areas such as food, shelter and improving the situation of children.

Sweden has been involved in development cooperation with Iraq since 2004. The previous government decided in 2013 to phase out support in 2015 as the country was classed as a middle-income country with sufficient resources to support itself.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government decides on new development cooperation strategy for Syrian crisis

Published 02 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Thursday 26 February the Government took a decision on the direction of new development cooperation strategies for the Syrian crisis, and for the Middle East and North Africa region. The strategy for the Syrian crisis will be unique in that it will also include Syria's neighbours that have been severely affected by the war.

“The conflict in Syria continues to deteriorate and may persist for many years to come. There is substantial risk that the conflict will spread. Consequently, we need a long-term strategy on how Sweden can best help alleviate the suffering caused by the war, how we can support democratic forces and mitigate the impact on neighbouring countries,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

The strategy is intended to fill the gap between acute humanitarian assistance and long-term aid that targets schools, health care and democracy development.

“We must focus our efforts to ensure that people do not get caught in a vacuum. There is an impending risk that otherwise we will see a lost generation that is not given the chance to go to school or work. Not only would this be a disaster for the individual, it would make the future reconstruction of Syria more difficult,” says Ms Lövin.

The conflict has already resulted in the worst humanitarian disaster in modern times, and geographically adjacent countries have been subjected to

great strain. Almost four million people from Syria have fled to neighbouring countries, while another eight million people have been displaced within Syria. Women's rights are a priority, as is support to basic public services such as education, health care and sanitation.

The Syrian strategy supplements the regional development cooperation strategy for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which will also be renewed. The MENA strategy will focus on human rights and democracy, cross-border water issues and increased economic integration in the region – an area in which there is great potential. The strategies are also to include a climate and environmental perspective.

The Syrian strategy will involve between SEK 1.5 billion and SEK 1.7 billion in 2016–2020, while the MENA strategy will involve SEK 1.5 billion to SEK 2 billion during the same period.

Following this decision, which establishes the framework of the strategies, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency will be instructed to produce background material by 1 September that will form the basis of the Government's final wording of the strategies.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin new co-Chair on work against war and conflict

Published 22 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

The OECD's International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) has appointed Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin as its representative in the post of co-Chair of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS).

“I am very proud of this appointment. War and violence are among the greatest obstacles to development and are primary challenges in my role as Minister for International Development Cooperation. Conflict prevention will now have greater weight in Swedish development assistance policy,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

The IDPS was initiated by fragile and conflict-affected states and is a unique channel for political dialogue between these states and international development assistance donors. The IDPS includes the twenty or so fragile states in the g7+, such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and Liberia, as well as around 30 donors – both states and international organisations. The purpose of the IDPS is to find better ways to support these states by tackling the root causes of instability and conflict. While more and more people are rising out of poverty, development is going in the opposite direction in the g7+ states.

“As co-Chair of the IDPS I will emphasise the absolutely crucial role of women in building peace that is sustainable and inclusive. I will also persistently highlight the urgent need to tackle climate change, which is a serious threat to the security of these states,” says Ms Lövin.

The IDPS was established in 2008 and is led by two co-Chairs – one representing the donors and one representing the g7+ states. Ms Lövin will serve as co-Chair together with Kaifala Marah, Minister of Finance and Economic Development of Sierra Leone. She replaces Pekka Haavisto, former Minister for International Development of Finland, and will formally take over in spring.

The 1.5 billion people living in fragile and conflict-affected states constitute almost half of the world's poor. Many of the states that have experienced war and conflict become trapped in a spiral of violence and revert to conflict. Seventy per cent of fragile states have experienced conflict since 1989.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin visits Lebanon and Geneva

Published 20 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Minister for International Development Cooperation
Isabella Lövin will travel to Lebanon on 20 January to discuss developments in the country linked to the Syrian crisis with Prime Minister Tammam Salam and with various organisations. During her visit, Ms Lövin will travel to the Bekaa Valley on the Syrian border to meet refugees and hear their stories.

Ms Lövin will also meet Minister of Social Affairs Rashid Derbas.

“Lebanon is the same size as Skåne, with a population of 4 million people. The fact that it has taken in over 1 million refugees obviously entails enormous challenges. Sweden is a major donor and during my visit I will see how we can best help those who have fled from the insanity of war and at the same time support Lebanese society, which is under enormous pressure,” says Ms Lövin.

On her way to Lebanon, Ms Lövin stopped in Geneva to meet Antonio Guterres, head of the UN Refugee Agency, Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Valerie Amos, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The aim was to discuss the Syrian crisis and how the international community can best respond to increasing humanitarian needs around the world.

“The humanitarian needs in the world today are at record levels and there are more than 50 million displaced people, which is the highest number since the Second World War. Sweden is one of the world’s leading humanitarian donors and I look forward to speaking with representatives of the major

humanitarian organisations about how we can jointly support displaced people around the world,” says Ms Lövin.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden recognises Palestine and increases aid

Published 30 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Sweden has today recognised the State of Palestine. The Government considers that the international law criteria for the recognition of Palestine have been satisfied.

Sweden hopes that its decision will facilitate a peace agreement by making the parties less unequal, supporting the moderate Palestinian forces and contributing to hope at a time when tensions are increasing and no peace talks are taking place.

“The purpose of Sweden’s recognition is to contribute to a future in which Israel and Palestine can live side by side in peace and security. We want to contribute to creating more hope and belief in the future among young Palestinians and Israelis who might otherwise run the risk of believing that there is no alternative to the current situation,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström (Social Democratic Party).

The Government also adopted a five-year aid strategy including substantially increased support to Palestinian state-building. Bilateral aid to Palestine will increase by SEK 500 million to SEK 1.5 billion over the next five-year period, in addition to Sweden’s substantial humanitarian assistance.

“Sweden’s contribution aims among other things to make it easier for Palestinians to support themselves and to continue living where they are, to strengthen women’s empowerment and strengthen resilience to environmental and climate changes. This increased assistance means support to all moderate and non-violent forces in Palestine promoting democracy, human rights and gender equality,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin (Green Party).



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Support to Syria's neighbours

Published 28 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin will visit Berlin on 28 October to take part in an international conference on the refugee crisis resulting from the war in Syria.

The conference will focus on the refugee crisis in Syria's neighbouring countries.

“The Government is greatly concerned by the humanitarian situation in Syria and its neighbouring countries, particularly Lebanon and Jordan, which have had to assume disproportionate responsibility. I can therefore announce today that Sweden will provide targeted support totalling SEK 100 million to these countries,” says Ms Lövin.

The support will be channelled via specialised World Bank funds.

The huge refugee influxes are placing great strain on Syria's neighbours. Lebanon has, for example, taken in Syrian refugees in numbers equivalent to 25 per cent of the country's population.

The humanitarian situation in Syria continues to deteriorate. According to UN estimates, 10.8 million Syrians currently require humanitarian assistance. About 6.5 million of these are internally displaced persons. At the same time, the number of refugees in neighbouring countries has increased to more than 3.2 million, more than half of them children.

As one of the major donors to the humanitarian response to the crisis in Syria, Sweden has contributed more than SEK 1.4 billion in humanitarian and other assistance since the crisis began. The figure so far this year is around SEK 465 million.

Support is primarily directed at UN agencies, the Red Cross movement and civil society NGOs. Apart from targeted support, Sweden is also one of the largest global donors of non-earmarked support to humanitarian organisations such as the UNHCR, UNICEF, OCHA and the WFP.

The conference in Berlin will be chaired by Germany's Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

An additional SEK 400 million for the fight against Ebola and humanitarian disasters

Published 23 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

The Government today decided to earmark an additional SEK 400 million from funds for development assistance in Africa for extraordinary measures to combat the Ebola outbreak (SEK 250 million), but also for the humanitarian crises in Syria, Iraq and other parts of the world (SEK 150 million).

The Government recognises major needs in terms of the fight against Ebola and humanitarian crisis areas such as Iraq and Syria. More than one hundred million people around the world are currently in an extremely vulnerable situation and are in need of humanitarian support.

“The Government wants to see a strong UN in efforts to combat Ebola. The UN is doing its coordinating work well and we want to make an additional contribution to that work. We want to provide financial support, but we are also pleased that Sweden, via the expertise and global networks of Anders Nordström, is able to make this crucial contribution to efforts to combat Ebola,” says Ms Lövin.

Through today’s decision the Government is providing additional funds of up to SEK 250 million for the fight against Ebola. This support will go to the UN’s coordinating role and to action being taken by African organisations. The total Swedish support to combat Ebola following today’s decision amounts to SEK 489 million. Sweden is also seconding Anders Nordström, Ambassador for Global Health, to work together with UN special envoy David Nabarro to secure continued international political engagement and

coordination of resources.

“The spotlight in the news has shifted slightly as a result of the Ebola outbreak. However, this does not change the fact that there are still many extremely serious crises occurring in other parts of the world. The Government is taking a holistic approach and providing support to both the fight against Ebola and humanitarian operations where they are needed,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Sweden contributes medical care efforts in the fight against Ebola in West Africa

Published 16 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

The Government has decided to contribute an additional SEK 100 million in humanitarian support to efforts to combat the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

The new funds are to be channelled through the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency for planning and implementing medical care efforts and coordinating voluntary Swedish health workers. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency will also contribute in other relevant ways, such as with logistical assistance.

“Sweden is now responding to the UN request for more personnel and other resources. The number of people infected in West Africa is doubling every two to three weeks. Sweden has many competent people who want and are able to contribute effectively the fight against Ebola. It is essential that all actors do their utmost. Ebola is now a global security issue,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

In addition to health workers, other personnel, materials (for example trucks) and logistical assistance have also been requested for the construction of accommodation for international relief workers and personnel involved in the UN-led efforts.

Swedish humanitarian support to combat the Ebola outbreak now amounts to SEK 239.3 million.

“Many people want to help, and the Government has now approved a number of decisions to step up Sweden’s efforts. A key issue is that Swedish

personnel who want to go are granted leave from work, and here I think the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions has sent positive signals that people are to be granted leave,” says Minister for Public Health Gabriel Wikström.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden increases its efforts to stop Ebola epidemic in West Africa

Published 07 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Sweden today allocated an additional SEK 105 million in humanitarian support to efforts aimed at stopping the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. Following a decision by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the funds will primarily be given to UN bodies (UNICEF, WHO and WFP) in their joint efforts to fight the epidemic. This means that Sweden's total contribution to fight the epidemic amounts to some SEK 145 million.

“The UN is now focusing on stopping the spread of the virus and ensuring that those affected receive medical care. Success depends upon the world working together in a forceful and coordinated manner,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

Part of Sida's contribution will go to supporting healthcare staff at Ebola clinics. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) will receive SEK 25 million to arrange housing and medical care for up to 200 healthcare workers on-site in Liberia's capital, Monrovia.

“Helping people and stopping the spread of the virus depends on ensuring that healthcare staff can work in an efficient manner,” says Ms Lövin. “Safe working conditions and the opportunity to themselves receive medical care are vital for doctors and nurses from other countries to be willing to volunteer,” Ms Lövin emphasises.

The Government is currently considering what other measures Sweden can take to help in the fight against the ongoing Ebola outbreak in West Africa.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Swedish national statement for High-level Political Forum 2020, delivered by State Secretary for the Environment, Eva Svedling

Published 14 July 2020 Updated 14 July 2020

Stockholm, 14 July 2020. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ministers, colleagues, friends,

The outbreak of COVID-19 reminds us of the importance of a strong multilateral system to tackle cross-border and global challenges.

We need to build back better to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Today's challenges are multifaceted and require a holistic response. The Government recently presented a bill to the Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament) to accelerate action and delivery on the SDGs. We have set an overarching goal to achieve the 2030 Agenda with an emphasis on policy coherence for sustainable development, spanning across different policy areas. We are weaving the SDGs into our national fabric.

I'm convinced that if we all nurture the SDGs by working together and integrating them into our recovery, we will build stronger, more resilient societies that will stand steady beyond 2030.

Friends,

This pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on people in vulnerable situations. Delivering on the principle of 'leaving no one behind' is crucial to reaching the goals for everyone, everywhere.

We need not only to combat growing inequalities and a lack of gender

equality, but also to target actions towards those living in poverty, marginalisation and exclusion.

While Sweden has favourable conditions for sustainable development, we also face multiple challenges. Inequalities and gender gaps are growing. Socioeconomically disadvantaged areas in Sweden are worse hit by COVID-19. We need to work harder towards equity in health care, equal access to lifelong learning and sustainable economic growth.

Sweden has a long history of a universal welfare system that has been key in building an open, inclusive and more gender-equal society. Social protection is a human right and universal policies, including floors, are key to upholding the principle of leaving no one behind.

Globally, we continue to show leadership for sustainable and inclusive growth, reduced inequalities and promotion of social dialogue together with the ILO, the OECD and a core group of countries, companies, employers' organisations and trade unions in the Global Deal partnership.

As we enter the Decade of Action, we need to focus more on the conditions and opportunities of future generations.

The proportion of young people in the world is the largest in history. Children and young people deserve equal access to services and opportunities. A special focus needs to be placed on girls. Young people must be recognised as agents of change and meaningful partners in decision-making.

The message from our young people on climate change is clear. We need to act, and we need to listen. Recovering after the COVID-19 crisis should speed up a green transition towards carbon neutrality and resilience. Sweden aims to become the world's first fossil-free welfare state, reaching net zero emissions by 2045 at the latest.

Mitigating and adapting to climate change, ensuring more efficient and circular use of resources, and safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystem services will be vital to improving resilience and safeguarding the future of both people and the planet.

In 2022, the world will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first UN Conference on the Human Environment, which was held in Stockholm. We believe it is our responsibility to use every possible milestone opportunity to

act, to accelerate a transformation that leaves no one behind and to ensure a healthy planet for all. This is what we hope to achieve in Stockholm in 2022 with a high-level global meeting, and we look forward to working with all of you on this.

Leaving no one behind requires the full realisation of human rights, gender equality and access to participation for those who are frequently left out of the conversation, including women and girls, people with disabilities, LGBTI people, minorities and newly arrived immigrants.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the pushback of sexual and reproductive health and rights and exposed more women to domestic violence and sexual exploitation. Sweden has a feminist government and we believe in prioritising gender equality and women's and girls' enjoyment of all their human rights at this crucial period.

The response to COVID-19 should not compromise the universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and gender equality. Sweden's Drive for Democracy provides support to democracy's institutions, processes and defenders.

My hope is that this year's High-level Political Forum will enable us to learn valuable lessons from coming together through technology and innovation. It is time for delivery on the SDGs. For this we need leaders, doers, who are prepared to step up and come together to build back better and leave no one behind.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of the Environment

Speech by Minister for the Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin at COP 25

Published 10 December 2019

Madrid, Spain 2019-12-10 Check against delivery.

Excellencies,

Natural disasters are pestering our planet, more and more frequently, and more and more violently.

Just recently, we have seen violent flooding here in Spain. In Venice. In Kenya and all over East Africa where hundreds of people tragically have lost their lives. The past year hurricanes have demolished the Bahamas, and Mozambique, and historic wildfires have ravaged California and Australia – and - not least -marine heatwaves have killed coral reefs and life under water.

We see what's happening.

We hear the calls for action, from the youth movement, and from all the sectors of society that committed to action at the UN Climate Action Summit. And from the scientists.

Dear world. We must act on science and facts. Anything else would be complete irresponsibility, or total immorality.

It's really not that difficult. Let's just understand one simple fact: getting out of fossil fuels is not a sacrifice; it's the salvation of our planet, and of people living here now, and of all future generations.

The time to act is now. I am going to outline four key areas where I expect

us all to act:

First, we need to enhance ambition. Our current pledges are far from sufficient, they will lead us to at least three degrees, not 2 or 1,5 .

Secondly, Article 6 can play a key role to reduce global emissions. It is essential that the rules we decide on ensure the highest possible integrity. We simply cannot afford to register emissions reduction on paper, if they are double-counted and not reduced in reality.

Thirdly, we must respond to climate change in a more integrated way and find synergies between reducing emissions, protecting biodiversity and improving ocean health. This should be reflected in the decisions at this Blue COP.

Lastly, as we move from words to action, it is time to incorporate the Paris goals into our national laws, policies and programs. In Sweden we have begun our journey with a climate law obliging us to reach net-zero emissions by 2045 at the latest. And Sweden will continue supporting developing countries and we have doubled our contribution to the Green Climate Fund.

The world and our very own children are calling upon us to act. No one can do it alone. But if we all work together we can do it. Let this be the Cop where leaders show the world we are determined to do it here, now, and without any hesitation. Let's just do it!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of the Environment

National statement by Isabella Lövin, Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister, at UNEA-4

Published 15 March 2019

Nairobi, Kenya, 14 March 2019. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ministers, distinguished delegates,

We have gathered here today to encourage action on the environment. But some of us that should have been among us are tragically missing. Our thoughts are with their families and friends in their difficult time. We share the sorrow of colleagues and others who knew those on the Ethiopian flight 302. Together we will remember them.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The story of mankind's relationship with our planet has long been a story of conquest. Finding new land, taming the wild, cutting down trees and killing animals. But our attitude towards our planet urgently needs to change. Entire species are going extinct at an alarming pace, the number of plastic particles in the ocean far exceeds the stars in the Milky Way and climate change is altering the very conditions of life on land - and the very biochemistry of the ocean, with no turning back.

It's late on Earth for us to come together to make sure that the story takes a new turn. We no longer need to conquer our planet – it already has been conquered. The next chapter must be about how to heal and protect our planet. It must be about stewardship and sustainable use, so that we leave our planet in a better condition to our children than it was when we arrived. This is a global challenge.

So let us all continue to strengthen the United Nations Environment Assembly as an important arena to write this chapter. UNEP has helped us to maintain a focus on the environment ever since the Stockholm Conference in 1972. Now, when we need to realize the Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement, its role is more crucial than ever.

The disastrous effects of climate change tell us with abundant clarity that we need to mitigate and make adaptive efforts. But climate change also urges us to do more. The increasing stress rising temperatures puts on all life means that we must try much harder to reduce other pressures. We simply cannot expect our oceans to cope with both plastic pollution, overfishing and eutrophication – on top of the effects of climate change; warming, acidification and deoxygenation. We urgently need to increase the resilience of marine ecosystems. I hope that UNEA 4 will be a turning point, when we set the stage for clean waters, healthy marine habitats and restored fish populations.

Excellencies,

Plastic is found everywhere – and we are fed up with it. Marine plastics from littering and mismanaged waste are major threats to ecosystems. Take single-use products for example, many of which are only used for a few seconds, while it takes hundreds of years for them to degrade. One of my most important missions for this meeting is to push for action against plastic pollution. As noted in the study commissioned by UNEA 2, current governance strategies and approaches do not adequately tackle this issue. We absolutely do need to step up our efforts, and I look forward to continue working with you all on this.

Plastic pollution is linked to another important problem and threat to human health: the use and spread of toxic chemicals. Since 1950, more than 140 000 new chemicals and pesticides have been synthesised. Many of these pose serious risks. In fact, every 30 seconds, one worker dies from exposure to toxic chemicals.

Sadly, we will not reach the 2020 goal of minimising the adverse effects of chemicals on human health and the environment. This is why Sweden, together with Uruguay, last year launched the High Ambition Alliance on Chemicals and Waste. Our ambition is to drive an ambitious global framework on chemicals and waste for 2020 and beyond. The High Ambition Alliance is open to everyone who would like to take the lead in this important work.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Right now, mankind is writing the next chapter in the story of its relationship with the planet. This chapter is about how we can tackle climate change, pollution and degradation.

Sweden is trying to do its part and today I pledge € 48 million to fight climate change within the framework of One Planet Summit.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I see some heroes in this chapter that we are writing, such as the youth who have come together to protest on the streets to demand that adults take climate responsibility. I hope history will tell, that we listened to them and that we acted. Only if we do that, the story we are writing together will have a happy ending. So let's just do it. Together we actually can change the sad story into one of hope and new and better lives for everyone.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

National statement by Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister, at COP24

Published 12 December 2018

Katowice, Poland, 12 December 2018. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ministers, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The effects of climate change are already here. People see them with their own eyes, live the effect of them around the world. In Sweden we experienced an extremely hot summer this year, with drought and violent forest fires in the Arctic region like never before. We watch the news and we see wildfires in California, hurricanes hitting the Caribbean and the Pacific, violent torrential rains in Japan and droughts in Africa, and we can no longer ignore the disastrous consequences for this planet and all future generations if we do not take action now.

Some people say we should not talk about the enormous threat of climate change because then people might lose hope. But to quote Greta Thunberg, a remarkable 15-year old climate activist from Sweden, the world does not need hope. It needs action. But when we take action – hope is everywhere.

The action that is needed here in Katowice is deciding on a robust, detailed, clear and stable rulebook for the Paris Agreement. A transparent rulebook that creates comparability and predictability, and also enables the necessary flexibility and – crucially – increased ambition over time.

Every school child today knows about science. Scientific knowledge is more precise than ever. The IPCC 1.5 degree report provides abundant clarity as to the need for action. And it does not leave room for hesitation.

So, let's face the facts. A nationally determined system, the beating heart of the Paris Agreement, requires responsible action by everyone. And current pledges are sadly far from sufficient. Time is not just limited, we are on the verge here. This is it. It's time to step up.

Our leadership is called for by our children. We need to show a predictable pathway towards low-carbon economies. Our constituencies need and demand it, and luckily business increasingly echoes those sentiments.

Dialogue between states is key, but dialogue between other parts of society is needed as well. Sweden has a proud tradition of upholding dialogue between business, unions, and government.

With the Fossil-free Sweden initiative, we enable dialogue between government at all levels, industry, and stakeholders. It has resulted in the industries themselves developing concrete roadmaps for fossil-free competitiveness in many sectors. From the steel, cement and aviation industries, to the forest and retail sectors, as well as many more. This shows action is possible.

Low-carbon transition offers new opportunities for investments, jobs and better lives. The Swedish economy has grown substantially, by more than 60 per cent, while our emissions are down more than 25 per cent since the early 1990s.

We want to, and look forward to, continue sharing our experience on policies, financing and technology with partners.

We believe developed countries must lead the first step of a global transition, encouraging and supporting others to move forward. We also know climate change hits some countries and regions harder than others. The least developed countries and small island states face very real and pressing danger. Developed countries must lead the first steps of a global transition, encouraging and supporting others to move forward.

Therefore, Sweden is proud to be one of the largest per capita providers of climate finance globally. I am also happy that here in Katowice we have been able to announce an additional contribution for 2018 of SEK 50 million

each to the Adaptation Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund. This is in addition to the contributions announced at COP23.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We warmly welcome the initiative from the United Nations Secretary-General to organise the Climate Summit in 2019. The summit will serve as an important complement to the UNFCCC process to mobilise political willingness to act and to demonstrate transformative action.

We need action. The cost of inaction is monumental; impossible to quantify. Nations are disappearing, ecological systems are being damaged beyond repair. The difference between 2 degrees and 1.5 is vast: we must pursue the most ambitious outcome.

And our duty as leaders is to ensure that the transition benefits all. An inclusive approach is part of the spirit of Paris and the 2030 Agenda. It requires full engagement from all stakeholders. It requires rules.

Rules that requires all states to take action. Because when there is action – as Greta, the 15-year old demanding the right to a safe future without climate collapse, says – where there is action, there is hope. And there is hope everywhere.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden's national statements at the high level segment of UNFCCC COP23 in Bonn

Published 16 November 2017

Statements by Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister. Bonn, Germany, November 16, 2017. Check against delivery.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Closing statement at the Ocean Conference by Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister, Sweden

Published 13 June 2017

New York, 9 June 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr. President of the General Assembly, Madame Deputy Secretary General, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends of our Ocean,

In closing this historic conference I would like to echo the gratitude expressed by Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama to all involved.

What an inspiring conference this has been!

During this week we have carried out several extremely productive partnership dialogues and I would like to thank the co-chairs, as well as the moderators and panelists. The partnership dialogues have always been the heart of this conference and I believe that the very fruitful discussions have shed light on some of the solutions needed to save our oceans and bring sustainable blue development to all.

The strong response we have received from the thousands of people that have participated during the conference has been truly overwhelming. The number of interesting and crowded side events on the broad range of urgent and burning issues facing the oceans, including overfishing, marine litter and

ocean acidification, have contributed greatly to the success of this conference and I would like to thank every single participant for your contribution.

Friends, for the first time ever leaders from all over the world have gathered here at this great hall of Humanity to discuss all the combined pressures that are threatening our ocean. It has become evident that the piecemeal way of dealing with our ocean must come to an end. The ocean is one. And this historic UN Ocean Conference has finally overcome this curse of fragmentation. It has broken down silos. Member states, UN Agencies, civil society, the private sector, academia and other stakeholders have all recognized the need to work together, across borders and boundaries, everyone taking their responsibility if we are going to have a chance to save our ocean. Before this week, the Ocean as a whole was not on the global agenda. Now it is. I want to underline, that we are all much indebted to Fiji and the other small island states for their tireless efforts and leadership in raising the ocean making sure we have the SDG 14.

And not least on raising awareness that the climate and ocean agenda go hand in hand. The conference has confirmed a strong commitment among stakeholders to urgently address the causes and severe consequences of climate change for the oceans and the importance of the Paris Agreement.

Ocean friends -we have set the sail, the wind is blowing in the right direction – now we need to keep the course steady.

It is the firm view of the Co-Presidents that we must build on the strong momentum created by this conference. During this week we have heard many interventions about the urgent need to reverse the serious decline in the state of our ocean and the calls for a strong process to drive the implementation of SDG 14 towards 2030. In this context the Co-Presidents would like to welcome the generous offers made in plenary this week by the governments of Kenya and Portugal to carry the torch forward by hosting the next conference in 2020. We strongly support these offers which will be reflected in the report by the Co-Presidents to the General Assembly for its consideration.

Distinguished delegates, we need a strong home for the ocean at the United Nations. The Call for Action that we have just adopted calls upon the UN Secretary-General to enhance interagency coordination and coherence throughout the UN system on ocean issues. So we look to his leadership to help drive the SDG 14 agenda forward and to the UN system to assist in

maintaining the engagement at the country and regional levels. We also note the many calls to ensure that these efforts are galvanized at a high level.

Friends, I am so happy to be part of this historical week when we, all of us together, put the Ocean where it belongs. At the centre of the political agenda. Finally putting it in its right context: As a matter of human survival.

This week has been the game changer we wanted it to be, and we must not lose this momentum! There is no turning back. Let me repeat what I said in my opening remarks: change is possible – if there is political will. It's as simple as that. The knowledge we now have, on how close to collapse our oceans are, must produce this will. All of us care about the oceans. We all depend on them. We must now show the political leadership and courage and continue this path. It is a question of survival!

Friends, as has been said here this week – together we are all crew on the spacecraft Earth. Or if you will: we are all islanders on the island Earth in the black empty sea of space. It's our only home. We have traveled a long way. It took a billion years for us to get where we are now. On our journey in space, the ocean is what has kept us alive. Let's make sure to not fail it. Let's now promise each other to keep this beautiful blue planet alive!

Thank you!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Deputy Prime Minister Lövins remarks for World Oceans Day

Published 08 June 2017

Worlds Oceans Day in New York, 8 June 2017. Check against delivery.

Your Royal Highness, President of the General Assembly, Secretary General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- It is my sincere pleasure to welcome you to this very special celebration of World Oceans Day. I am absolutely delighted to be here with you today, and to stand with my friends from Fiji in realizing our dream of a vibrant and productive Ocean conference here this week.
- I offer my gratitude to Prime minister Bainimarama and his wonderful team for their tireless efforts in working with us to make this a reality. And to the president of the General Assembly Peter Thomson, without whom we would not be here today.
- I also offer my sincere thanks to the many organizers and partners who have made this event possible.
- Friends, imagine planet Earth – without water. Without water; no life, no blue, no green.
- These are the words of a woman I deeply admire, marine biologist Sylvia Earle, who is present here and will join our event today, and who is one of the people on the planet who has spent longest time under water, as a diver and researcher.
- The esteemed Sylvia Earle, sometimes called Her Deepness - also often points out that when astronomers are looking for signs of life in space, they look for one thing – water. In a cold, black infinite universe dotted with blazing stars, black holes and red desert planets, our shimmering living blue planet is a spectacular exception.
- Almost all astronauts who have seen the planet from space, who have seen how the blue planet hangs there in the black emptiness, have

undergone a fundamental change, a phenomenon that has been dubbed The Overview Effect. National boundaries are not visible from space, and it is quite obvious that there is just one Planet Earth, that it is alive and that we all belong together.

- The American environmentalist Aldo Leopold once said that it is impossible to engage and have an ethical approach to something that you do not feel anything for, and it is impossible to feel anything for something you do not know about. And that, I believe, is one of the reasons of the decline of our ocean. People have not known about it. We have not understood the extent of the damage we have caused our ocean by all the combined pressures.
- Overfishing. Pollution. Plastic litter. Eutrophication. Destruction of coastal ecosystems. Climate change.
- Now we can no longer say we don't know. Now we must engage, now we must act.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends,

- I'm an optimist when it comes to the world's ability to solve crises. I'm an optimist because I know that change is possible. I've seen it through my political life many times. I know what we are capable of when we are working together.
- This year, for example, the historic protection of the Ross Sea in Antarctica, sometimes called the "Last Ocean", will come in to force. The Ross Sea is probably the least altered marine ecosystem on earth. It is a wild place, a kingdom of wildlife with emperor penguins, leopard seals, minke whales and killer whales. It is one of these rare places where humans are only visitors and large animals rule. I think the protection of this area shows that the world can successfully cooperate in saving our ocean, and we need to celebrate it.
- But one-off achievements in protecting the ocean will not be enough. We need to incorporate ocean health into all our plans for economic and social development. The two issues cannot be separated, and by now we know that. Today is a celebration for this vision. A celebration of the ocean that gives us life, and that we all depend upon.
- Now, I am delighted that we are able to spend this day together and I am very excited by, and very grateful to, all the Ocean heroes that are here and that we can listen to this morning.
- It is now my pleasure to declare this World Oceans Day celebration open!



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Swedish national statement at The Ocean Conference, 6 June 2017, by Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister

Published 06 June 2017

Mr President,

As much as we all share the air we breathe – we all share the ocean. Climate change and ocean health both need international frameworks and joint efforts by all stakeholders. We are in this together! We need to cooperate. We need multilateralism. The Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda are vital and the Swedish Government remains firmly committed to these agreements, and encourage others to do the same.

Together with Fiji, Sweden is a proud initiator of this conference. We expect it to show how important our ocean is for the success of the entire 2030 Agenda.

Mr President,

Already back in 1972, at the Stockholm Conference, the first UN Conference on the Human Environment, pollution of the seas was recognised as a threat to human development. It's easy, and sad, to see that 45 years later, we haven't done our homework.

As with climate change, the deterioration of marine environments hits the poorest and most vulnerable the hardest, particularly in LDCs and SIDS. Saving our ocean is a matter of justice. It has existential consequences for

entire nations and threatens the security of millions of people.

Therefore, one of Sweden's voluntary commitments is that we will significantly strengthen our development cooperation in support of SDG 14. Our next global strategy on the environment, climate, oceans and natural resources will be implemented for the period 2018–2022. The funds – up to USD 750 million over the 5-year period – mean significantly raised ambitions for the oceans.

The Ocean Conference provides a unique opportunity to change the path and ensure a living ocean for future generations. Sweden is making more than 20 voluntary commitments this week to safeguard the marine environment, achieve sustainable fisheries and strengthen resilience to climate change.

Mr President,
Our commitments focus on three critical areas.

Firstly, on climate change

The ocean has for too long been too absent in the international climate discussions. Yet we know, the ocean is fundamentally changing because of CO₂-emissions. It has become 30 per cent more acidic.

More than 90 per cent of all the heat humanity has added to the planet since the 1950s has been absorbed by the oceans. And we are just beginning to understand the seriousness of ocean acidification, warming and deoxygenation.

To put it in simple words: To save our oceans we must live up to the Paris Agreement and cut emissions. Our goal is make Sweden the first fossil-free welfare nation with zero net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2045. To this end, the Swedish parliament will next week adopt a new climate policy framework with a historic climate act that is binding for future governments.

We must cut emissions, but we also must strengthen the ocean's resilience. Mangroves, seagrass beds and other coastal habitats are crucial for CO₂ storage as so called blue carbon. Sweden will support the IUCN, the Ocean Foundation and the International Coral Reef Initiative with USD 1.6 million to strengthen developing countries' knowledge and capacity to handle ocean effects of climate change. Sweden will also contribute financially to Germany's new Blue Action Fund with approx. USD 5.5 million.

Secondly, marine litter

Litter and microplastics in oceans and marine food chains are spreading at a catastrophic pace. We urgently need to identify the pathways of pollution, from land to sea, and take necessary action.

Sweden is committing to strengthening our support by more than USD 1.7 million to UN Environment's Global Program of Action for Land-based Pollution and the Clean Sea Campaign, and to the Action Platform on Source-to-Sea Management.

At home in Sweden, we will implement a national programme on sound plastic management. Together with our neighbours in the Baltic and North Sea region we are working for a ban on microplastics in cosmetics. Sweden will also co-lead the Arctic Marine Debris project. The sensitive and vulnerable Arctic environment and biodiversity need our particular attention.

Thirdly, sustainable blue economy

Sweden has a long coastline. A healthy sea is important for our people and our economy.

We recently achieved SDG 14's target on marine protected area after doubling the level of protected areas within Swedish territory, which is now above 13 per cent.

In 2015, the Government also presented an Integrated Maritime Strategy based on sustainable use of marine and coastal resources. This was a landmark for our sustainable blue economy. Measures to protect biodiversity and decisions to cut harmful emissions from shipping to a fraction at global level are being implemented. HELCOM, OSPAR and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region are important frameworks to this end.

Sweden warmly welcomes the entry into force of the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. We commit to a contribution of USD 5.5 million to the FAO to support the implementation of this important agreement in developing countries also supporting the Global Record of Fishing Vessels. We are also pushing for multilateral efforts within the WTO to fight harmful fisheries subsidies and meet target 6 of SDG 14.

Mr President,
Sweden joins others in calling for the Secretary-General to build on the

momentum of the Ocean conference for the implementation of SDG 14. We should ensure concrete ways to apply the outcomes across the UN system.

For the sake of all creatures that live below water – as well as all women and men, boys and girls who depend on them and for the sake of our children and grandchildren, for the sake of this blue planet ocean – the time to act is now. This conference is just the starting point!

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Address by Isabella Lövin Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for International Development Cooperation at She Decides Conference 2 March 2017

Published 07 March 2017

Check against delivery.

Your Excellencies, dear colleagues and friends,

What an honour to be here today! Allow me, on behalf of my Government, to begin by expressing my immense gratitude to Minister De Croo for hosting us, Minister Ploumen and Minister Tørnæs for co-organising the She Decides conference with us, and to all our friends gathered in this room in support of women's and girl's human rights.

I am profoundly encouraged by the fact that we, at such short notice, have travelled from all regions of the world to demonstrate our support for organisations that make sexual and reproductive health and rights a reality for millions of women and girls. Now, more than ever, is the time to join forces: Governments, parliamentarians, CSOs, UN agencies and EU institutions, and the private sector.

I have the pleasure to introduce the high-level panel that will shortly be discussing the risks we are taking if we do not keep our promises to women and girls to provide them with full access to SRHR. The panel is composed of:

- Your Excellency, Minister of Public Health of Chad Doctor Ngarmbatina Odjimbeye Soukate,

- Your Excellency, Minister of Health of Ethiopia Professor Yifru Berhan,
- UNFPA's Executive Director Doctor Babatunde Osotimehin,
- International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) General Director Tewodros Melesse, and
- the Guttmacher Institute's President Ann Stars.

We are very honoured that Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Kate Gilmore, will be moderating this important session.

Let us first remind ourselves that 100 years ago, half of humanity was still largely unrepresented in the public realm and in public decision-making. The female half.

Our mothers and grandmothers fought for women's liberation – for women's participation in politics and the workforce, and for a woman's right to decide over her body and reproduction. We are harvesting the fruits of their labour and I would argue that we, women and men, have a moral obligation to continue their struggle – because women's and girl's human rights shall never be taken for granted.

The situation for women, girls and adolescents has improved. A hundred years ago I would not have been able to cast a vote, far less run for office. Today, I am the Deputy Prime Minister of a government consisting of 12 women and 12 men.

Since the early 90s, the world has seen a nearly 50 per cent decline in the maternal death ratio – a remarkable achievement.

But progress has been unacceptably slow and uneven. One woman or girl still dies every two minutes from causes related to pregnancy or childbirth. Together with labour complications, and harmful practices, such as genital mutilation, unsafe abortion puts women's and girls' lives at risk every day.

Their deaths are intolerable because the vast majority of them are preventable.

SRHR is not an optional extra. SRHR is right and smart.

The full enjoyment of human rights includes the right to decide freely over

your own body, sexuality and reproduction. Absence or presence of these rights can mean the difference between life and death for a young girl.

But SRHR is also intricately linked to areas such as decent work, peaceful societies and political participation of women, as well as women's full enjoyment of other human rights, such as economic rights and right to education.

That is why SRHR is smart. When we empower women and girls, we empower their families and their future children. We empower communities. We empower nations. Ultimately, we eradicate poverty.

Ensuring SRHR for all will have a direct impact on the possibilities of achieving many of the targets in the 2030 Agenda.

An hour ago, the Government of Sweden decided to increase its global SRHR support by SEK 200 million, approximately EUR 21 million, in 2017, as part of the She Decides initiative.

An important part of our increased funding will be channelled through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency to civil society organisations that make SRHR a reality for millions of women and girls in the field.

The contributions and the role of CSOs cannot be emphasised enough. I say this in terms of strengthening evidence-based action and ensuring accountability, but also in terms of cross-regional bridge-builders.

Sweden also believes in the UN Development System's capacity to tackle global development challenges. Sweden, with its ten million inhabitants, is the sixth largest donor to the system as a whole.

It is in support of women and children's health globally that Sweden remains the leading donor of core support to UNFPA, and the second largest funder of total support. Sweden will continue to prioritise flexible funding and will raise its core contribution to UNFPA in 2017 to approximately USD 61 million.

We welcome fellow Member States, the European Commission and private institutions to join us.

We should have high expectations of ourselves. And we should trigger and inspire each other to achieve more. Some countries and individuals will not agree with us, but we stand prepared with patience, fortitude and endurance.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Ocean Conference preparatory meeting opening remarks

Published 02 March 2017

New York, 15 February 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr. President of the General Assembly, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends of our ocean,

I would like to start by thanking Ambassadors Mendonça e Moura and Gafoor, the esteemed co-facilitators of the preparatory process of The Ocean Conference. We're less than four months away now, and I'm very glad to see that the preparations are making good progress, thanks to the significant efforts of the co-facilitators and all other parties engaged in this work.

I'm also very pleased to be in the presence of the President of the General Assembly, Peter Thomson, and Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo. We are very confident in your strong leadership. We're also very thankful for the support of Assistant Secretary-General Stephen Mathias and the Office of Legal Affairs.

Furthermore, I'm delighted to share the podium with Minister Koroilavesau of Fiji. Sweden is very proud to have taken the initiative, together with Fiji, to realize The Ocean Conference. As co-presidents, we both hope that it will be the game-changer the ocean needs so badly. Two countries far apart geographically, we are joined by our strong commitment to and dependency on the same ocean.

Sweden and Fiji are very much encouraged by the strong response we have received from UN Member States, all parts of the UN System, the knowledge community, business and civil society on The Ocean Conference. This has reassured us of the readiness of the international community to come

together and take real and urgent action

Friends,

Aside from offering endless beauty and inspiration, we all know that the world's oceans and seas are fundamental in eradicating poverty and creating food security and prosperity for millions of people. There is no doubt that the situation is grave. The ocean is warming and acidifying, corals are bleaching, fish stocks are in decline and the amount of marine litter is increasing. The immense deterioration of marine environments and resources strikes the already disadvantaged and vulnerable the hardest.

The ocean supports all life on earth. To survive and prosper, we need a healthy ocean. There is enormous potential in a global and sustainable Blue Economy.

We're fortunate to have Agenda 2030 and SDG 14. Now is the time to come forward with ambitious commitments and effective collaborative action to protect our ocean.

By adopting SDG 14, the international community has made a clear and momentous commitment to end overfishing and eliminate illegal fishing, to better protect marine and coastal areas, to reduce plastic litter and other sources of marine pollution, and to increase ocean resilience to acidification.

But if we don't change our ways, including consumption and production patterns, our prospects are grim and uncertain. There will be as much plastic as fish in the ocean by 2050. By the middle of this century, we will also face the dire possibility of having an ocean that is too acid and warm for our precious coral reefs.

In other words: we have to act now, tomorrow will be too late!

Friends,

Sweden remains fully committed to maintaining the political momentum created by the adoption of Agenda 2030 and calls upon all countries – as well as other critical stakeholders, such as business, civil society and academia – to actively engage for the successful implementation of this tremendously important goal.

The significance of broad stakeholder participation leading up to and at the Conference cannot be overstated. We need the engagement of all relevant

stakeholders to bring forward sustainable solutions and initiate real change. I'm elated to see so many various stakeholder groups represented in New York this week – which is also manifested in the wide range of interesting side events.

This is a unique opportunity to make real difference for the ocean. Ambitious voluntary commitments, translated into effective joint action, to protect our ocean, are of paramount importance. We strongly encourage all United Nations Member States and other stakeholders to present - existing and new - plans and priorities that contribute to the implementation of SDG 14 and its targets. In this regard, I want to take the opportunity to inform you all about a special side event on how you can register your voluntary commitments, taking place during the lunch hour in Conference Room 3.

We're also looking forward to having fruitful discussions on the themes for the partnership dialogues, as well as on the elements for a Call for Action. We hope to have a political declaration that strikes the balance between ambition and conciseness, and avoid protracted negotiations in the run-up to the June Conference.

We intend for the Call for Action to be a good starting point for long-term action-oriented implementation of SDG 14 and all its targets. I trust that all parties gathered here in New York will work constructively and creatively in the coming two days.

Friends and ocean enthusiasts,

The ocean is the reason why I decided to involve myself in politics. Working as a journalist, I was appalled by the overfishing in our Swedish waters, the Baltic Sea. Entering the political realm, I was elected to the European Parliament, where I had the opportunity to play a very active role in reforming the EU Common Fisheries Policy. I truly believe that The Ocean Conference will provide yet another opportunity for real change, to the benefit of us all, especially the Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States.

I know that this Preparatory Meeting will shed further light on the unifying forces that the ocean conjures, and what can be achieved if people cooperate and work toward a common goal.

Time may be running out, but viewing all the initiatives that you are involved in or plan to launch to accelerate the implementation of Goal 14, there are

still good reasons for hope. If we all assume the shared responsibility and act together, it is still possible to save our ocean!

I thank you!



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Isabella Lövin at donor conference for Afghanistan

Published 05 October 2016 Updated 05 October 2016

Speech by Isabella Lövin, Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden and Minister of International Development Cooperation and Climate at Brussels Conference on Afghanistan 4-5 October 2016. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sweden would like to express its gratitude to the European Union and the government of Afghanistan, for co-hosting this Conference. We are gathered here today to reaffirm our continued support to Afghanistan on its path towards self-reliance and peace.

I had the privilege to visit Afghanistan in November last year. I could see with my own eyes the many challenges Afghanistan is facing. The increased number of attacks on civilians is a great concern. So is the increasing number of internally displaced persons, the growing number of returnees as well as the limitations in humanitarian access. My thoughts are with all those affected by the conflict which has lasted for almost 40 years.

But I was also struck by the great hospitality, the beauty of the country and not the least the engagement by the young people. I was taken aback by the courage and commitment of women leaders working in their communities to end violence, to educate the children and challenge norms impeding not only their own development but their entire country. There is so much unleashed potential that could really make a change. That gives hope.

I would like to thank the Afghan National Unity Government for its commitment to the reform process. Its continued unity will be paramount for continued progress. Sweden recognizes the efforts made and the steps taken,

including in areas such as anti-corruption and regional cooperation. Improved regional connectivity and economic integration is key for sustainable and long-term development. We welcome the Government's efforts in the field of peace and the accord recently negotiated with one of the insurgent groups. Its implementation will require careful attention. The parties have agreed to reassure that all Afghan women and men have equal rights before the law; they have also reassured that these laws will guarantee the protection of all Afghan citizens. Internal reconciliation is key to reach sustainable peace and this shows that the Government is ready to engage in an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace process with any group of resistance.

I strongly encourage the National Unity Government to continue to implement necessary reforms – including within key areas, such as improvements in the field of human rights and especially women's enjoyment of those rights, anti-corruption and the electoral system. The time is now to move ahead so that free and fair elections can be held. To progress further, a maturing democracy needs to hold elections intermittently.

Women and girls must be made part of the solution in Afghanistan - their economic empowerment, participation in all political processes, at all levels, as well as freedom from all forms of violence is a precondition for sustainable development. I especially want to highlight the importance of women's active participation in a future peace process. Without women there will be no lasting peace. And without peace there will be no development.

I would also like to stress the importance of a vivid and pluralistic civil society. The civil society's rights to act and effect in its own right must be protected.

The situation for the poorest of the poor in Afghanistan is alarming; during the past years we have seen an increase, from 36 to 39 per cent, of people living below the poverty line. Among those, women and girls are the most vulnerable. We need to step up every effort to fight the scourge of poverty. The launch of the Citizen's Charter is a commendable step in this direction.

Afghanistan is a founding member of the g7+ organization of fragile states and successfully hosted the g7+ fourth ministerial meeting earlier this year. The g7+ is an appreciated partner with a number of the major donors in the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and statebuilding. I would like to encourage Afghanistan to continue its strong engagement in g7+ and to keep on convincing donors of the advantages of using the New Deal principles

when planning their investments and when implementing the Agenda 2030.

Mr/Mrs Chairman,

Two years into the transformation decade, the concerns are many. We all knew that it would not be an easy process. We knew that patience and long-term commitment would be necessary. We need to remember this today. It is crucial to stay on course and continue to work towards strategic and long-term goals.

In Tokyo, Sweden made a commitment to support Afghanistan throughout the transformation decade - a long-term commitment for the period 2015 to 2024 of an indicative amount of 8-8,5 billion SEK. Today I reiterate that ambition. I hope that others will follow suit and make long-term commitments.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Isabella Lövin at UN High-Level meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants

Published 20 September 2016 Updated 20 September 2016

UN High-Level meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, 19 September 2016, New York. Round table – addressing the root causes of large movements of migrants Check against delivery.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

In a world increasingly characterised by conflict, climate change, and extremism, where we are witnessing the largest number of refugees since World War II, we need to think innovatively and boldly about how to address the root causes fuelling forced displacement. This summit and the round table discussion here today show that we have moved forward in thinking about issues of large movements of refugees and their root causes more cohesively. At the same time, the international community needs to scale up its efforts in tackling the factors that trigger forced displacement in order to break the current trajectory. Sweden would like to highlight four areas in particular.

Firstly, we need to recognise that the solution to violence and poverty is not humanitarian. It is political.

We need to be much better at preventing fragile and conflict-affected countries continuing to relapsing into violence. There is a framework for this developed by fragile states and donor countries: the New Deal for Peace,

reaffirmed in the Stockholm declaration adopted earlier this year – a tool to implement the Global Goals in the most complex settings. The tools are there – what we need is political will to implement them, and for donor countries to better coordinate their efforts and to engage in long-term development, not only in short-term projects. The New Deal identifies 5 areas that we should focus on: political inclusiveness, justice, security, jobs, and social services.

Secondly, multiple root causes of forced displacement are linked to climatic and environmental degradation.

Climate change is a threat multiplier that can aggravate existing tensions and divisions within a society and among nations. It strikes disproportionately at the most vulnerable and poor people of the world and adversely affects security in fragile settings.

As such, Sweden aims to ensure that the UNSC coherently includes climate analyses and sustainable solutions to the root causes fuelling conflicts. Sweden has also made a commitment to streamline all of its development cooperation to be climate-friendly and conflict-sensitive, both to support developing countries becoming more resilient to droughts, flooding and extreme weather, and to help them leapfrog to the future renewable energy market, which is absolutely key.

Thirdly, empower women and girls.

Act feminist. Sixteen years on from the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, one can firmly state that the promotion of gender equality is not only a matter of women's rights, but also a matter of ensuring peace and security for all. Nothing can be discussed about women without women.

Fourthly – we need to bridge the gap between humanitarian aid and long-term development.

As a concrete example, earlier this year Sweden launched a USD 200 million development strategy for the Syria crisis to complement and seek synergies with our significant humanitarian aid in Syria and neighbouring countries. The strategy seeks to strengthen resilience among the Syrian population and host communities in neighbouring countries, which have received large groups of refugees, by strengthening local capacity, creating livelihoods, supporting human rights defenders and addressing gender-based violence.

We are also planning to give additional core funding of MUS\$ 16 to UNCHR this year.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to fully integrate migration and refugee analyses into the way we think about international development cooperation. Migration and refugee issues cut across many policy areas. Today, and in the future, we need long-term commitment, interaction and utilisation of all tools at hand.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Isabella Lövin at UNICEF event

Published 19 September 2016 Updated 19 September 2016

Speech by Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin at Carry Light for Children event, UNICEF, New York, 18 September 2016. Check against delivery.

Every one of the world's almost 50 million uprooted children represents a heartbreaking let down by the world community. We need to turn this collective failure into collective action for the children who need it the most.

Children can never be held responsible for wars and conflicts, but they are always the most exposed to their consequences.

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Children are our future. We cannot afford to have 50 million uprooted girls and boys; millions of them are trapped, held hostage in refugee situations without any possibility of living a full life or a fair chance to build a future. More than four million Syrian children have not gone to school for years. An entire generation of children are growing up in fear, amid conflict and destruction.

What will happen to them? And how will this affect Syria's future?

Children are amazingly resilient, finding a way to live an everyday life in extreme situations. Many of the children I have met in conflict regions and refugee camps, in Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan and Dadaab in Kenya are still so full of curiosity and creativity. I always ask them what they want to be when they grow up. And each time they answer: I want to be a doctor,

a judge, a teacher, a policeman, a nurse, a football player...

And often, schools and teachers are their window to the future.

I will never forget the school children chanting in Dadaab, the world's largest refugee camp where people have lived for generations. They were standing there in blue UNICEF T-shirts repeating: Education, education brings development for generation, generation, generation...

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We must do everything in our power to make their vision come true. The vulnerability of children, and in particular unaccompanied children, calls for measures to ensure that all children are protected from violence, abuse and exploitation, and given access to education.

However, it is not enough to help children in need. We must prevent war from breaking out in the first place. The root causes of armed conflict must be addressed. Peacebuilding and statebuilding must be reinforced. Efforts to promote democracy and human rights deserve far greater political attention and financial resources.

In the Global Goals era, UNICEF has to work very closely with other UN agencies and multilateral organisations, as well as with civil society and the private sector. In fragile and conflict-affected countries, where complexities abound, UN cohesion is more critical than anywhere else.

The world needs countries that demonstrate leadership. I am proud that Sweden gives unearmarked core support to UNICEF. We are now stepping up our efforts to help children, wherever in the world, who are fleeing from war, conflict and disasters. We plan to double our support to UNICEF this year. Sustaining peace and protecting victims of violence – this is our shared global responsibility to every single one of the 50 million uprooted children in today's world.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Deputy Prime at the UN Security Council, 10 June 2016

Published 10 June 2016 Updated 10 June 2016

Speech by Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin, delivered in connection with an open debate on protection of civilians and peacekeeping operations. 10 June 2016 at the UN Security Council. Check against delivery!

Mr. President,

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway – and my own country, Sweden. These remarks are in addition to the statement which will be delivered by the representative of the European Union later today, with which we align ourselves.

To begin with, let me thank you for convening this important open debate. I would also like to thank [the briefers] for their contributions this morning, and the Council for its efforts to strengthen the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

As outlined in the Secretary-General's report, the protection of civilians is at the core of our common purpose. The heroic efforts of UN personnel and the commitment of troop and police contributing countries are testament to this.

They deserve our deepest respect, recognising that their mission may also entail sacrifice.

Mr. President,

Let me highlight three ideas that we believe should underpin the PoC-agenda of the 21st century:

Firstly, peacekeepers and peace operations must be properly resourced to protect.

Governments have the primary responsibility to protect civilians. But while we re-commit to enhancing national efforts, UN peace operations must be able to assist in fulfilling this responsibility. All peacekeepers need to be properly prepared, trained and equipped.

We must therefore ensure that all UN personnel, at all levels and in all functions, receive adequate training on the protection of civilians, child protection and preventing conflict-related sexual violence before deployment – and that continual training is provided in the field.

The Nordic countries commit significant resources to capacity building – across the board, from military to civilian personnel, local authorities to civil society, and States to regional organisations. We do so in a wide variety of contexts, ranging from the coalition against Daesh, to support to the East African Standby Force.

In addition, Sweden is supporting the development of pre-deployment training standards for UN corrections officers. Over the last 11 years, the Swedish Prison and Probation Service has provided pre-deployment training to more than 400 corrections officers from all over the world.

Secondly, prevention contributes to protection.

By increasing our efforts in the field of prevention and peacebuilding, and addressing the root causes of conflict, we foster sustainable peace. Important joint steps towards this have been taken through the recent resolutions on the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. We believe that a shift towards prevention, underpinned by local perspectives, should be seen as an antidote to atrocities.

Needless to say, the protection of civilians includes the protection of women and children, in particular girls. Furthermore, women and girls need to be

considered as powerful agents for prevention and protection. We therefore need to ensure women's and girls' influence and meaningful participation. One tool in support of UN mediation activities is our Nordic Women Mediators' Network.

Our experiences in MINUSMA have taught us that efficient protection of civilians requires close cooperation among military, police and civilian components within the UN system, as well as successful coordination with local authorities, humanitarian organizations and civil society. MINUSMA has also demonstrated the importance of strengthened situational awareness to effective protection of civilians as well as peacekeepers. We welcome the development of a policy framework for intelligence in support of UN peace operations.

Seeking national and regional perspectives is key – and enhanced and more dynamic partnerships are critical, including with regional and sub-regional organizations. More predictable, sustainable and long-term financing is also essential in this regard. The Nordic countries provide long-term financing for peace and development in a wide variety of ways, including through significant non-earmarked contributions to different parts of the UN system.

Thirdly, we need norms that safeguard humanity.

Humanitarian organizations and humanitarian and medical personnel play a crucial role in the protection of civilians, both through active efforts and through their very presence. They must be respected and given swift and unimpeded access to those in need. Their facilities and transports must be protected. And they must never be targeted, harmed or prevented from saving lives in contravention of international law.

The very purpose of international humanitarian law is to protect civilians in armed conflict. These norms that safeguard humanity must be upheld. We therefore commend the Council for its adoption of Resolution 2286, which strongly condemns acts of violence, attacks and threats against the wounded and sick, medical and humanitarian personnel and hospitals and medical facilities.

We also need to increase our humanitarian efforts to respond effectively to crises. The first ever World Humanitarian Summit held in May provides an excellent point of departure for our intensified efforts and the way forward.

The Nordic countries have long been among the top financial and political

supporters to the humanitarian agenda. We intend to maintain our high level of support.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by honouring the legacy of an individual who I believe embodied the courage that defines the proud mission carried out by UN peacekeepers all over the world, every day: the late Captain Mbaye Diagne, who saved hundreds, perhaps as many as a thousand lives. His heroic deeds illustrate that the protection of civilians is within the scope of our common action.

Because the protection of civilians needs to be pursued in partnership.

We need to listen to the voices of the vulnerable.

We need to ensure the dignity of the defenceless.

And we need to keep civilians safe – together.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by the Minister for International Development Cooperation at the IPPF event - Call to Humanity

Published 24 May 2016 Updated 24 May 2016

Speech by the Minister for International Development Cooperation at the IPPF event - Call to Humanity - Transformative Humanitarian Action for Prioritizing Sexual and Reproductive Health, Istanbul 23 May, 2016. Check against delivery!

Your royal highness, executive director, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

As I have travelled across the world as a minister of development cooperation, I have noticed there is usually one single phrase creating more reactions than anything else I say. From cheers and applause to complete silence. That I represent a feminist government.

Sweden is in fact the first country that has an outspoken feminist foreign policy. What does this in fact mean?

To put it in very simple terms: that we put a gender lens on all issues, and that a gender perspective is implemented in all foreign policy areas, not least in peace and security efforts. Why is this so important?

Because if we don't, peacebuilding will never be sustainable in the longer perspective. Women's issues are not soft issues, they are hard issues of human rights, life and death!

I have visited many humanitarian missions, and quite a few refugee camps - from Dadaab in Kenya, to the Bekaa valley in Lebanon. There is one common fact that stands out: women and girls share the same stories of living in fear of violence and sexual abuse, and of not having the rights over their own bodies, or the fear to be given away to be married at a too early age, fear of dying giving birth.

This evident vulnerability of women and girls remains one of our main challenges when now looking at the humanitarian system with critical eyes.

Therefore, two of our focus areas in our feminist foreign policy is "Women and girls in humanitarian settings", and Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR),

60 percent of the preventable maternal deaths worldwide occur in emergencies. Only today, an estimated 500 women in these settings die during pregnancy and childbirth. These deaths could have been avoided with quite simple access to sexuality education, affordable contraceptives, safe and legal abortion and access to basic health care.

It doesn't have to be very complicated, As I visited Mogadishu last year I witnessed the cruel and stark contrasts between women giving birth with and without the help from trained midwives. And it is literally a matter of life and death. It's not unique for Somalia, I heard the same stories in Afghanistan and South Sudan.

Sexual and reproductive rights are human rights. Still, for too long, the humanitarian response has not taken adequate measures to protect these rights. And the consequences have been dreadful. Here we also see that local women's groups have a key role for empowerment and the fulfillment of these human rights.

One of our commitments for the World Humanitarian Summit is to ensure the implementation of the targets for the 2030 Agenda on maternal, new-born and maternal health in emergencies. Ensuring that women have access to comprehensive health care is about saving lives.

Sweden is in a strong position to exert an influence, thanks to our substantial humanitarian aid. We demand our partners provide maternity care. This is also an example of a feminist foreign policy!

Now, I would like to take this opportunity welcoming RFSU/IPPF as a new

partner in the Call to Action for addressing Gender-based violence. We need more partners that forcefully promote women's sexual and reproductive rights. RFSU has an extraordinary track record of working successfully with these issues, and I know that their contribution will be of great value for the initiative.

This year Sweden is leading the Call to Action of Protection from gender-based violence in emergencies with the aim to build a truly global coalition to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in humanitarian situations. By joining the Call to action, we can hold ourselves accountable. Making commitments is simply not enough.

Worldwide, an estimated one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse in her lifetime. One in every three, most often by someone she knows. These numbers are outrageous and totally unacceptable!

And we know that domestic violence, sexual assault and rape, increase in times of war and conflict, and the perpetrators of these crimes often enjoy a higher degree of impunity. We will significantly improve our humanitarian support to organisations with a protection mandate, including to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and to promote integration of protection in all humanitarian sectors.

To sum up, The World Humanitarian summit must lead to political commitments that are translated to concrete change for women and girls on the ground. We will use the Call to Action to ensure that commitments are put into action. As Chair of the Call to Action in 2016, I encourage all states and organisations to endorse the Call to Action and its Roadmap.

The Roadmap provides a framework to follow-up the commitments being made here at the summit. It is a tool for humanitarian actors to ensure that pledges are translated into and targeted actions on the ground.

Sweden will continue to actively push for SRHR within the framework of our feminist foreign policy and within Call to Action.

We therefore commit to only fund humanitarian interventions that explicitly include a gender analysis with sex- and age disaggregated data. We also demand that partners apply the IASC, ECHO or other gender- and age Markers into all humanitarian operations by 2018. This is one example of our Swedish feminist foreign policy!

Only with this perspective can humanitarian assistance truly be part of peace-building.

Thank you



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Introductory speech at the International Dialogue side event at WHS

Published 24 May 2016 Updated 24 May 2016

Introductory speech by Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation, at the International Dialogue side event at the World Humanitarian Summit, Istanbul 23 May, 2016. Check against delivery!

Excellencies, Madam Moderator, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

You have probably heard the numbers many times at this summit, but I think they deserve to be repeated once again. 125 million people are in need of humanitarian support. If it would be a country it would be the 11th biggest in the world. 80% of these are suffering because of man-made wars & conflicts. The amount is twelve times greater than fifteen years ago, still the funding gap is 15 billion dollars.

As Sweden's minister of development I have visited quite a few refugee camps across the world. From Gambella to Dadaab and Tindouf. One single fact, one insight, has been more painful to grasp than others. That there seems to be no hope for a future outside the camp for the people living there. Generation after generation have faced or will have to face this destiny, if we - the international community - don't bring our act together. The average length of conflict-induced displacement is an astonishing 17 years. To many, displacement has become a life sentence.

This is not only a matter of wasted lives and dreams. This is not only a matter of dignity. It might also be a ticking bomb. When society can't bring

hope for a better future, people tend to look for alternatives. We see the results in terms of terrorist organisations recruiting young people by offering false promises to people in despair.

So we have gathered here in Istanbul at a critical moment.

Although many humanitarian appeals remain unanswered, the issue of increasing humanitarian needs is not only a financial problem. It is political.

The UN Secretary General calls in "One Humanity" for five core responsibilities critical to deliver better for humanity.

1. To prevent and to end conflicts
2. To uphold the norms that safeguard humanity
3. Leave no-one behind
4. Deliver and finance aid differently and
5. To invest in humanity.

These have to be transformed into political action. We must mobilize the political will to reach these ambitious goals. We need to marshal resources to end fragility and violent conflicts.

The best way to deal with growing humanitarian needs is to address their root causes. In fragile and conflict affected situations, institutions are weak or dysfunctional and less able to withstand shocks. Whether in the form of health epidemics (as we have seen in Western Africa during the ebola crisis), whether in the form of natural disasters (as in Nepal or Bangladesh which I recently visited) or terrorist attacks (as countries like Somalia and Afghanistan now suffer from).

What begins as a short-term humanitarian emergency often turns into a long-term development challenge.

Fragile states can soon become conflict affected states unless we act now. And which the next fragile states are we must be better at identifying.

In April the members of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding adopted the Stockholm Declaration on Addressing Fragility and Building Peace in a Changing World.

If we are to reverse the trend of an increase of protracted humanitarian crises, we need to have a long-term perspective. The Stockholm Declaration emphasizes that we need to focus more on prevention by addressing the root

causes and the drivers of fragility and conflict. We need to work together, and we need to do it horizontally rather than vertically.

The Stockholm declaration commits members of the International Dialogue to bridge the divide between humanitarian and development actors.

It calls for collective outcomes that supports the "Leave no-one behind" ambition. And it strives for the implementation of Agenda 2030 in fragile and conflict affected contexts.

The International Dialogue can be a platform for creating closer working collaboration. Together we can achieve collective outcomes and scaling up innovation at country levels.

The International Dialogue and two of its members, Germany and UNDP, have organized this event today to answer the UN Secretary General's call.

Therefore, we have three requests for all of you here today.

1. That you share innovations on how we can collaborate productively when working with the humanitarian and development communities.
2. That you explore opportunities for joint analysis and how to work more effectively and inclusively with national and local governments and communities.
3. And last but not the least, that you explore how we can work on implementing the global goals in fragile environments.

I encourage you, as the chair of the International Dialogue to see how this closer partnership should translate in practice!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Isabella Lövin at the Security Council Open Debate on the Middle East Peace Process

Published 19 April 2016 Updated 19 April 2016

Swedish national statement, New York 18 April, 2016.
Check against delivery.

Mr. President,

Let me begin by welcoming today's adoption of the Presidential Statement on Yemen by this Council. The UN-led peace talks that have been resumed today in Kuwait will hopefully take us closer to a political solution in Yemen.

Sweden welcomes the Cessation of Hostilities in place since 10 April and we urge all parties to respect it

The massive humanitarian needs must be met. Sweden is among the largest humanitarian donors to Yemen, with contributions over 50 million US dollars since the conflict began.

Mr. President,

Making the Syria talks in Geneva a success is an enormous challenge, but the world cannot afford to fail. Five years of horrific warfare must be brought to an end. A political transition must be realised. The Syrian people deserve to live in peace and democracy.

For the talks to succeed, all parties must fully implement the Resolutions of this Council.

While the Cessation of Hostilities seems to be broadly holding, I am gravely

concerned by the slowing down in humanitarian access.

In particular, I am appalled by reports that medicines and medical equipment are being removed from humanitarian convoys, costing innocent lives. This is unacceptable!

Sweden supports the work of Special Envoy de Mistura, not least by funding Syrian women's participation.

Sweden is assisting the Syrian people in three ways:

First, we are stepping up resilience funding through our new Syria Crisis Strategy of 200 million US dollars. Secondly, we are increasing our humanitarian aid, amounting to over 300 million US dollars. Thirdly, we have received over 120 000 refugees that have fled Syria, one of the highest in Europe.

Sweden recognises that neighbouring countries, especially Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, are under immense pressure. That is why our Syria crisis strategy includes support in these countries as well.

Mr. President,

Next year marks 50 years of occupation of Palestine. 50 years!

All of us are aware of the urgency of the situation on the ground and the absence of a political horizon. The two-state solution is fading away before our eyes.

We are seeing continued violence, we are seeing a rapid continuation of the settlements, and we are seeing unprecedented numbers of demolitions of Palestinian homes and infrastructure.

The settlements are illegal and an obstacle to peace. Settlement activity in East Jerusalem seriously jeopardizes the possibility of Jerusalem serving as the future capital of both states.

A fundamental change of the settlement policy is needed, particularly in East Jerusalem and Area C.

Such a change would increase economic opportunities, it would empower Palestinian institutions and it would enhance stability and security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Sweden stands firmly against terrorism. All acts of violence against civilians are despicable, and must be condemned by all.

Yet, security measures alone will not end the violence. The underlying causes of the conflict must be addressed.

Only then will the violence come to an end.

Only then will peace and stability prevail.

Only then will the citizens in Israel and Palestine be able to live their lives in dignity.

The situation in Gaza remains critical. Recent rocket attacks from Gaza and the Israeli air strike-retaliation show the urgency of the situation. These are reminders of the risk of further violent escalation. In a couple of years, the lack of potable water is irreversible.

Therefore the isolation of Gaza must end and the reconstruction must be fast-tracked.

The European Union and Sweden have called on all parties to guarantee unimpeded humanitarian access to Gaza for humanitarian organisations and other international actors including state representatives, as foreseen by international humanitarian law.

Mr. President,

To save the prospects of a two-state solution, and to counter the growing hopelessness among the youth, the international community must move from words to action.

We must help the parties to move forward by creating new dynamics and a momentum for a meaningful peace process to end the occupation.

Sweden therefore fully supports the French initiative on an international peace conference, as a way for the parties and the world to recommit to the two-state solution. Sweden is encouraged by the increased Quartet activity, and is looking forward to the publication of the announced Quartet report.

The Security Council has a central role to play, and must shoulder its responsibility to uphold its resolutions and the UN Charter.

If we, the international community, are serious about our commitment to the two-state solution, we have important work to do in the months ahead.

Thank you, Mr. President.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin at SRHR seminar on Resources for women and girls: realizing the vision of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all through agenda 2030

Published 07 April 2016 Updated 07 April 2016

All-Party Parliamentary Group on SRHR seminar on Resources for women and girls: realizing the vision of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all through agenda 2030, Stockholm, 7 April 2016. Check against delivery!

Dear all,

I'm happy to be here and to be able to conclude this important seminar. Thanks to the Parliamentary Group and RFSU for inviting me. This week, Stockholm and the Swedish government hosted the high-level International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and State building. This dialogue is an important process to put the spotlight on the fragile states, which we know are the ones that did not fulfill the Millennium Development Goals. To fully realise the 2030 Agenda these countries are key.

Sweden sees the importance of these issues, which is why we will lead the work on target 16 in the new agenda. This target and the international dialogue both have special importance for the work to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights. It is in the context of conflicts that maternal deaths increase. It is in the context of fragile states that the human rights for women and girls are grossly neglected. It is in the context of a state rebuilding its' peace that sexual abuse and trauma have to be addressed on a systemic level.

So, in a world with more conflicts, the challenges of sexual and reproductive health and rights are more important to address than they have ever been.

Every year, the denial of women and girls' basic right to decide over their ownbodies leads to 80 million unplanned pregnancies, 30 million unplanned births and 20 million unsafe abortions around the world. It prevents more than 220 million women and girls from having access to effective and affordable contraception. Every year, more than 300 000 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. The figures are shocking.

The absolute fundamental right to control one's own body is still controversial in many parts of the world, mainly due to discriminatory laws, norms and practices. Laws and structures keep many women, girls, adolescents and LGBT persons from enjoying their human rights, reaching their potential and contributing to their societies.

Sweden is deeply concerned about the increased resistance against gender equality and SRHR.

Luckily, this is not only a time of challenges but also a time of opportunities. We have a new architecture for development, through the 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda, with its two goals that explicitly relate to SRHR, offers a real opportunity for change. Its implementation is a top priority for Sweden. We welcome collaboration and ideas on how to progress and succeed on the goals and targets set out to advance the SRHR situation.

Next month, the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit will take place in

Istanbul. The summit must lead to political commitments that are translated to concrete changes for women and girls on the ground.

As you know, about three in five of all maternal deaths worldwide occur in humanitarian or fragile contexts, which include wars and natural disasters. Every day, more than 500 women in these settings die during pregnancy and childbirth.

For too long, the humanitarian response has not taken adequate measures to protect the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls. At the World Humanitarian Summit, one of the Swedish priorities will therefore be the inclusion and the empowerment of women and girls in the humanitarian response.

A concrete tool for change is the initiative Call to Action on protection from gender-based violence in emergencies. Since the beginning of this year, Sweden is leading the Call to Action in emergencies and the implementation of its Road map. I would like to express my appreciation to UNFPA for its engagement as co-chair in the Call.

This seminar addresses a core question – who will fund SRHR in the 2030 Agenda – and how?

Nearly 85 per cent of Swedish bilateral aid directly or indirectly affects gender equality, since the gender perspective is mainstreamed into our strategies. Swedish support to SRHR makes up around 60 per cent of the Swedish development assistance for health and around 7 per cent of our total development cooperation. It is also of course a vital part of our development assistance to human rights and democracy.

Sweden is the largest donor to UN Women and the second largest donor to UNFPA and UNAIDS. The government's increase of core-support to UNFPA and UN Women in 2016 was a deliberate political choice. I have instructed The Swedish international Development Cooperation Agency to especially prioritise SRHR in country strategies and programmes in 2016, in a time when we have been forced to cut back on our aid budget. Our serious commitment to SRHR cannot be questioned.

While the ODA that goes to SRHR continues to increase, the global needs for SRHR by far exceed the resources available. In order to increase access

and funding to SRHR, we need an efficient multilateral system with a robust global financial architecture.

A robust financial system must be based on core support. Core support allows UN Funds and programmes to remain strategic. It should be complemented with flexible ear marked support and innovative funding in order to give the organisations maximum room for manoeuvre. This is a Swedish commitment.

We also need strong health systems. Systems for health must be strengthened in a broad sense; health must be part of global and national development priorities, plans and budgets.

In the multilateral system, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and UNAIDS have unique normative mandates. They are key partners for political dialogue about issues related to gender equality and SRHR of women, children and adolescents.

We all want the World Bank and the Ministries of Finance to consider these issues to a greater extent! But when establishing new funds, such as the GFF and the GFF Trust Fund, we must make sure that it does not lead to underfinancing of UN organizations. This can lead to undermining their capacities, technical expertise and important normative roles. The Swedish Government engages in the discussions with the World Bank and we voice these concerns.

Yet, above all, the most important issue with regard to financing is ultimately – political will. We need a strong political will from donors and governments, to further these rights and to build the systems.

Dear friends, in conclusion. The Swedish Government is and will continue to be a strong advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality and LGBT rights, as integral parts of human rights. We will continue to prioritize these issues even if the times are difficult.

We should invest in gender equality not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because when women and girls can educate themselves and find a job they like, they bring economic development. If every country would match the most gender equal country in its region, in terms of women's access to the labour market, the global GDP would increase by 11 percent!

Gender equality can truly be a key to ending poverty!

We remain committed to the realization of the 2030 Agenda, where we luckily see a broad support in the Swedish parliament. We continuously work together with other governments to address the challenges of SRHR globally, and to increase the funding to tackle these challenges.

We do this because these rights are absolute – every woman and girl should be able make the decisions about her own body. Every LGBT person should be treated with respect and dignity, in the eyes of the law and in their life. Every adolescent should get access to sexuality education and youth friendly services. And every woman should rest assure that the birth of her child will happen in a safe place.

To make this a reality, a lot of work is needed. So let's get to work.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Opening statement by Isabella Lövin at the Fifth Global Meeting of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

Published 05 April 2016 Updated 05 April 2016

Opening statement by H.E. Isabella Lövin at the Fifth Global Meeting of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, Stockholm, 5 April 2016. Check against delivery.

Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, (UN High Commissioner for Refugees), Chair of the g7+ and Co-chair of the International Dialogue of Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, Distinguished Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and an honour to welcome you to Stockholm for the fifth Global Meeting of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding.

The world has changed quite dramatically since the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding was created less than ten years ago.

As a result of the efforts made to meet the Millennium Development Goals, extreme poverty has decreased significantly in most developing countries over the last two decades.

Probably all of us in this room have heard the success stories. Extreme poverty has been halved; child mortality has been drastically reduced – in most developing countries.

With one exception: in fragile and conflict-affected countries. Very few of fragile and conflict-affected states have met the poverty target. The ten worst performing countries on maternal mortality globally are all in conflict affected countries.

Syria has shown that conflict and violence means development in reverse – 20 million people who used to live in a middle-income country have been thrown into poverty and half of the population has been forced to leave their homes.

60 per cent of the population is unemployed; 4 million children are out of school.

The cost of rebuilding a country once it has been destroyed by war is incalculable. Yet the World Bank has tried to quantify it: some 35 billion dollars have been lost since the outbreak of the Syrian war only.

The total cost of conflict in 2014 was 14.3 trillion US dollars; equal to the size of the GDPs of Germany and France. And the UK. And Canada. And Spain.

These figures are of course staggering. But what is worse that it will take at least a generation to rebuild a country affected by serious conflict.

Not since the Second World War have we seen such huge numbers of refugees, and the trend is extremely worrying: after declining for many years, the number of major civil wars almost tripled from four to eleven between 2007 and 2014.

We can't afford to allow this to continue! Not in terms of human suffering, not in terms of global security.

And if we want to achieve the new Global Goals that the world committed to in September, we urgently need to address conflict, and start working on peacebuilding and conflict prevention in new ways.

This is why we are here today. The world needs to focus on addressing the underlying issues that lead to conflict, fragility and chronic poverty. We must address the root causes and deal with them.

Peace and development are interlinked.

Where there is no peace, there is no development.

Where there is no development, there is no peace.

The two cannot be regarded as two different things the way the international community still tends to do.

But we have an opportunity to change that now.

The entire international system is shifting. If 2015 was an important year for global governance - with worldwide agreements, the climate agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, 2016 is the time to allocate resources and shift from setting the targets, to acting to achieve them.

It's time to focus on conflict prevention and peacebuilding, to commit to inclusive peace processes and to invest the necessary political capital in international cooperation for peace; this is ultimately a matter of political will and pro-active leadership. I know that this transition is not easy, but utterly necessary.

This is where the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding comes in.

The dialogue was the driving force behind the New Deal for fragile states, with its 5 Peace building and State building Goals. The Dialogue also successfully pushed to have goal 16 on peaceful societies included in the 2030 Agenda. With the Dialogue as a platform, and the New Deal as the tool, we can make sure that the Sustainable Development Goals set last year are implemented also in fragile and conflict-affected countries. This is the force and added value of the IDPS. It is the coalition of the willing.

The five peace- and statebuilding goals identified in the New Deal by the fragile states themselves – legitimate politics, security, justice, economic development and service delivery – should, in my view, be the guiding principles of all peacebuilding, statebuilding and development work.

I actually see a lot of that language and thinking in the recent review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. This is a good sign. We should work together, we must work together, to achieve concrete results on the ground, not only preventing conflict from re-emerging, but also sustaining peace – that is, working on conflict prevention before conflict erupts, costing lives, livelihoods, time and reversing development.

Recognising the urgency of addressing these global challenges, we would

like today to seek members' commitment in the following four areas:

First. We need to renew our commitment to the New Deal.

Through local ownership, by addressing the root causes of violence, conflict and fragility, the New Deal can achieve concrete results in difficult environments. To achieve this we need to improve our systems to ensure inclusion and rebuild trust between states and citizens. We must show that we can use the New Deal to achieve results. This will also include strengthening gender approaches and women's active participation in peacebuilding, as well as recognizing and harnessing the positive potential of young people.

Secondly: We should use the New Deal principles to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The New Deal is a key framework for achieving resilience and development outcomes in fragile and conflict-affected environments and for meeting the commitment to 'leaving no one behind'. The New Deal provides a unique platform for political, economic and social reforms by strengthening dialogue between national authorities and development partners, and by including civil society. We must lead by example and show how to implement the 2030 Agenda in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

Thirdly: Development partners should provide smarter, more effective, more innovative and more targeted development support in fragile and conflict-affected situations, especially in protracted humanitarian crises and in g7+ countries. It is important to strengthen country systems and to make relevant development aid conflict-sensitive, based on an analysis of conflict and fragility drivers and 'do no harm' principles

Finally, we must strengthen our partnerships. If we want to improve our responses to conflict we need broader, deeper and more effective coalitions for peacebuilding and statebuilding. Achieving sustainable peace and development in conflict-affected countries requires the international community to work together like never before, in new partnerships and in new ways. Here, I would highlight in particular 'fragile-to-fragile' cooperation, a closer cooperation with civil society and the need for the International Dialogue to have closer cooperation with the UN. The International Dialogue is a flexible and ready partner in this regard.

Mr Co-chair,

To conclude: responding to the challenges of today, and drawing on the experiences of the past, we need a new global partnership to prevent violent conflict, reduce humanitarian needs, and sustain peace. This meeting here today, taking place just before the WHS, is a key moment in which the principles of the New Deal for fragile states can lay the foundation for such a partnership. The New Deal can be used as the tool for implementing goal 16 in fragile states. It provides a relevant framework that brings together partners and stakeholders. It's difficult to reinvent the New Deal, because its principles are still valid. But by renewing our commitment to it we can revitalise it, and make it a central part of implementing and achieving the entire 2030 Agenda.

Because without peace – no development.

And without development – no peace.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin at UN Women panel discussion in Juba, South Sudan, celebrating International Women's Day, 8 March 2016

Published 08 March 2016 Updated 08 March 2016

Check against delivery!

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen, panellists and friends,

I am honoured to be here with you today to celebrate International Women's Day, to honour your work and learn from your experiences.

I thank UN Women for organising this event and for their close and productive cooperation over several years here in South Sudan and elsewhere in the world.

I know that you – the women of South Sudan – are in a battle. I know that you have lived through decades of war and violence that have permeated the very fabric of your society.

I also know that your consistent hard efforts are making a difference – laying the ground work for peace and a better future for your children.

The stories of our sisters that I have met in other war-torn countries – Afghanistan, Somalia, Lebanon and Liberia – have made deep impressions

and will stay with me forever. They have made my commitment to women's rights and gender equality even stronger.

In a time when warlords with guns are trying to set the agenda – driving millions of people from their homes, creating long-lasting wounds that will take decades or sometimes centuries to heal – you stand out as the true heroes and 'peace lords' of our time.

You ensure safety for your families, put food on the table, mediate conflicts in your communities, build bridges between groups and strive to bury the hatred – looking ahead to the future – rather than holding on to the violent past.

I am proud to represent the first explicitly feminist government in the world. We are convinced that gender equality is the foundation of sustainable development and we are now working hard to ensure that all our policies in all political fields have a gender perspective.

I would argue that Sweden's own success is linked to our improvement in the area of gender equality. This includes important reforms such as:

- Parental leave – the rapid expansion of child care provision, preschools and individual parental insurance. Both parents are equally entitled by law to parental leave.
- Maternal health care – providing access to professional midwives and education about sexual and reproductive health and rights. A century ago many women in Sweden died in pregnancy or childbirth, now almost all survive. Exercising control over your own body is also the first building block of a truly democratic society and key for economic development. Girls who become mothers are often forced to quit school, perpetuating the cycle of poverty for their children.

Today, Sweden is one of the most gender-equal countries in the world, and has one of the highest standards of living.

This has not always been the case.

I am harvesting the fruits of my mother's and grandmother's struggle. Together with women throughout Sweden, they fought to become full citizens – to gain rights, resources and representation. This fight continues.

Feminism – gender equality and inclusive politics – is needed more than ever.

We are living at a time when armed conflicts yet again are on the rise, where almost half of all peace agreements fail within five years, where each day over 42 000 women, men, girls and boys are forced to leave their homes due to conflicts and persecution, where the average length of conflict-induced displacement is 17 years. This illustrates that we desperately need new ways of building peaceful and resilient societies.

Research and our own experience demonstrate that women's inclusion and participation is critical to achieving successful and sustainable peace that encompasses all citizens.

The UN Security Council has stated that widespread sexual violence during and after conflicts undermines the chances for peace and security.

Despite this – as you know all too well – these facts have not led to any real change on the ground. Of the 1 168 peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2013, only 18 per cent made any reference to women or gender. From 1992 to 2011 less than four per cent of signatories to peace agreements were women. The recurring violence against women and children is absolutely appalling and continues to shatter lives, families and communities.

This must change if we are going to stop the vicious circle of armed conflicts.

You, the women of South Sudan, have shown your leaders and the world that you won't be silenced or sidestepped.

You have a proud history of fighting for a seat at the table during peace negotiations and for trying to bridge divides in times of conflict. Groups such as the Sudanese Women Association in Nairobi, Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace and, most recently, all the women who participated in the peace negotiations in Addis Ababa deserve recognition.

You have shown that progress can be made, despite extremely difficult circumstances. South Sudan's accession to CEDAW last year was an important landmark. Work on the national gender policy has pointed the way forward. Our Embassy has reported on the inspirational efforts of girls and young women across South Sudan to end child marriage and ensure equal access to education.

Sweden has been a steadfast supporter of women's rights and women's participation in the peace process in South Sudan. Our support stretches

from development cooperation to political dialogue. We are pleased and proud to be the largest donor to UN Women in South Sudan, and also to be able to support the government and organisations working on women's health and midwifery, including supporting and educating midwives in different parts of the country.

You can rest assured that I will raise gender issues in all my meetings during my two days here in Juba.

I look forward to our discussion here today to learn how Sweden can enhance the work for women's rights and peacebuilding in South Sudan.

Our discussions and my visit are also very timely and important for two other reasons:

Firstly, in April, I will host a high-level meeting in Stockholm, together with Minister of Finance and Economic Development Kaifala Marah of Sierra Leone. We are co-Chairs of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding – of which South Sudan is a member. Our ambition is that leaders from donor countries and fragile states will commit to a new deal for peace – the Stockholm Declaration. Evidently your experience is extremely important here.

And secondly, in May, the first ever World Humanitarian Summit will be held. I would therefore like to take the opportunity to hear from you how humanitarian response can better ensure the protection and participation of women and girls. I will use my presence at the Summit to voice your call to action.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Isabella Lövin at the International Fisheries Transparency Initiative conference

Published 05 February 2016 Updated 05 February 2016

Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI), Mauretania, 3 February 2016. Check against delivery.

Your Excellency Mr President Ould Abdel Aziz, ministers, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, I'd like to express my congratulations to Mauritania for showing extraordinary commitment in supporting the establishment of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative.

We are really making history now – with the very first International Fisheries Transparency Initiative conference!

I would also like to thank professor Peter Eigen, chairman of the FiTI International Advisory Group, for your achievements as founding chair of Transparency International and Extractive industries Initiative – now taking the initiative to create a new mechanism to allow the world to better protect and preserve the resources of the oceans, and at the same time promote transparency, fight corruption and thereby promote better governance, the rule of law and a better future not only for our oceans – but for our children.

I am indeed greatly honoured to have been invited here as a keynote speaker, an honour I expect I have been awarded thanks to my engagement in fighting overfishing, not only in my own home country Sweden, but also at European and international level.

The problem of over-exploitation of our oceans has so many dimensions to

it.

The environmental aspect is one; seven out of ten fish stocks around the world are fully or over-exploited, and too few fish in the ocean means that they cannot fulfil the functions that the marine ecosystems rely on.

Jellyfish invade our coasts when no fish control their numbers. And algal blooming that colours the oceans yellow or green like a pea soup is exacerbated by the same phenomena. This is of course terrifying those of us that have seen these effects with our own eyes.

But then we have other types of terrifying effects – the social consequences. The links between overfishing in Sweden and the vanishing of livelihoods for artisanal fishermen in West Africa might not be completely obvious to everybody, but they are there. Fish is one of the top commodities traded internationally, and most of it is transported from the global south to the global north. Europe imports over 60 per cent of all fish that it consumes. Some of it comes from aquaculture, but that doesn't mean it doesn't affect the oceans. Even farmed salmon has to be fed by some marine protein, which means some of the feed is fished, for instance, in West Africa.

But then some of the fish that is consumed in Europe comes from European boats that have been fishing in waters outside Europe. Not only Europeans do this – the Russians, the Chinese, the Koreans, the Americans, the Japanese and others have extensive fishing outside of their own waters, sometimes fishing in international waters, sometimes buying access to third countries' waters.

When I was at the European Parliament I worked very hard for a reform of the EU Common fisheries policy and its external dimensions. And in 2013 we actually managed to conclude this reform, which many along with me consider a big success. One of the major advances in the reform dealt with transparency. The EU was already publishing its fisheries agreements with third countries, so that the terms and the payments were already publically available. But two additional important principles are now mandatory for the EU:

The first is that the EU now is decoupling payment for aid, or sectoral support, from access costs. In other words, previously it was often not transparent how much the EU was paying for actual access, since part of the money should go to supporting the local fishing sector, monitoring and control, or research, etc. Decoupling makes accountability for the payments

much easier and comparison between various actors possible.

Second, another major shift was that for the first time, we now have the obligation to make sure the EU only buys access to surplus fish – fish resources that are not needed by the country or its fishermen.

This is of course already an obligation to everyone under the UN Law of the Sea, that a country can only sell access to surplus fish – but now for the first time this important principle is enshrined in EU legislation. This obligation of course poses a great responsibility on everyone involved: how can the EU be sure the third country has a surplus of fish to sell, if there are a number of other foreign fleets operating under confidentiality clauses, and in addition to that, a lack of sufficient fisheries control of a country's exclusive economic zone – including fishing by its own nationals – and because of all these unknowns, a lack of reliable scientific data?

But anyhow, a first step in the new direction of the EU policy was taken when the EU did not ask to include octopus in the fisheries protocol with Mauritania, because this resource was fully exploited by the Mauritanian fishermen – also an important step for Mauritania to support and develop its own domestic fishing sector.

But I want to be frank here: this was not an easy battle. Why? Because as long as there are other foreign fleets out there not publishing what they pay, not publishing what they catch, not respecting the principle of only access to surplus – of course some of the European fishermen argue that it makes no sense for them to be "punished" for behaving well, when everyone else is involved in shady business practices, and fishing on the sly.

So therefore the FiTI is so extremely important.

We need to set common standards on transparency, creating a level playing field for all actors. Of course we should not prevent anyone from taking their ambitions even further, since we all know the oceans need a lot of attention and better management to recover from so many decades of overfishing, including extensive illegal and unreported fishing which is now estimated at about 20 per cent of all catches.

I think the FiTI is on the right track with the three core categories of reporting that have been identified.

First, on tenure arrangements: Who has the right to fish, how is it to be

conducted and where is it to take place? Transparency regarding vessel owners and operators – since these often are different – is important, as well as including information on beneficial ownership, and of course the IMO numbers of the vessels. Knowing who is out there in a transparent way also allows for other fishermen to check that their colleagues actually have a right to be where they are, fishing for whatever they are fishing for.

Second, on FiTI reporting on payments. I think it is important that other actors follow the EU's example and decouple access payment from development aid, or sectoral support, that often accompanies actual access payments. To include transparent reporting on fines and penalties is of course highly relevant in any country; it is a guarantee of the rule of law.

The third category is transparency on catches. I would very much recommend not only including catches in the countries EEZ, but also landings in the country, which would include data on catches landed locally but derived from fishing in another EEZ, or the high seas.

But it is also important to stress the FiTI does not replace other agreements and important commitments that countries have undertaken, and in many cases have yet to implement. The FAO Code of Conduct of responsible fisheries for instance, the Port State Measures Agreement, the EU IUU regulation, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries, the Compliance Agreement and other commitments under UNCLOS or the new global agenda, the 2030 Agenda.

Rather, it should be seen as a tool, an instrument to fulfil certain parts of these commitments. The FiTI is also a useful exercise in identifying difficulties and gaps, not least for developing countries in terms of their capacity and resources. I am very happy to also see the small-scale sector included in this initiative – not only because a substantial part of all catches are made by the small-scale sector, but it means, not least, that lack of data and reporting for this important sector will be identified, and resources will have to be directed towards this end. This is excellent and not at all impossible. With new technology and political will it can be done, and it should, not only for the sake of the well-being of our oceans, but also for the long term sustainability of the small-scale fishermen themselves.

One of the priorities of the Swedish Government is to always make visible the issue of gender equality, and it must also be emphasised here how crucial sustainable fisheries are for millions of people around the world, not least

women. In Africa, I have met widows of small-scale fishermen who have taken far too big risks far out on the ocean, to try to make a living when the coastal zones have been emptied by foreign fleets. I have met women who struggle to make their living as fish smokers or fish traders when there is less and less fish, their children playing in the smoke all day long. With more transparency and accountability their future can be much brighter, and their potential in different parts of the fisheries sector can be developed, when supply is stable.

But of course transparency alone will not make a huge difference if it is not accompanied in many cases by improved governance. There are no short cuts to good fisheries management. First of all you, need good legislation, based both on science and social justice – who should have the right to fish? You need reasonable, dissuasive sanctions if fishermen do not comply, and you need control and enforcement, data collection, improved science, you need cooperation between coastal states, market states, port states and flag states – you need all of this – but above all you need the political will to address the problems. Lack of transparency provides opportunities for corruption – let's say that clearly. Here, initiatives such as the Extractive Industries Initiative, Transparency International and Publish What You Pay have taken important steps and shown how transparency can make it more difficult for money to disappear, and also how good practises can also be encouraged by consumers in market states such as Europe. I also see great potential in the FiTI, and I am convinced consumers appreciate information on everything from bycatches to discards and the working conditions on board the fishing vessels. Too many shocking reports have been published on slave-like conditions of fishermen on large vessels around the world. This could also be an area the FiTI could investigate.

To conclude

Ladies and gentlemen, I have been writing and talking about the ocean for more than a decade now. As Minister for International Development Cooperation I see even more closely the link between environmental sustainability and the fight against poverty and hunger. We are not only fishing unsustainably – we are living unsustainably. And, as always, it is hitting the poorest and the most vulnerable the hardest.

But on a more positive note, I think we must all be aware that the world has entered a new phase. In September last year at the UN, all the world's leaders adopted a global agenda, an agenda for the next 15 years – the 2030 Agenda with 17 new sustainable development goals. Many of the goals are in

the area of environment kind, but always with a clear connection to people.

As with Goal 14 on oceans– it is not only about healthy fish stocks and coral reefs, it is about people.

It is about how people can work together and cooperate across borders and boundaries to put governance and structures in place for the benefit of all, acknowledging that what some people might profit from in the short term is depriving other people of earnings and livelihoods in the longer term.

It is about fair distribution of available resources, for this generation and the ones to come.

That is why Sweden has partnered with Fiji and other small island developing states to host the world's first UN conference in support of implementing Goal 14 on the oceans, next year in Fiji.

Because we recognise we need more cooperation to make this ambitious goal become a reality. And the FiTI is one very important initiative that I hope many countries will join, as a way of making the implementation of Goal 14 and the sub-targets on sustainable fisheries, protecting small-scale fisheries and eradicating IUU, become true.

And everyone who cares about fisheries must also care about the other problems our oceans are facing. These include the immense spread of microplastics, acidification, warming, sea-level rise, marine pollution. We all need to work together to address the root-causes of all these problems. And the gains are huge if we succeed:

The FAO estimates that ending overfishing at global level will mean global fish catches can increase by 20 per cent – providing millions of people with food and livelihoods – which the world needs if we are going to support an increasing population of another 2 billion people by 2050.

Mr President, again, my great gratitude to you for spearheading this important initiative that can make governments and private actors accountable for what is happening in our oceans. If many other countries now join, I believe we can make a difference. Thank you for your attention, and my best wishes for the continuation of this work.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Isabella Lövin at the European launch of the World Development Report 2016

Published 27 January 2016 Updated 27 January 2016

Sida, Stockholm, 25 January 2016. Check against delivery.

Ladies and gentlemen, The World Development report team, Mr. Basu!

I am very happy to be here at this important launch of this year's World Development Report, for many reasons.

One reason being that I remember that one of my very first meetings I had as a minister of development cooperation a year and a half ago, was with you Mr Basu, at the World bank annual meeting in Washington, and that we were discussing the premises of the work with this very report.

Secondly I am also very happy to see such a broad group of people in the audience, both from the internet and the development communities, both from civil society and from business.

Thirdly I am happy because I am a true technology optimist. Technology is of course not the answer to everything, and human rights, democracy and the rule of law must always be defended - never taken for granted - but I can't help being truly optimistic that ICT technologies will provide us with new possibilities that will shape and transform our societies in profound ways.

Of course, they already have. When I was a girl, highest on my wish list was to have a set of walkie-talkies.

Imagine me and my friend being able to talk to each other wherever we were, out-doors; even in the woods! That was for me science fiction, a

dream of ultimate freedom - a sense of magic! And imagine today – I can sit in the woods of my childhood and with my cell phone directly call anyone of the world's more than seven billions subscribers of cellphones, wherever they may be! In Australia, in Africa – or in a remote small island far away in the Pacific Ocean.

And it is not magic – it is technology.

Now – the publication of this report comes at a very good point in time. The world now has adopted a new universal, global agenda: Agenda 2030. It is indeed a very ambitious agenda. Many have been doubtful and even critical to the vastness of the 17 new Sustainable Development Goals; It would have been more realistic with only perhaps 10 goals, instead of 17, some have argued. And how can we achieve absolute goals such as No poverty, no hunger, education for all, sustainable energy for all, access to good health care for all etc. – and all of this in only 15 years?

Well, one thing is clear – without the huge possibilities of leapfrogging development that ICT technologies provides, the prospects of fully achieving the Agenda 2030 are very small, if not microscopic. But with them? Well, remember, only twenty years ago most people didn't even know what the Internet was at all. I remember that because in my previous life as a journalist, in 1995 I did a piece on an international youth conference with participants from different continents communicating through computers – and I do remember that I had to explain what Internet was – "computers interconnected through the telephone lines". !

Now only twenty years later, ICT and the Internet are now a fundamental part of Sweden's society and economy, providing us with nearly half of our nations growth! And – the world has a global agenda where one of the explicit sub targets within goal number 9 is to "strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020".

I think this is wise, because if we achieve that by 2020 there is still time up until 2030 to work with ICT tools to help deliver on all the other goals, allowing for leapfrogging technology to help everything from access to finance to citizens, to transparency, e-learning, e-health, e-commerce, access to public services, to information, allowing for greater transparency in decision making, accountability, public participation, etc. And just imagine what advanced 3D printers could mean for poor, remote areas! We are only beginning to see the impact this will have for health, education, agriculture and many other areas, not least climate change. According to some studies,

ICTs only, could help reduce yearly global emissions by 20% by 2030.

In 2000, when there were close to no mobile phone subscriptions in many parts of Africa, few people envisioned there would be over 900 million subscriptions today – meaning basically everyone that can use a phone today has one.

Fortunately some people did see this development coming. Sida has, in fact, been working with ICT and development issues since the late 90s in various forms; building infrastructure, setting up training programs and helping countries improve their regulations and institutions. I know some of the pioneers of this work are in the audience today, and I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your efforts and foresight!

Still too many people - In fact 60 percent of the worlds population - do not have access to internet. So increasing access and closing the so called digital divide is of course a key issue.

For remote villages in many parts of Africa where there aren't even any roads, the arrival of a solar-panel powered mobile base station means instant access to education, health care, local markets and improved security, not least for women. Access to ICTs can mean both economic and social empowerment of women – which is also emphasized in the Agenda 2030, under goal number 5, where there is agreement to "enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women."

Empowerment of women is of course not only an issue of access of technology - it is also one of participation and representation. Already 20 years ago - in 1995 - the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing set out as one of its strategic objectives to "Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication."

So now it is time to deliver on these promises.

But as this report shows, access is not enough to achieve positive development outcomes.

Countries also need good governance, strong institutions, appropriate regulation and they need to develop skills for the future, not for the past.

Helping countries that are now moving towards digital future to avoid the

mistakes, and draw on the best practices of others must be a key part of our development cooperation.

This is true not least for the many challenges that sometimes dominate the discussion on Internet issues.

Cybercrime, cyberattacks, radicalisation, hate speech and online threats are but a few.

Also another very worrying global trend is the shrinking space for civil society in many parts of the world, which often includes restrictive internet legislation.

Censorship and blocking is increasing.

Countries are contemplating or enacting legislation against encryption.

In many cases, these actions are the result of immediate reactions to security threats.

We must address these challenges, but do so within a framework of human rights and accountable institutions, good regulation and the rule of law.

And we must share our best practices globally, so that countries facing these challenges do not fall into the trap of choosing the easy way of repression.

It is an important message in the World development report that where public sector accountability is low, digital technologies often help control rather than empower citizens.

So we should not be too much of technology optimists, not to the point that we become naïve. Technology alone does not change the world, it is the people using it that does that, so we need all of us, business community, governments and civil society together to engage in all aspects of development, making sure not only functioning broad band technology is available, but also functioning democratic institutions.

Therefore I am convinced that having a rights-based perspective on digital development, with a particular focus on the gender divide is crucial.

In this field, Sweden will lead the way. We will remain committed to an open and inclusive Internet that contributes to economic and social development worldwide.

And I'd like to finish by mentioning that this fall, the Stockholm Internet Forum for Global Development will gather hundreds of delegates to further the global conversation on technology, gender and sustainable development.

This will be an important step in advancing the digital agenda of poverty eradication, leaving no one behind and bringing all of us closer together. To make us all fully realize the potential and responsibility of being one global community, just one cell phone call away.

I hope to see many of you there.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at the launch of Sweden's action towards the Global Goals

Published 19 January 2016 Updated 19 January 2016

Stockholm 18 January 2016 Check against delivery.

Your Royal Highness,
Dr Nabarro,
Friends,

A very warm welcome to this launch of Sweden's action to implement the 2030 Agenda. It is particularly exciting to see so many here from so many sectors of society.

Because if there's one thing I know, it is that we get results when we work together – the business sector, trade unions, civil society, researchers, politicians and civil servants at all levels.

One of the success factors for the Global Goals and the 2030 Agenda is that so many have been involved in developing them.

This gives us strength as we move forward and begin to implement the goals.

Thank you for being here ready to take on this task. I very much look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas about the work that lies ahead of us.

Friends,

"A quiet life on the peak of a volcano is illusory. In today's world everything concerns everyone."

These were the words of Václav Havel, formulated when the Berlin Wall fell and the world was in upheaval. Gone was the stalemate of the Cold War and a new era of global cooperation began. It was a time when world leaders and countries came face to face with the completely new challenges and new opportunities that globalisation presented.

The decade that followed was a time when the major future global issues were discussed at a string of world conferences, not least the Earth Summit in Rio, the Conference on Women in Beijing, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and the Conference on Population and Development in Cairo.

And it was those efforts that resulted in the Millennium Development Goals.

And I know that at the turn of the millennium, there weren't many who believed that those goals could be achieved.

We were used to the United Nations setting important goals and visions but we were also used to careless implementation of the decisions that were taken.

But the prophets of doom were wrong. We have proved that it is possible to change and improve the world. When there is willingness, when global leadership is strong and when the opportunities globalisation offers are seized.

At the end of last year, the American magazine The Atlantic wrote that 2015 was "the best year in history for the average human being".

And much of what was reported there relates to the UN Millennium Development Goals. Poverty was halved – five years ahead of the deadline. Today, nine out of ten girls and boys around the world go to school. Maternal mortality has fallen. Child mortality has fallen.

Billions of people have gained access to clean water. A global middle class is emerging where every second person has access to a mobile phone.

Friends, the world is not worse. It's better.

But we live in paradoxical times.

Alongside positive developments we see deepening wars and conflicts, terrorist attacks, an ongoing refugee crisis and serious environmental and

climate threats. This adds to our unease.

And despite the huge progress that has been made 800 million people are still living in extreme poverty. Ninety million children around the world are still suffering from malnutrition. Women across the globe still have less power, and poorer access to the labour market and education.

A lot of work remains to be done.

It was with this perspective – of challenges and opportunities – that the world's leaders gathered in New York in September last year and adopted the 2030 Agenda and its 17 global goals.

And it was recognising our common destiny that we gathered in December and agreed on a new binding climate agreement.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has expressed it well. "We are the first generation that can eradicate poverty. And the last that can put an end to climate change."

And the work is not to be done by someone else, somewhere else. It has to be done by all of us together. The goals make great demands on all countries and all actors. It is my ambition to see Sweden take the lead.

And there are two reasons for this.

1. It is morally right.

We have a responsibility towards others, and not just ourselves here and now. We have a responsibility towards people all over the world, but also towards future generations.

2. But it is also economically smart.

I want Swedish companies to be the ones to develop the new technology and solutions that the world is crying out for to reduce carbon emissions. Our country will benefit from being at the forefront of climate adaptation.

Sweden's strength lies in being an egalitarian and gender equal society, which not despite, but because of its solidarity and tolerance, is rich, modern and a world development leader. This is the Sweden we are striving to build. This is the Sweden we believe in.

And I know that there are plenty of ideas and solutions in Sweden.

Just over a year ago, I met Mehrdad Mahdjoubi when he was named

Technologist of the Year. I'm sure you have heard of him. He has developed the world's most advanced and efficient shower system, saving 90 per cent water and 80 per cent energy, and the shower water is cleaner than ordinary hot tap water. In addition, he has succeeded in turning his innovation into a business idea and set up a company called Orbital Systems. It is now ready for a global launch.

Many Swedish companies are well ahead. Scania and Volvo, working tenaciously for a low-emission green transport sector. H&M, one of the world's largest users of organic cotton and working for workers' rights.

There are more examples: Ericsson's digital solutions, ABB's development of smart grids and IKEA's goal to produce its own renewable energy and make it easy for us ordinary people to live greener lives with LED lights and solar panels.

I could go on because this is what I think is really exciting – when jobs are created through innovations that are turned into business ideas and reach new markets.

Sustainable business models give Swedish companies a competitive edge. This is Sweden's future. This makes a difference – in Sweden and in the world. And this creates jobs and growth.

Let me give you another example of leadership. Malmö – a municipality that has made the global goals its own. You are showing the way both on innovative environmental efforts and proposals to reduce health inequalities. And there are many more municipalities making important investments in sustainable development – Karlstad, Örebro, Lomma, Östersund and Borås to name but a few.

We have to take advantage of all the available knowledge and experience.

Three government ministers have particular responsibility for implementation. Minister for Public Administration Ardalan Shekarabi, Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin and Minister for Strategic Development Kristina Persson.

The Government will soon appoint a national delegation to facilitate and stimulate implementation. It will be tasked with producing a national action plan.

We will be assisted by a large number of government agencies that will

contribute their knowledge, such as SCB, which will help to develop indicators for the follow-up. This will make our work and the results concrete.

But what is most important is all of you here today, the breadth that you represent and the engagement you bring. Your knowledge is essential. Your work is crucial. We will do this together.

And what a historic opportunity to be a part of this process and make a difference.

We have a long to-do list. Let's get started.

Once again, a warm welcome to you all.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin at the UN Women side event on gender and climate at COP21

Published 08 December 2015 Updated 09 December 2015

Speech by Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin at the UN Women side event on Gender and Climate at COP21 in Paris on December 8th 2015.

Check upon delivery

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

For far too long the world has been blind to gender issues and the role of gender equality for sustainable development. This includes not least the dimensions of energy and climate issues.

How many of us haven't seen the pictures of starving polar bears and melting icebergs? Quite recently, people started realising that human beings would be affected too, especially those living in poverty.

Slowly there was also recognition that men and women are affected differently, both by the impacts of climate change and by the effects of energy poverty.

Today we have come to realise all this, but the world has yet to realise the full potential of women as key stakeholders to combat climate change and promote sustainable energy for all.

Experience shows that the resilience of households and communities depends greatly on the resilience of women. Women's and girls' traditional

responsibilities as food growers, water and fuel gatherers, and caregivers connect them closely to available natural resources and the climate.

In parts of Africa, as much as 80% of the workforce in food production are women. If women had as much resources as men, food production would increase by more than 20%. Women are experts on food, water and energy systems and have the crucial knowledge needed for the transformation to sustainable development. This must not go to waste. But how can we ensure this?

"We wake up at 5 a.m. to pound our millet and to collect water. We have one single tap, which is far away.

After the pounding is over we do not even have time to sweep our compounds as we have to run to join the queue for water collection."

This is a snapshot of a normal day for a great number of women around the world. Imagine what a difference a solar-powered milling machine, water pump or lighting could make if this was your everyday life. Promoting green and renewable energy is not only a way to promote environmental sustainability – it is also an important part of the puzzle to promote gender equality. The time and effort spent by women and girls on routine tasks could be reduced significantly if adequate resources were in place to deliver green electricity, modern cooking and heating fuels, running water and sanitation, and basic transportation services. Today women in developing countries are working on average 13 hours more per week than men. Reducing women's household burdens can therefore have dramatic effects on women's levels of empowerment, education, literacy, nutrition, health, economic opportunities and involvement in social and political activities.

But promoting women in the local context is not enough. Estimates by the International Renewable Energy Agency shows that only around 20% of the workforce in the modern renewable energy sector are women, and examples of women energy entrepreneurs remain largely limited to small-scale initiatives. This must change in order to unleash the powerful role that women can play as agents of change in the transition to sustainable energy, and is also something I will promote through my role on the Advisory Board of Sustainable Energy for All.

We must also ensure that women are included and allowed to be active in planning, finance and policy-making processes. And in order to achieve this we must also work with the men. Yes, look around you here at COP21 –

even though we have many good examples of excellent women in the negotiations, we can see the patriarchal structures reflected even here.

We must therefore highlight the benefits of having both men and women involved in the decisions being made. We must encourage the men in power to dare to share.

Lastly I would like to say that I am proud to represent a government that promotes gender issues through key organisations like UN Women and ENERGIA. But as a feminist government we know that we have to work with these issues wherever we are, and that is why mainstreaming gender considerations is a fundamental principle of our development cooperation – also in relations with the multilateral climate funds, such as the Global Environment Facility [GEF CEO Naoko Ishii is next speaker, TBC]. Step by step we have put in place gender policies and action plans. Step by step we are building a greener and more equal world, one reinforcing the other.

Thank you very much.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for International Development Cooperation at the UN Seminar ahead of United Nations Day

Published 26 October 2015 Updated 26 October 2015

Stockholm Concert Hall, 23 October. (Check against delivery)

Today we celebrate the United Nations. It is a wonderful thing: an organisation that ties together all the countries of the world.

As we celebrate, we should also remember why we are here. Seventy years ago, Europe lay in ruins and the world was rocked to its core. Devastation and suffering were carved into people's very souls. Millions of people were fleeing, yet more were dead. The gates of the concentration camps were opened, revealing the worst mass murder of our time and exposing the inherent evil of war and what humans are capable of. The atomic bomb struck terror in the heart of humanity, and its mushroom cloud has hung over us ever since, a constant reminder of our ability to annihilate ourselves.

Never again. Never again would this be allowed to happen.

From the realisation of the hell of war, the countries of the world came together in a union – the United Nations. Out of chaos, something beautiful was born. A common global set of values was born:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

The beginning of the Charter also states:

We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding

generations from the scourge of war.

Today, the world is once again facing global challenges and threats that may seem overwhelming. Once again, war and armed conflict are on the increase. Once again, refugee numbers have reached historic levels, and the climate threat risks destabilising entire regions and forcing even greater numbers to flee.

Once again, the world needs to come together.

The need for global solutions and a common road map towards sustainable development is glaringly obvious.

And a few weeks ago, we managed to achieve this. The world's leaders, under the aegis of the United Nations, adopted 17 global goals for sustainable development that map out the way forward for the peoples of the world up to 2030. This is fantastic. We did it! It inspires hope and confidence in our troubled times.

The global goals show that the UN is still extremely relevant. This 70 year-old will not be allowed to retire: it is needed more than ever.

The global goals offer us a vision and tools to avoid future Syrian crises, climate disasters and economic crashes. Achieving the goals will require a strong, reformed and modern UN.

The Government has therefore restored the UN's place in Swedish politics.

Sweden will be an active, attentive partner that pushes for a more effective UN. We can play a leading role for international peace and security, for social and gender equality, and in efforts to eradicate poverty and oppression, and to save our beloved planet.

To successfully achieve the global goals, to build sustainable peace and prevent war and conflicts, we must tackle one of the greatest human rights scandals of our time: the systematic discrimination against girls and women. Violence against girls and women.

In my travels during my first year as Minister for International Development Cooperation, it is the stories told by girls and women that have made an indelible impression.

Take, for example, my trip to Liberia during the Ebola outbreak.

At a 'one-stop shop' project in the capital, Monrovia, where women who are victims of violence can sneak into a special building in the hospital grounds to obtain medical, psychological and legal help, the staff testified that the number of rapes of women and children had increased dramatically since the Ebola outbreak. I was taken aback to hear that rape is the most common crime in Liberia – despite being extremely under-reported, as women and girls who have fallen victim are ashamed, and blame themselves. I began to truly understand the scale of the problem when I heard the advice given by the doctors at the rape clinic to mothers of small girls:

“Put an extra pair of trousers on them under their school uniform, that makes it harder to get at them.”

Liberia has survived a terrible civil war marked by sexual violence. It is obvious that violence against women did not end with the peace agreement. Instead, as in so many other post-conflict countries, it spread into society, the home, schools, workplaces and the streets. Sexual violence sows dissension between people and eats away at the very fabric of society – at trust between people, the glue that holds families and people together. Traumatized men with guns and a lack of a functioning legal system to hold perpetrators to account is a lethal mix for women and girls.

Lebanon:

In the Beqaa valley in Lebanon, on the border with Syria, I met women who are fighting to keep their families together after the men were killed or disappeared in the war. If it is only possible to send one member of the family to school, far too often it is the boys who are chosen. I was told that the number of child marriages is increasing as parents feel that they cannot protect or support their daughters in the camps. Their fear is justified. Human trafficking and violence against women are increasing. But the solution cannot be to lock girls up in a marriage that entails a clear risk of further violence and abuse.

Bangladesh:

In Bangladesh I met women in the delta who had been forced to move following widespread flooding that has been exacerbated by climate change. They told me how vulnerable girls and women are when they are forced to move, that violence follows in their footsteps, and that they feel forced to marry off their daughters for the same reasons cited in the refugee camps of

Lebanon. What is more, in Bangladesh a girl's parents have to provide a dowry worth several years' salary just for her to be married off, with all of the tragedy that ensues.

These are all variations on the truly appalling reality that the poorest girls and women endure in far too many countries in the world today.

A UN report this week confirmed that one in three women have been subjected to sexual or physical abuse, and far more than half of these cases are never reported.

One in three women. Rich and poor alike.

The widespread physical and mental violence against women is the single biggest factor that oppresses women and prevents them from asserting their human rights. Violence haunts women throughout the life cycle and increases during and after conflicts.

Sexual violence in times of war is nothing new. It is a feature of almost all armed conflicts – in Myanmar, Cambodia, Afghanistan, the Balkans, Congo, Sudan and Colombia. Sexual violence is used as a weapon to instil fear and divide opponents. As a way to control reproduction among the enemy. Or because women's bodies are seen as 'fair game' as an outlet for soldiers' frustration and to demonstrate their power.

We hear horrific accounts from Syria. The UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, has warned that sexual violence is part of ISIL's ideology. That systematic rapes, forced abortions and human trafficking have become a strategy and a source of income.

When the UN, together with the Member States, launched the celebrations of the 15th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security last week, it was reiterated that violence against women constitutes a real threat not only to individual women, but also to peace itself. It is established that:

When sexual violence is used as a method or tactic of war, it can significantly exacerbate and prolong armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security.

The time when sexual violence was seen as a natural, if regrettable, part of

war must be past.

Violence is not a law of nature. It can be stopped.

It is gratifying that there is growing international realisation and consensus to that effect. The UN has played an important role in pursuing this. The challenge is, as always, to breathe life into resolutions and commitments so that they make a real difference for women on the ground.

It is not enough to merely talk about the violence and how we are to 'protect' women. We must not fall into the trap of reinforcing the image of women as nothing more than victims.

We must talk about women's participation – about power and influence.

Through the ages, individual women and women's organisations have shown exceptional courage and drive, maintaining daily life with minimal means as war rages around them, conducting dialogue across lines of conflict, forging alliances and building peace from below in highly trying circumstances. They deserve all of our support and attention.

Take the women's activists fighting for peace from within Syria. A new report from the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation and the Syrian organisation Badael outlines how women are negotiating with various militias for access to water and electricity that have been cut off by militia groups in besieged areas; others have taken part in negotiations to free kidnap-victims or are trying to stop the recruitment of child soldiers. These positive forces need to be highlighted to show that there actually are groups in Syria fighting without violence for a better future.

Their voices must be heard all the way to the negotiating tables. Peace and the future cannot be negotiated only by men with guns – the ones who started the war. It should be perfectly obvious to everyone that any such agreement rests on a fragile foundation, as it does not represent the interests of the people, only of the warlords.

As one women's activist wondered: how can a warlord be a peace-lord? As the UN global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 presented ahead of the 15th anniversary quite rightly states:

- Women's participation is key to sustainable peace. Research shows that

women's participation is crucial to effective, successful and sustainable peace processes.

If we really want peace, it should therefore be a top priority of the international community to include women at all levels and at all stages of peace-building activities.

WHAT IS SWEDEN DOING?

The implementation of resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions is a priority issue for Sweden. Using a combination of political dialogue and strategic development cooperation, Sweden is pushing the women, peace and security agenda at national, regional and international level.

The Government is currently producing a new action plan on resolution 1325, which is due to be completed by 2016. To ensure that it is as relevant as possible, we have consulted with women from five conflict-ridden areas in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Palestine and Colombia. They have all presented the same message:

“There cannot be sustainable peace without us: without half of the population.”

Sweden has therefore taken the initiative of starting a network of women mediators, who in two years' time will be ready to assist in peace negotiations wherever the need might arise. Alongside this, Sweden is helping to form a Nordic network of women mediators.

Violence against women is a crime that must be punished. As long as the perpetrators walk free, violations of women's rights will continue. In the efforts to combat conflict-related sexual violence, Sweden is working with the Chief Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court to combat impunity for sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict and strengthen national prosecution of perpetrators.

The issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights is crucial in efforts to combat sexual violence, and it is another issue that we are pursuing vigorously.

In 2016, Sweden will take over the chair of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies. In this capacity, Sweden will

work to improve the way in which gender-based violence is handled in humanitarian crises.

Through Sida, Sweden supports organisations working for gender equality and women's rights and participation in conflict and post-conflict countries.

Sweden was one of the driving forces behind the formation of UN Women, and in 2014 was its largest donor (with support totalling SEK 270 million).

We also use our influence to raise 1325-related issues on the agenda of regional and multilateral organisations.

In conclusion

Why are we a feminist government? What is the point of it? On my travels, when I explain that Sweden has a feminist government I encounter astonishment and joy, not least among women's activists. They are astonished that our Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven, is a feminist, and that our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström, is pursuing a feminist foreign policy. When I told the women at a Swedish-financed Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation project in West Point, Liberia, they rejoiced, danced and chanted "We are women!" for several minutes.

Sweden's long history of working for gender equality has inspired engagement in the global arena, and will continue to do so at an increasing rate as reactionary forces try to limit the freedoms that women have struggled to obtain over the last few centuries.

The new global goals and the chain of resolutions that we now have on women, peace and security lend a new impetus to efforts to

- stop the violence against women;
- break the trend of increasing war in the world;
- build sustainable peace; and
- prevent conflicts.

I look forward to our continued close cooperation with the UN. We all have a responsibility to defend the Charter, which belongs to us all, and to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for International Development Cooperation

Published 08 October 2015 Updated 08 October 2015

United Nations, New York, 30 September 2015. Please check against delivery.

First of all a warm thanks for convening this meeting. The World Humanitarian Summit is now only eight months away. So it's really crunch time and we need to shift focus in our discussions from process to substance. Sweden is the fifth biggest humanitarian donor in the world, which we are very proud of. We are facing great challenges and a shift of the humanitarian landscape at the same time as the needs are greater than ever before.

We have identified the following pressing issues that we urgently need to address – many of which I have heard from several of you during these past days in NY.

- **Access:** Civilians are being targeted, schools bombed and aid workers attacked. People in desperate need of life-saving support are stuck, isolated, without any help. We must take action to reinforce the respect of the humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law. It is of the utmost importance that these values constitute the very basis of our civilisation.
- **Participation:** Due to the situation it is more important than ever to reach out and listen to local populations and civil society, including women's organisations, to make sure that their voices are heard at the Summit. We have already started: next week we are initiating a CSO forum with Swedish NGOs working on the ground to start discussions. We are also conducting a study from different countries affected by conflicts and crisis to see how local populations can participate more

effectively in shaping the humanitarian response.

- **Bridge humanitarian aid and development:** Around the world we see refugees being kept hostage in refugee camps for decades. We see children becoming lost generations without a chance to go to school or get a job or citizenship. Humanitarian aid is not short-term anymore – it has become a band aid for unresolved conflicts. Two thirds of humanitarian financing goes to thirty countries that have been receiving it for eight years or more. On average, a refugee spends 17 years as a refugee. The unsustainable situation may lead to new conflicts and refugee crises. We desperately need to link humanitarian and long-term development aid much more effectively. We must not allow humanitarian aid to contribute to cementing conflicts. On the contrary, we need to put much more effort into conflict prevention.
- **Coordination:** We need to look at how the international humanitarian system can be more effective and better coordinated in order to make the best use of our limited resources.
- **International responsibility:** There is a huge gap between the UN appeals and pledges made. Today, the humanitarian system is upheld by a few countries – this is not sustainable. We support the idea of asserted contributions to the humanitarian system: everyone needs to help. We also need to break the trend of growing earmarked funding where the humanitarian priorities risk being determined by media headlines or internal politics rather than actual needs, leaving forgotten conflicts and people behind. Sweden is one of the biggest donors of core support to UN agencies, which makes it possible for them to plan ahead and to act swiftly wherever crises occur.

We urge other countries to follow our example.

We are looking forward discussing these topics with you today and on the road to the Summit.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by the Minister of Development Cooperation: Implementing the New Development Framework in Countries Affected by Conflict and Fragility

Published 01 October 2015 Updated 01 October 2015

United Nations, New York, 28 September 2015 Check against delivery

Seventy years ago, the United Nations was founded after the most dreadful and horrendous war the modern world had ever seen. It was founded with the hope of being able to prevent and intervene in conflicts between nations and to make future wars impossible, or at least limited. This was the core purpose of the grand idea of uniting the world under a common roof and a joint institution.

Today, we have gathered here on the margins of what the Secretary-General has called the most important event since the founding of this institution. And I personally share the Secretary-General's view. Because looking at the world of today, we see that we share the same goals as the founding members of the UN. But we also see new challenges as well as new possibilities ahead of us. This is why the Sustainable Development Goals are so important – because they are universal, in terms of both ambition and responsibility. They bring new energy to the UN and its members. And of course, SDG goal number 16 on peaceful societies is at the core of the agenda. Implementing the new goals will be a particular challenge for countries in conflict and fragility – but it must be done. This is where poverty

is taking root today. This is where the flaws of our international community are the most visible and perhaps the most painful. This is where the work must start.

A couple of weeks ago I visited the world's largest refugee camp, Dadaab in northeast Kenya, close to the Somali border, hosting more than 350 000 Somali refugees. Many of them have been there since 1991. What hope can the international community bring to them? What opportunities can we provide? These must be the core questions that have to be answered, and this is where the work of the New Deal takes off.

What needs to be done?

I would like to address three things that need to be done, now that the new sustainable development agenda is in place.

First of all:

The SDGs are universal and it is therefore the responsibility of all governments to make sure that national policies work towards SDG fulfilment. That is why my government takes a whole-of-government approach to the implementation of the SDGs. This means that we pledge to look at how all policy areas contribute to equitable global development. The new goals also affirm the importance of the 0.7 per cent target of ODA/GNI to developing countries, and I am proud to say that Sweden has consistently advocated and delivered on even more than this, with our 1 per cent of GNI commitment to development aid and our hope that this will serve as an example to others.

Secondly:

The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding has an important role to play, and I am proud to be co-chairing it along with Minister of Finance Marah. Through implementation of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States we have gained knowledge and learned lessons that will be crucial when implementing the SDGs. Not least the experience from fragile-to-fragile cooperation is invaluable.

When it became clear that it was difficult for countries in conflict and fragility to deliver on the MDGs, the answer was the New Deal for Fragile States. We can be proud that the cornerstones of the New Deal are now incorporated in the SDGs.

The five Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals of the New Deal rest on solid ground. If we were to reinvent them, we would probably come up with the same result:

- 1) Inclusiveness
- 2) Security
- 3) Rule of law
- 4) Livelihood
- 5) Good institutions and service delivery.

The New Deal's five Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals rest on solid ground, and they continue to constitute the cornerstone of our work. The fact that these insights are now reflected in the new global development agenda puts us in a better position than ever to effect real and lasting change in conflict-affected countries through international development efforts.

Last but not least:

As Minister for International Development Cooperation I am constantly reminded that conflict and violence is a major threat to sustainable peace and development. Therefore, I regard my participation in the international dialogue as one of my most important tasks. **I am committed to making all Swedish bilateral and multilateral aid conflict-sensitive.** In practice, this means that from now on, all Swedish support must be systematically underpinned by an analysis of conflict and fragility. I challenge other donors to do the same. Let's make the new deal a new deal for peace.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister of International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin Speech at Sustainable Energy for All's event

Published 30 September 2015 Updated 30 September 2015

Speech at Sustainable Energy for All's event in conjunction with the UN member states adoption of Agenda 2030: Increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030

Thank you Director General Amin, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am delighted and honoured to participate in this high-level event on the seventh Sustainable Development Goal – ensuring access to sustainable energy for all. This goal is at the very heart of sustainable development. It is at the heart of determining whether we will be able to tackle two of the biggest challenges of our time: making poverty history and stopping global warming.

*

Many of us who are privileged enough to have reliable access to energy probably don't often think about what our lives would be like without it. If we didn't have modern stoves, how would we cook? If we didn't have fridges, how would we store food? If we didn't have proper lighting, how would our children do their homework in the evening?

Lack of energy deprives you of so many things that are essential to a life in dignity and prosperity. And for billions of people, that lack is a reality today.

But I believe we are at a moment in time which heralds a better future, one in which no one will be deprived of reliable, modern energy.

*

I'd like to tell you about one of the things that has truly moved me and given me hope recently. Last autumn, I travelled in rural Bangladesh. And what I saw in so many villages was that there is electricity for only a few hours a day, often erratically. So people dwell by the light of kerosene lamps, inhaling the dirty smoke. They use noisy diesel generators, which emit noxious particles. They live lives of *energy poverty*.

But what I also saw, on rooftop after rooftop, were solar panels. Some of them were installed through Swedish development aid, but many other countries and actors have done important work as well. And what is now happening is quite fantastic – people's lives are being transformed:

Children are able to do their schoolwork without straining their eyes. And they can study longer hours when they don't have to rely on an expensive fuel like kerosene. People don't have to wake up with sooty, blackened faces and a pain in their chest. They don't have to fear that their houses will burn down if they forget to put out the light. (In poor countries, burns are the main cause of childhood injuries or deaths, roughly half of which are caused by kerosene lamps.) And families are relieved of a huge burden when they don't have to spend a large part of their slim budget on fuel.

In essence: solar energy makes life better, it makes it healthier, and it makes it sustainable.

This is why one of my priorities as Minister for International Development Cooperation is sustainable energy. If there's one thing I hope we can all agree on, it is that clean, affordable energy is the key with which we can unlock a sustainable future.

Making the shift to a 100 per cent renewable global energy system should be the priority of every government, every corporation and every community. We are all responsible, and we are all part of the solution. Developed countries have a special responsibility to transit quickly to clean energy systems and at the same time to support developing countries to leap-frog directly to renewables.

*

I often hear people say that this is a task that requires global action on a scale and at a pace we've never seen before. They say we won't be able to make it happen fast enough to avert dangerous climate change.

But when I look at what's happening across the world, I start to believe. What we're seeing is a revolution in clean energy that is *already under way*. Investment is booming, prices are going down, the market is moving in ways unimaginable only a few years back, and countless communities and individuals are joining the revolution. Even today, renewables can often match the cost of non-renewables. The cost of installing solar panels has gone down some 70 per cent in just six years' time, to mention only one telling fact.

*

But all of this will not move forward by itself. All of us – governments, businesses and individuals – need to push for it. So before I finish, let me tell you briefly what the Swedish Government is doing in my field, international development:

-We have joined the Power Africa project, committed to catalysing investment in renewables of up to USD 1 billion for Power Africa over a ten-year period, through grants, loans and guarantees.

-We have pledged some USD 580 million to the Green Climate Fund, making us the biggest donor per capita in the world.

-We are a major contributor to many multilateral initiatives and funds, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and SE4All, which are spurring action in the field of energy and climate change.

-We are pushing for fossil fuel subsidies to be phased out.

-We are streamlining climate change policy in all our development programmes.

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Making the world safe from the danger of climate change and expanding access to modern, sustainable energy in developing countries – these are two of our biggest challenges and responsibilities.

Not all the solutions needed to address these challenges are available yet,

and those that are may not be apparent. Figuring out these solutions and aligning them across scales will require more effort. Yet the task is achievable if we have enough of a vision, if we can work together, and if we offer ourselves the right incentives.

Someone once said that “the impossible will take a little while”. What we are seeing in the field of energy across the world – in the poor villages of Bangladesh and elsewhere – is that we are making it come true.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister of International Development Cooperation Ms Isabella Lövin's speech at the GPEDCs side event: "Using partners hip to deliver on the SDGs:The case of gender responsive budgeting"

Published 27 September 2015 Updated 27 September 2015

New York 26 September 2015 Check against delivery

When I was a child, Sweden went through a revolution. My mother, grandmother and great grandmother had fought together with women throughout Sweden to become full citizens – to gain rights, resources and representation.

I bear the fruits of their struggle.

I honour them by keeping up the fight for women's rights. Their gains can never be taken for granted.

Consequently, I am proud to represent the world's first feminist government. Today, Sweden is ranked as one of the most equal societies in the world – but we are far from perfect. And my Government has high ambitions.

But first let me take you back in time. Why has Sweden come so far? Well it has not been purely by luck. It has been through a strong women's

movement AND brave politicians with a clear vision. Who dared to challenge prejudices and traditional values that kept women in the home.

Politics is nothing but will. Politics should be driven by values. And while in office, politics is about turning those values into concrete reforms.

I want to share a few concrete political reforms that have been key in our gender equality revolution:

- Maternal health care – providing access to professional midwives and education about sexual and reproductive health and rights. A century and a half ago, more women died in pregnancy in Sweden than in Nepal today. Now almost all women survive. Exercising control over your own body is also the first building block of a truly democratic society, and key to economic development. Girls who become mothers are often forced to quit school, perpetuating the cycle of poverty for their children.
- The abolition of the joint taxation system. This reform meant that spouses were taxed individually and not jointly. This is of relevance, for example, when it comes to pensions that are linked to how much tax you have paid throughout your working life.
- The expansion of high-quality child care provision, the rapid expansion of preschools, and individual parental insurance. Both spouses are equally entitled by law to parental leave, and we currently have two ‘daddy months’ which only the father can use. In 2016, three months will be reserved for fathers.

These reforms have made it possible for women to take a proper step into the labour market and become financially independent, and they have challenged the perception of femininity and masculinity – enabling my mother, my sisters and me to leave the narrow roles of mainly caregivers and service providers.

This has released the energy and potential of 50 per cent of the population.

It has made our society more diversified, more dynamic, more intelligent and more participatory.

Although Sweden has come a long way toward gender equality – we are not perfect and we are still struggling to achieve equal pay for equal work, crack

the glass ceiling and end men's violence against women.

One effective tool to achieve gender equality is the budget.

That is why my Government has worked with gender-responsive budgeting and gender mainstreaming in the Swedish central government budget for 2016. Our ambition is that the effects on gender equality should be taken into account in every policy area – be it in housing construction, school reforms or infrastructure initiatives.

Gender budgeting is not a theoretical policy discussion – **it is about putting your money where your mouth is.**

Our work nationally gives us a voice internationally. My ambition is for the budget for international development cooperation to be 100 per cent gender integrated.

Increasing gender equality is not just about allocating resources. **It also releases resources and fuels development. Investing in women pays off.**

- Girls and women spend 90 per cent of their earned income on their families, while men spend only 30–40 per cent.
- Closing the gender gap in agriculture could lift 100–150 million people out of hunger (FAO, 2011).

Most of us realise the importance of narrowing gender gaps and respecting the rights of all women and girls. But this stands in stark contrast to the evidence. Discrimination of women and girls still exists around the globe. All throughout the life cycle.

We see the evidence, so it is time to act.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires political commitment, financial resources and action at all levels of society. Working with other stakeholders, not least women's organisations, will be vital to achieving results.

We stand ready to deliver on all counts.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for International Development Cooperation at World Water Week

Published 28 August 2015 Updated 28 August 2015

“Reflecting on the outcome of the Third Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa.” Welcome address by Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin at the ministerial panel “Means of implementing the Post 2015 development agenda: Heads of state and ministerial perspectives” during World Water Week 2015. Check against delivery.

“Reflecting on the outcome of the Third Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa”

President Loeak, Excellences, Distinguished guests

First, I would like to thank the Stockholm International Water Institute for organizing this inspiring event during the past 25 years.

The theme for this year’s World Water Week is “Water for development”. For me, as a minister of development cooperation, with a long history of working with issues concerning issues such as water and fisheries I must say: you couldn’t have chosen a better theme!

I will give you some numbers: Out of all of you, that is to say every human being, 65% is water. Out of all of this planet’s surface, 72% is water. 1 billion people is dependant on the protein coming from fish – living in the water. And of course: all of us – the entire mankind - is dependent on the

access of water. Still, despite the fact that access to water has been declared by the UN as a human right, around 800 million people still lack access to this global good, more than 2 billion people still live without improved sanitation.

Needless to say, water should be in the center of every discussion and every strategic plan on sustainable development.

So this theme also links well into this historic year. The agenda we are about to adopt – of the people, by the people, for the people – will shift us onto a universal path of poverty eradication and environmental, social and economic development. With the 17 new sustainable development goals the world is about to shift its trajectory – from short sight to long vision. From a path of hopelessness, to a path of dignity. But much work is of course still to be done.

Because, at the same time as we are about to do the almost impossible, setting these crucial goals, the challenges lying ahead of us is the least to say, demanding. And water is one of our most urgent issues to manage.

During my first trip as a minister to Bangladesh last autumn, I became deeply aware of the discrepancy of development. At the same time as I could see that almost every girl I met had access to a mobile phone, they hadn't got access to lavatories and fresh water. This is the paradox of human development today.

Without addressing the issue of water we cannot properly address poverty.

At the same time the population of the world is growing rapidly. More people will get out of poverty and receive a higher standard of living. This will also mean an increased demand for food production and other purposes, such as household water, sanitation, industrial and energy production. etc.

As you may know, if the entire world would have the same living standard as the Swedes, we would need 3.7 planet earths. It's a tough equation to solve without a radical shift in how we treat our natural resources, in how we produce and how we consume.

I recently read that this year's month of July was the warmest month recorded in history. That is unfortunately not just a historic bump, but a clear trajectory: the 14 warmest years in recorded history have all come in the last 15 years. As a result of this we see extreme weather patterns increase

throughout the world, not least the latest flooding in Myanmar.

As we look around the world we see upcoming and escalating conflicts emerging out of areas which also happen to be cursed by droughts and water stress. Disputes over shared water resources are many times the reason for conflicts, social tensions, political instability and intensified refugee flows. As the co-chair of the international dialogue of peace building and state building I daily recognize the need for an inclusive economic and social development to successfully build sustainable peace and resilient states. But without proper water resources there can not be any economic and social development. So water is also a matter of peace, and security.

The challenges around water are in many cases a matter of coherence. Water issues are usually lifted as separate issues, but are interlinked to several policy areas that are central to social development: health, industry, agriculture, fishing, forestry, transport, gender equality, security and so forth. Achieving a successful management of water resources thus requires a combination of efforts not only in development cooperation but within and across several policy areas.

With that said, I still want my message to be one of optimism and hope.

As I said before: this is 2015 – a most extraordinary year. Never before has the international community been more determined to transform the world into a better and safer home for all. By consensus, we have already adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development. And we are now about to agree on realizing the human rights of all, end poverty and hunger, ensure healthy lives, combat climate change, sustainably manage natural resources and energy systems, create just and democratic societies, achieve sustainable economic growth, gender equality and decent work for all, close the digital divide, exercise non-discrimination, and ensure that no one is left behind. Isn't this amazing?

We must have these goals in mind when we evaluate the outcome and adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. For the first time, financing for development is not only about economies, but also includes a social and environmental perspective. For a minister coming from a Green party, representing a red-green government, it was encouraging to see that the focus in Addis Ababa was on the global transition to a green economy. A transition that has to do with everything from investments in sustainable energy and infrastructure, as well as taking important steps towards putting a

price on carbon and facing out harmful subsidies for fossil fuels.

I'm also very pleased to see the recognition of several Swedish key priorities in the final documents, including the importance that tackling poverty reduction and environmental and climate issues goes hand in hand, as well as several references to the importance of gender equality.

Sweden also welcomes the strengthened language on the importance of Official Development Assistance. No other source of finance is equally targeted on poverty reduction and has a significant value which cannot be replaced by other funding. It is therefore crucial that ODA is to be used where it is needed the most. Using ODA strategically it can also generate more resources and impacts for development. I'm therefore proud of representing a country remaining committed to allocate 1 percent of its gross national income to ODA.

However, development cooperation can never by its own create the conditions necessary for change. For this, all of us need to contribute and action is needed at all levels: national and sub-national, regional and global.

The universal nature of the new SDG:s means that all countries are responsible for implementing every goal, of course including one of the corner stones: Goal 6 which says: "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation". This will be the guiding light for the water and sanitation community for the coming 15 years.

Implementing such a comprehensive agenda is a challenge, but nevertheless it gives us a unique opportunity to redefine and strengthen the way the global community work together. We have to form a new global partnership for poverty reduction and sustainable development in order to deliver on the future SDG:s.

Countries ownership of the agenda and Domestic Resources Mobilization are central to the agenda. Sweden look forward to see that the next generations of national development plans seriously take responsibility for the social, economic and environmental dimensions. The Swedish Government will soon present a comprehensive plan for our own implementation of the SDG:s, rooted in our current approach on policy coherence for development.

In 2003, Sweden became one of the first countries in the world to adopt a coherent policy for global development. A policy that states that efforts

towards sustainable development and poverty reduction can never be a task only for development policy or development actors. It is a shared responsibility for all policy areas and thus all ministries.

In the Budget Bill for 2015, the Swedish Government committed itself to accelerate the implementation of this agenda. All ministries are currently drafting action plans to spell out the implementation of this policy.

This work I believe will contribute to an equitable and sustainable development in line with the SDG:s.

Although, for a successful implementation it can not only be the responsibility of the governments but by all actors to contribute to this transformation. The UN, The Multilateral Development Banks (MDB:s), the International Financial Institutions (IFI:s), civil society organizations, industries, the scientific community, government agencies, municipalities, private sectors, schools and educators . all development actors and others need to be involved. Global challenges require global approaches.

Last but not the least:

In December, a new international climate agreement will be adopted at the Climate Conference in Paris.

The impact of global climate change has clear impacts in all areas and especially on water. If I may once again refer to my trip to Bangladesh, almost 20% of this beautiful but crowded country is supposedly under water by 2050. That means 30 million people displaced. And by then the life giving rivers also will have been severely affected by the melting glaciers.

We have no time to loose. As the Secretary General has put it: we are the first generation to end poverty, and we may be the last to stop climate change.

Sweden has here an important role to play in the global arena, as well as in the climate negotiations.

Sweden can by means of climate financing, mainstreaming environment and climate in its development cooperation and increased pressure on multilateral actors such as the World Bank and the United Nations contribute to concrete steps towards a green economy. Even on a global level .

Our recent contribution to the Green Climate Fund of four billion SEK (580

m USD) has received strong recognition and appreciation internationally and has also inspired many other countries to add or increase their contributions. Our commitment to climate finance should be seen as an investment for the humanity in our collective future.

This fund plays a significant role in overcoming one of the most difficult stumbling blocks in the international climate negotiations on how a transition to a green economy and climate adaptation in developing countries can be financed.

So to conclude. This is the time to turn the political commitments into real change. Together we now have the responsibility to contribute to a more sustainable and just world. The future is bright, if it's green and blue. When we – as nations, peoples and humans – seek prosperity our outcome is rich. So let's join forces in this endeavor . I look forward working with all of you, both bilaterally and within the multilateral context.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin at the High-Level Event on Climate Change in New York

Published 06 July 2015 Updated 06 July 2015

Speech by Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin at the High-Level Event on Climate Change in New York, 29 June 2015. Check against delivery.

Thank you Mister President, Excellencies, colleagues, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. It is a great honour to be here today at this important high-level event to mobilise political momentum for climate action.

There is no doubt that we need more ambition. Hurricanes, floods, droughts and heatwaves related to climate change are already here. Some of these have in indirect ways even contributed to the wars in Syria and Libya.

Climate change is already a great cost to society, but the cost will be almost immeasurable if we don't manage to halt the temperature rise at two degrees. Let's be frank: basically all of the 17 proposed Sustainable Development Goals - that we all want to see adopted here in New York in September - will be unattainable in a world ravaged by climate change.

But focusing only on the problems caused by climate change is likely to lead to a dead end. So far, the global debate has often focused on the costs and challenges. But by doing so, we tend to lose sight of the abundant

opportunities that come with the transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient future.

Under the leadership of you, President Calderón [Moderator of this session], The New Climate Economy report has in an excellent way shown that countries at all income levels have the opportunity to build lasting economic development, and at the same time reduce the immense risk of climate change. I am proud that Sweden has supported this game-changing work.

The report shows that the world is going to invest 90 trillion dollars in infrastructure projects - 45 trillion on energy infrastructure alone - in the next fifteen years. 90 trillion dollars. That is a lot more than the yearly 100 billion dollars we pledged to climate change adaptation and mitigation in Copenhagen in 2009. It is also more than the 500 billion dollars that is right now going into direct fossil fuels subsidies – which is, by the way, almost five times the amount spent on subsidizing renewables today.

The point is - money is not the real problem. The money is already there. It is just not spent in a way that serves the good of our common planet, our common future. With the right incentives and policies however, such as putting a prize on carbon emissions and phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, the money could be spent on a transition to a low carbon future that will have a number of new and exciting opportunities, not least for developing countries.

If we were to rid ourselves of old infrastructure and investments in fossil fuels, we would trigger enormous opportunities for leap-frogging, for example by using small scale off-grid renewable solutions. 1.3 billion of the poorest people in the world have no access too energy today. But with the price of solar plummeting as much as 70 percent in just five years, coupled with the growing potential of wind, hydro, wave, geothermal and biomass power - energy that is available everywhere - energy production can be made more democratic, more resilient, safer, cheaper, cleaner and closer to consumers. And inexhaustible!

Today, an energy revolution is underway, but we need an ambitious, binding agreement in Paris to fully unleash the potential of technology, research and development oriented towards renewable energy and to abandon investments in the fossile technology of the 19th and 20th centuries. We, the governments cannot achieve this development alone, but we have the possibility and the duty to send a clear signal to the private sector and investors - so they know where their many trillion dollars should be invested.

With the right incentives things will change. Sweden put a tax on carbon in the early 1990s and since then, GHG emissions have gone down by 23, while economic development has remained solid, with GDP increasing some 58 percent. This shows that it is possible to decouple greenhouse gas emissions from economic development.

Adaptation to climate change - in particular ecosystem - and community based adaptation - also offers many opportunities to advance quality of life and improve livelihoods. As the Sendai Framework shows us prevention is better than cure. A cement barrier may be efficient to prevent flooding, but other measures, such as planting mangroves as storm protection, will create valuable co-benefits for fisheries, biodiversity, and tourism.

We need to get the incentives right, and reprioritise funds available to make transformational change possible. But we should also not shy away from the fact that additional resources are needed to tackle this challenge. Sweden has pledged four billion Swedish Crowns (580 million dollars) to the Green Climate Fund, making us the largest donor per capita to the fund. We make this investment beyond the one percent of GNI we already spend on Overseas Development Assistance.

In addition, we are a partner of the Power Africa initiative and have set ourselves the goal of catalysing one billion dollars in renewable and socially sustainable energy. We are analysing how Swedfund, the Swedish state's development financier, can scale up investment in renewable energy. And we are contributing to the adaptation Fund and The Least Developed Countries Fund. All of this shows our commitment to climate finance, and we believe that it should not be seen as a charity, but as an investment in our collective future. Finally, we are now making efforts to streamline climate and environmental sustainability in all our development assistance.

In his Synthesis report on the new Sustainable Development Goals, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon writes that we are the first generation that can eradicate poverty, and the last that can stop climate change. This is an opportunity, ladies and gentlemen, which we must not fail.

A recent study by the Lancet pointed out that slashing fossil fuel use presents the greatest global opportunity to improve people's health in 21st century. That is a convincing argument alone. But the most convincing one in economic terms is that we are going to spend the money anyway. So let's make sure we spend it in a way so that we can say to our children - we did it. We made the transition to a zero carbon society. We made it possible for the

17 SDGs to come true. And dear children and grandchildren: we are proud of it.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

How does SRHR fit into the feminist foreign policy as part of the post-2015 agenda?

Published 12 June 2015 Updated 12 June 2015

Speech by Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin at the High-level Dialogue on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Gender Equality in the Post-2015 Development Framework, in the Swedish Riksdag, 10 June 2015.
Check against delivery.

I am very happy to be here today. I am proud that Sweden has a long history of being at the forefront of the global fight for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Our mothers and grandmothers fought for women's liberation – for women's participation in politics and the workforce, and for a woman's right to decide over her body and reproduction. We are harvesting the fruits of their labour and I would argue that we, women and men, have a moral obligation to continue their struggle, in Sweden and internationally – because women's rights can never be taken for granted.

This morning I returned from a trip to Mozambique, a country with great potential for growth and development. However, there is one big obstacle: the status of women and girls. Half of all marriages take place before the age of 18. And the vast majority of these children are girls. Girls should be in school, not at home taking care of husbands and babies. The irony, though, is that the sexual abuse of girls in schools by teachers and others is so great that many parents do not want to send their daughters to school. This is an untenable situation.

Consequently, we are strengthening the work on SRHR in the new strategy launched in Maputo on Monday. And I have also seen that change is possible. I met the fantastic Futebol da Força team – teenage girls playing fearless football and discussing SRHR before the games. Their coach was earnestly maintaining that they have rights, that they shouldn't risk having babies, that they should continue to fulfil their dreams. The club provided them a safe place and an opportunity to see an alternative future.

On every trip I have made as minister, I have noted a similar pattern of control and violence against women: in Bangladesh, where the legalisation on child marriages is currently being discussed; in Liberia, where almost 90 per cent of women have undergone genital mutilation; and in Lebanon, where trafficking is increasing as a result of the war in Syria and the serious refugee situation.

Many people I speak with are noticing a growing resistance against the rights of women and LGBT individuals in the world –not just in the form of ISIL and other violent extremist groups, for whom the control of women's sexuality is at the very heart of their existence and rhetoric – but also in negotiation rooms and within nationalistic and populist parties in Europe. We need to join forces: governments, parliamentarians, CSOs and other relevant actors. This is another reason why SRHR is a central part of a feminist government's work.

The systematic violence and oppression against women is one of the most pervasive human rights abuses of our time – and a huge obstacle for the development of society at large.

Accordingly, it is not by chance that we estimate that nearly 85 per cent of bilateral aid directly or indirectly affects gender equality. Swedish support to SRHR makes up around 60 per cent of our Swedish development assistance for health and around 7 per cent of our total bilateral and multilateral development cooperation.

The new sustainable development goals offer a great opportunity for change. When we empower women and girls we empower their families and their future children. We empower communities, we empower nations, and ultimately we reduce poverty.

Within the post-2015 framework, Sweden, together with other likeminded countries from various regions, has been working hard to advance SRHR issues and to ensure they are included under both the gender equality and

health goals. That being said, we would of course have liked to see an even stronger text on SRHR.

It is crucial to deal with SRHR as a gender equality issue and not reduce it to merely a health issue. This dual track reflects the Swedish approach to SRHR. Sweden was vocal in supporting this approach during the negotiations in the Open Working Group. This focus on the rights and gender equality aspects of SRHR has now received even more emphasis with Sweden's feminist foreign policy.

Ensuring SRHR for all will also have a direct impact on the possibilities of achieving many of the other targets in the future post-2015 agenda. Sweden recognises the clear links between SRHR and areas such as decent work, economic rights, peaceful societies and political participation of women.

For example: boys are twice as likely as girls to attend secondary school. One of the primary causes of girls dropping out of school is early marriage or pregnancy. It is vital to offer young people comprehensive sexuality education, youth friendly services and contraceptives so that girls can remain in school as long as boys.

Women and girls should also have the right and access to legal and safe abortions. Making abortion illegal does not reduce the number of abortions, it only drives them underground.

Sweden put the feminist foreign policy into action in the negotiations on the EU Council conclusions on Gender in Development that were adopted late May. Sweden fought hard, with other likeminded countries, for strong language. For far too long, the EU has not been able to agree on a strong common position on SRHR – crucial at this stage with increasing resistance in negotiations on the SDGs and how to finance and implement the goals.

The hard work gave results – the outcome provides us with a solid foundation for future EU action on implementing the post-2015 development agenda.

There are three main elements in the Council conclusions that are of particular relevance to the post-2015 agenda:

Firstly, the conclusions underline the importance of ensuring coherence between internal and external EU policies at all levels in guaranteeing the fulfilment of rights of women and girls, and of groups such as LGBTI

persons. The conclusions state that women's and girls' rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls must be at the core of the post-2015 agenda.

Secondly, the Council emphasises that “gender equality is both a goal in itself and a means to achieve sustainable development. It stresses that ambitious objectives must be matched with adequate financial and non-financial means of implementation, and a strong political commitment from all actors and at all levels.”

Thirdly, the Council reaffirms “the EU's commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. The Council further stresses the need for universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and health-care services.”

The need for accountability to ensure women's empowerment and the fulfilment of SRHR is evident. Sweden and the EU are vocal advocates for establishing a well-structured monitoring, accountability and review framework, based on a multi-stakeholder approach.

Sweden has worked strategically throughout the negotiations to secure SRHR and gender equality in the post-2015 agenda.

The strategic cross-regional cooperation with likeminded member states and civil society has been – and continues to be – crucial.

At this point, as we are approaching the final phase of the negotiations, we do not foresee reopening the agreed targets on SRHR and SRH.

In the event of any unforeseen turns in the negotiations, Sweden will of course engage actively with likeminded countries, both in and outside the EU, in order to safeguard strong language.

The contributions and the role of CSOs are also imperative, and Sweden has worked closely with civil society throughout the negotiations. I say this in terms of strengthening evidence-based action and ensuring accountability, but also in terms of cross-regional bridge-builders. The level of mobilisation is as impressive as it is valuable, especially in the global women's rights and

LGBT rights movements.

Ensuring that women and girls AND men and boys have full autonomy over their lives, bodies and sexualities is a first crucial step towards fulfilling human rights, achieving gender equality, and enhancing health and well-being, as well as the well-being of society as a whole.

This must be at the heart of the post-2015 agenda!



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at IDPS

Published 27 May 2015 Updated 27 May 2015

Check against delivery.

Your Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to be here with you today. As you are aware this is my first meeting with the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding steering group. I have met some of you before and I am looking forward to get to know the rest of you during the course of the day. It is almost five months since I took on this task as co-chair of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, and I would like to express my appreciation to my co-chair Minister Marah for his strong commitment and cooperation.

In my role as minister for development cooperation I am constantly reminded that conflict and violence is a major threat. Therefore I regard this as one of my most important tasks.

Today we have this meeting at an historical time against a backdrop of important political processes. The Secretary General recently pointed out that this year is the most important year since the UN itself was founded. This year we have the creation of the new Sustainable Development Goals, the Financing for Development agenda, the Climate Conference in Paris and the reviews of UN peace building. This is the year when we can be an important contributor to the development agenda, and we must not miss this window of opportunity. We should be proud of the work we've done so far, and we shouldn't hesitate to call goal 16 one of our major achievements.

The international community is about to change the way it supports states in fragility and conflict, and I believe that fragile and conflict affected states are about to change the way they work towards sustainable peace. This meeting is our chance to decide on how we can and should affect ongoing processes.

The change is welcome, especially for the growing number of poor and vulnerable people who live in fragile and conflict affected areas. The situation in the world right now looks bleaker than in a long time.

We all know the figures. Today, 43 percent of the world's poorest live in fragile states. By 2030, this is expected to increase to two thirds. If we do not act and figure out a way to change this trend, extreme poverty will continue to take root in fragile states. Here we have a clear cut task to show that we are taking this challenge seriously.

The significant increase of violence and conflict in the world has generated a record high wave of refugees and internally displaced people, comparable to those of the Second World War. This is also part of our broad agenda.

We must also factor in climate change. We are already experiencing impacts of climate change and they will keep on increasing. Climate change is a threat multiplier, not least in already fragile states.

We know that those who suffer first and worst are the people who are already the most vulnerable, often women and children.

Inclusion is absolutely key for peace and development and to counteract fragility. For example, recent research has shown that quality inclusion of women in peace negotiations significantly increases the likelihood of sustainable peace. And EXCLUSION of ANY important group in society from discussion is the recipe for fragility and potential conflicts.

Whole of government and whole of society engagement needs to be established. National ownership of the New Deal must be established from civil society to senior civil servants, across mass media, education – targeting all sectors of political and economical life.

The financing for development process will be crucial for the implementation of the new development goals. Goal 16 is extremely important but goal 5 on gender equality, goal 8 on economic growth and jobs and goal 11 on urban safety and sustainability are other examples of important development goals that reflect the New Deal principles. And goal 13 on climate change I also want to stress, since environmental sustainability is fundamental to the survival of our planet, and therefore a prerequisite for peaceful societies...

As the Minister for International Development I have committed to make all Swedish bilateral and multilateral aid conflict sensitive. In practice that

means that all Swedish support from now on must be systematically underpinned by an analysis of conflict and fragility. I intend to challenge other donors to do the same.

The challenges we are facing today requires a collective effort. The International Dialogue is a unique channel for direct communication between donors, fragile states and civil society on how to build peaceful and resilient societies together. I hope that today we can have straightforward discussions on the important issues we have in front of us. I also hope that we will be able to make commitments and agree on outcomes of this meeting that will enhance the implementation of the New Deal principles. This is what the International Dialogue is about and where we can make a difference for people who depend on us for a better future. I have said it before and I will say it again, “There can be no more business as usual”. We have a unique and important role to play. I am very much looking forward to the discussions today.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Opening address at the Stockholm Forum on Security and Development 2015 - "Promoting sustainable peace"

Published 12 May 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Stockholm Forum on Security and Development 12 maj 2015 Check against delivery.

I am delighted to see all of you here today. And I'm very happy with the turnout to the Stockholm Forum, and the great cooperation between the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and its co-host, SIPRI.

I am pleased to stand here with Minister Kaifala Marah of Sierra Leone. Together, we serve as co-chairs of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. This forum serves as a channel for direct communication between donors and fragile states on how to build peaceful and resilient societies. Let me also extend a warm welcome to our other prominent guests in the panel.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have all been personally invited for a reason: because you are needed.

Solving today's challenges of conflict, violence and fragility requires a collective effort. We all have important complementary roles to play – individually and together.

Since last year, the number of conflicts and wars has increased. Forty armed conflicts – of which 11 are major wars – are ripping societies and peoples'

lives apart all over the world. This significant increase of violence and conflict has generated a record high wave of refugees and internally displaced people, comparable to that of the Second World War. Millions of women, men and children have been trapped in conflict zones around the world. We also see desperate people fleeing in the hope of a better future for themselves and their families – only to lose their lives trying to cross the Mediterranean in their search for safety.

A record number of 75 million people are now in desperate need of humanitarian aid.

The humanitarian system is crumbling under this burden. Costs are rising, people are dying, children are not going to school.

My own country, Sweden, is also affected, facing a steady influx of refugees escaping the conflict zones of Syria, Iraq and other places.

This situation is completely unsustainable.

We know that once a country slips into conflict, there is a risk of it being caught in a vicious circle of recurrent violence, poverty and fragility.

Today, 43 per cent of the world's poorest people live in fragile states. By 2030, this proportion is expected to increase to about two thirds. Most fragile states are still struggling to reach the Millennium Development Goal of halving infant mortality. The situation is more or less the same in terms of access to clean water. In other words, we are witnessing extreme poverty taking root in fragile states.

No country is insulated from the risk of conflict, violence and instability. Middle income countries that are hit by conflict today could turn into low income countries tomorrow. Radicalisation is on the rise in Europe, including in Sweden.

The promotion of sustainable peace is a universal challenge.

If we want to achieve it, we must also factor in climate change. We are already experiencing climate change and its impacts will keep on increasing. We know that those who suffer first and worst are those who are already the most vulnerable. In recent years, there has been an increase in incidences of water-related violence around the world.

Climate change acts as a threat multiplier. The Syrian uprising in 2011

occurred shortly after a very severe multi-year drought, which caused crop damage and mass migration to cities. In the past, it was not unusual for Syria to experience a wet year followed by a dry year, but multi-year droughts consisting of three or more consecutive dry years have been much less common.

Has climate change directly contributed to the war in Syria? We cannot know this for certain. But we do know that drought has increased insecurity and has had a disastrous effect on an already vulnerable country.

So, what can we do to change this around?

The world is in need of long-term sustainable solutions. There are no quick fixes.

To achieve sustainable peace, many decisions and actions need to be taken by different actors, all pulling in the same direction. Donor coordination is one key to boost development effectiveness and to build capacity. The International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding has a role to play in promoting enhanced coordination.

I see this forum as one step in a process of change.

One fundamental issue is how we deal with problems – that we approach them in a more comprehensive way. The mix of competence, geographic representation and function that you represent is not a coincidence. I also feel that there are some areas where we need to step things up.

First, let me speak about conflict.

Today, a majority of armed conflicts are internal. Reaching constructive and non-violent interaction between a government, an opposition, civil society and local communities is key to preventing escalation into conflict.

It is my humble opinion that external actors can play a partial but important role in facilitating this.

To do so, we need to properly understand the causes of conflict and tensions.

Therefore, it is my intention that all Swedish bilateral and multilateral aid is made conflict-sensitive.

What this means in practice is that all Swedish support must be systematically underpinned by an analysis of conflict and fragility.

Engaging in conflict prevention in practice means that you try to detect tensions, for example through systematic increases in human rights abuses, before they develop into large-scale violence and conflict.

The next step is to address the causes of tensions. That is the crucial role that development can play.

We need to become better at picking the daily fights on inclusion and accountability. Because ultimately, this may save us from war.

My second point has to do with the inclusion of women and girls.

Inclusion is absolutely key to peace and development.

Inclusion is necessary in order to make good political decisions. But security, justice, service delivery and other efforts to promote sustainable development also need to be inclusive.

Let me give you one illustrative example from a rule of law project in Palestine. The support is aimed at developing accountable and harmonised justice and security institutions that are gender-sensitive and serve the entire of the population.

The project consists of experts that are seconded to the rule of law institutions. They provide mentoring, coaching, and training to their Palestinian counterparts. But the support also targets the “demand side” by empowering women’s groups and civil society to call for access to improved services and provide feedback.

This shows how the social contract between citizens and the State can be strengthened with external support.

Another example is the important role that the diaspora plays in the development of Somalia. Together with the International Organization for Migration, the Swedish Government is supporting 65 Somali university

graduates who have returned to Somalia to work in ministries and government agencies for a three-year period. They are placed in judicial, health and public finance institutions at the federal level as well as in Somaliland and Puntland.

My third point has to do with sustainability.

The world is in urgent need of sustainable solutions that:

- go beyond political election cycles,
- go beyond mission and programme completion,
- go beyond quarterly reporting.

One such solution, of course, is that we urgently need to curb the current direction of climate change. Otherwise, life on Earth as we know it will be fundamentally changed.

To promote sustainable peace, we need to be ready for long-term engagement and for a bumpy ride, with risks and set-backs. We know that progress in institutional transformation could take between 17 to 40 years (!). It is important to get the military out of politics, to root out corruption and attain the rule of law.

These are admittedly very difficult issues.

But if we want to eradicate extreme poverty and improve the lives of the most vulnerable people, these are issues we need to tackle.

I see efforts to promote peace, gender, and climate as interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

This special year, with three crucial agreements to make – on sustainable development goals, financing for development, and climate – we have an opportunity to show that we have the courage, the endurance, and the energy to put this world on a better track.

My colleagues and I will listen carefully to your discussions over the coming

days.

Thank you once again for being here.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech given at Global Citizen 2015 Earth Day

Published 18 April 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Global Citizen 2015 Earth Day, Wahsington DC 18 april
2015 Check against delivery.

Hello everyone,

I am so pleased to be here on Global Citizen Earth Day. I would like to thank the Global Poverty Project and the Earth Day Network for organising this outstanding event.

I am from the Swedish Green Party and we are proud to be part of the Swedish Government. I am also extremely proud to say that the Swedish Government is a feminist government - the first feminist government in the world!

Being feminist means respecting everyone: women and men, children and elderly people - and future generations.

Our biggest challenge today, if we are ever going to eradicate poverty, is preventing climate change. With business as usual and no significant carbon emission cuts, we have only 15 years left before we have emitted enough CO₂ to make this planet more than 2 degrees warmer. Then we will see a dramatic increase in droughts, floods, storms and species extinction - and we will have changed the conditions for every generation to come.

This is not a political statement but a scientific one.
Fifteen years left.

So we must start changing our energy systems now, going from fossil to renewable now. No more subsidies for fossil fuels, which today are six times higher than those for renewables.

I represent Sweden, a country of some nine million people. Today, Earth Day, I want to share with the world how proud I am to represent a country that for a very long time has put global solidarity high on its agenda. Bono actually dedicated his song 'One' to Sweden because we give one per cent of our Gross National Income to aid. And on behalf of the Swedish people I'd like to take this opportunity to reaffirm this commitment of one per cent.

I hope other countries will follow.

But there is more. I would also like to announce that Sweden has also committed to streamlining all its development assistance to be climate friendly.

We have 15 years left of 'business as usual' carbon emissions. But we also have a unique chance to change the course of the world this year. The climate conference in Paris will give us that chance. But we also need to provide extra financing to help the poor countries build their capacity for sustainable development.

The Swedish Government has therefore made the largest per capita commitment by far to the new Green Climate Fund: USD 580 million. We don't see this as charity. We see this as an insurance policy for our common future.

We can't afford more business as usual. We only have one planet - and we are all one humanity. Women and men, future generations, all have the right to a good life.

Fellow citizens of the world, we are actually the first generation that can eradicate poverty. And we are the last generation that can prevent disastrous climate change. If we all join forces, I truly believe we can do it.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech given at the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai

Published 16 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

UN 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction,
Sendai 16 mars 2015 Check against delivery.

Madame Chairperson,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here in Sendai today at this important 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, and I would like to thank the Japanese government for hosting.

What is disaster risk reduction about?

Disaster risk reduction is about protecting human lives.

It is about protecting villages and cities, schools and property, businesses and livelihoods. Today and in the future. It is about understanding and respecting the forces of nature. DRR is actually also thinking about future generations.

It is therefore very timely that this conference take place at this moment in time. Firstly because we know much more about how to reduce risk successfully today than ten or fifteen years ago. DRR is now firmly on the political radar, and it is recognised as being closely linked to development. It is clear that the Hyogo Framework of Action has contributed greatly to this.

But we also face new challenges today, which require a renewed commitment to DRR. We know that disaster risk is increasing in the world. Poverty, urbanisation, and climate change – these factors are leaving people

and communities ever more exposed. We know that the last 10 years have seen some of the largest disasters on record.

Secondly because 2015 is the year of thinking and planning for the future. We have major summits coming up in Addis Ababa, New York and Paris, which will all have a profound influence on our future.

We all know disasters put hard-won development achievements at risk. They reverse economic growth and the progress we have made in eliminating poverty. Sadly, climate change will make things worse. Wet seasons are getting wetter, dry seasons drier. Hurricanes and other extreme events are getting more frequent and intense. And waiting in the wings is the peril of sea level rise. Climate-related disasters now account for the vast majority of all disaster events, and they contribute enormously to economic losses and population displacement.

With everything we know, we have a golden opportunity this year to establish a broad framework where DRR, the new development agenda, including the FFD conference, and the climate treaty can form mutually reinforcing parts of a sustainable, resilient whole.

Sweden is convinced that the new DRR framework will help us all move forward with disaster risk reduction.

We stand ready to continue working together with all States and other stakeholders to establish the new Framework. We all have a shared responsibility to contribute.

We see prevention as one of the keys to disaster risk reduction. Climate change and the loss of biodiversity must be halted. The loss of forests, wetlands and coastal areas with mangroves and coral reefs have direct implications for risk – they weaken nature's ability to withstand extreme weather events. We need to strengthen the protection of ecosystems and more clearly see the services they provide. We need to invest more in environmental and climate resilience.

We also see a need to see the growing inequality of risk exposure. According to UNDP's latest Human Development Report, 98 per cent of those who are affected by or die from natural disasters live in developing countries. Developed countries are not spared disasters and extreme weather, but as so often, the poor and the vulnerable are hit the hardest.

Moreover, we believe that a consistent gender perspective should be applied, when it comes to both the understanding of risk factors and concrete action. Women's participation is critical in designing and implementing disaster risk reduction programmes. We would like to see this reflected in the political declaration of the Sendai meeting.

We believe that the use of targets and indicators that are neither too complicated, nor too many, will be of great help. Designated Focal Points and National Platforms are key, as are the existing mechanisms for evaluation and follow-up, such as the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review for monitoring and follow-up of the new framework.

Ladies and gentlemen,

2015 is the year of possibilities of our generation. The decisions we make this year will shape the course of the world for a long time. Here in Sendai, we are called upon to take the first, crucial step. Let's put suspicion aside and stop regarding each other as two opposing teams where one can win over the other. Only together we can make this year the success it has the potential to be. Only together we can start the course towards a new world working together in respect, unity and solidarity. If we miss this chance – no one will win!

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech given at the 3 March Ebola Conference – "From Emergency to Recovery"

Published 04 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

European Commission High-level international conference on Ebola 3 mars 2015 4 mars 2015 Speech by MS Isabella Lövin. Check against delivery.

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

I want to start by expressing my deepest condolences to the victims of Ebola, their families and all the affected countries. My admiration is truly profound for the people and governments who continue to courageously fight this outbreak. The struggle is not over until the last victim of Ebola has been found and cared for, and we must all make a decisive contribution to reach the very end of that road.

Sweden is one of the countries that has contributed the most per capita in financial terms, and is still active in the efforts to finally end this Ebola outbreak, through health workers and experts on the ground.

Less than two weeks ago I visited Liberia and Sierra Leone, and my strong impression – that I know I share with many of you – is that Ebola is not primarily a medical problem. People have not died primarily because of Ebola. Too often they have died because of a lack of confidence in the authorities, because of weak institutions and because of a lack of education.

As we now discuss investing in a more resilient health system and economic recovery, we need to remember that when Ebola hit, it exposed and exacerbated country-specific challenges. More than ten years of peace and economic development was reversed in just a few months. We must ask

ourselves why? Was it only because of a lack of health institutions? Was it because of a lack of economic investments? I believe this crisis actually presents a unique opportunity to really analyse how we can support the affected countries to truly strengthen their resilience against future shocks. How can we create an enabling environment for sustainable economic growth, how can we address the root causes of the fragility of the affected countries and not just continue with ‘business as usual’?

Since the beginning of this year, I have been co-chairing the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, together with the Minister of Finance of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Kaifala Marah. A conclusion from my recent trip to Liberia and Sierra Leone, where I met Mr Marah, is that I believe the New Deal principles put forward and agreed by the G7+ countries can be better used to guide the recovery.

- Politics need to be more inclusive.
- Security and justice must be put high on the agenda.
- Institutions must become better at delivering the services people ask for and need.
- Reconciliation and trust need to be key concepts.

Governance should include all groups of society. The role of women must be strengthened and integrated in all processes. The private sector must be involved, and civil society – including traditional leaders, who have been key actors in combating Ebola – should continue to play an important role.

This is to say that peacebuilding and statebuilding essentially have to be an integrated part of the post Ebola-strategy.

Sweden has been committed to supporting Liberia in its peace- and statebuilding efforts for a long time. It is now three years since Liberia and Sweden became partners to pilot the New Deal (together with the United States) in Liberia, and since Sweden started chairing the UN Peacebuilding Commission’s Liberia configuration.

In Liberia, peacebuilding priorities based on the New Deal principles should be emphasised – such as support for justice and security sectors, the reconciliation process and strengthening institutional capacity. Not least in view of the UNMIL Transition Plan, and preparations for the 2017 elections. The PBC will continue to provide an important platform for international coordination and for developing coherent strategy, linking development, security and political aspects, including the post-Ebola recovery.

For Liberia to come out of this stronger and more resilient to future shocks, we need to invest, not only in hospitals and infrastructure, but also in the people and the government, to build a sustainable future for all. Sweden will continue to stand by Liberia and we want to do it the right way – together.

Finally, I would like to commend the organisers of this important conference and champion the unfailing efforts of all those involved in fighting the Ebola outbreak. Not the least those brave men and women who have been – and are still – on the frontline every day fighting the virus. They are our true heroes. For them and the people of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, not least the children, we need to make our very best efforts to support the affected countries in their pursuit to heal, build and strengthen their societies. In Brussels today, I hope that we have taken a first step on that journey together.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech given at the UN General Assembly High Level Thematic Debate on Means of Implementation for a Transformative Post 2015 development agenda

Published 09 February 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

High Level Thematic Debate on Means of Implementation for a Transformative Post 2015 development agenda, New York 9 februari 2015 Check against delivery.

Mr President,
Mr Secretary-General,
Honourable Ministers,
Delegates,

It is a pleasure for me to be here today and I am grateful for the opportunity to address the General Assembly on these very important matters.

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We stand at the outset of a seminal year for global development. This year, 2015, presents an opportunity that we may never see again in our lifetime. A historic opportunity to resolutely address humanity's major global challenges and to embark on a truly sustainable pathway. But this year also harbours a risk – the risk of missing this opportunity. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-

moon puts it in his synthesis report:

“We are the first generation that can end poverty. And the last one that can take steps to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.”

Mr President,

Even without the threat of climate change, the world is facing no shortage of serious challenges: extreme poverty, fragile states, increased inequalities within and between countries, oppression of women, an increasing number of wars and conflicts, unsustainable use of ecosystems, terrorism, pollution – the list can be made much longer – however, the threat of serious climate change is currently the backdrop against which we must tackle all of the other serious challenges.

Because if we do not succeed at the climate conference in Paris, all the other sustainable development goals will be a lot harder, if not impossible, to achieve.

How can I say that?

I visited Bangladesh not long ago on my first field trip as Minister for International Development Cooperation, and there I learnt that the predicted consequences of climate change are that rises in sea level and the melting glaciers of the Himalayas will mean that 20 per cent of Bangladesh will be under water by 2050. Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. So this would mean that 30 million people would be driven from their homes – 30 million!

It would also mean salt water intrusion into groundwater. It would mean less land to be used for farming. It would mean conflicts over resources and food insecurity. It would mean – as usual – that the weakest will be hit the hardest, that children, women and those who are already poor will not have the chance to develop, gain access to higher education or lift themselves out of poverty.

I will not labour this point, honourable ministers and delegates, but the view of the Swedish Government is clear: we believe that a successful outcome in Paris and a transition to a zero-carbon society are absolutely fundamental in order for the world to be successful in the new, ambitious sustainable development agenda, which we fully support.

Mr President,

The Millennium Development Goals have played a hugely important role for international development. The MDGs show that when we come together, we can achieve remarkable things. At the same time, it is clear that much still remains to be done.

The new Sustainable Development Goals agenda is even more ambitious than the MDGs, and for the first time it places sustainability, in the full sense of the term, at the core. I believe this is necessary. Fighting poverty without tackling environmental problems will never be successful in the long term.

However: the post-2015 agenda, no matter how good it may look on paper, will be meaningless unless it is accompanied by adequate means of implementation.

In this context, the very basis to me is the universality of the new agenda.

The agenda is for all countries and peoples – and it is also by all countries and peoples, which is important because it gives universal ownership to it. But if it is to succeed it is also necessary that all countries – and all stakeholders – contribute towards its implementation.

As indicated in the background papers for this meeting, the means of implementation can and must take many shapes and forms.

We need to think new and big; we need to build on existing flows, find innovative ways of mobilising new ones and create synergies. And not least, we must make them all work towards sustainable development.

Sweden remains convinced that Official Development Assistance, ODA, is an important, but limited, source of financing.

As a scarce commodity, ODA should be directed towards countries most in need, and allocated in an effective and efficient manner and be used to catalyse other, much greater, financial sources.

Sweden remains committed to allocating not just 0.7 per cent, but as much as 1 per cent of its GNI to ODA, of which a large proportion is allocated to the least developed countries. This is something I, as newly elected co-chair of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, find particularly important to stress.

The well-being of developing countries is the concern of all developed countries, and I would urge those countries that have committed to the 0.7 per cent target to stand by their commitments, and all other developed countries to commit as well.

This is a matter of credibility and trust.

Increased resource mobilisation is fundamental, but not enough to implement the new development agenda. Possibly even more important is Policy Coherence for Development: ensuring that all policies at national, regional and global level on areas such as trade, investments, migration, climate, environment, fisheries and employment promote sustainability and take account of the developing countries' perspectives.

Sweden has had its framework for Policy Coherence for Development for 10 years and has been working on a lot of these issues, and I know that this is not an easy task. However, the need for this approach remains, and is even greater today. This is why I have recently taken the initiative to strengthen my own Government's work on PCD, with the aim of mainstreaming it in every branch of government. I hope other governments will do the same this year. Because only by mainstreaming all policy areas towards global development can we ever hope to achieve the SDGs within 15 years.

Finally, on the subject of resource mobilisation, I would like to mention an all too often forgotten resource: women. I know gender equality is one of the proposed sustainable development goals – but I am convinced we must also see it as a crucial means of implementation.

Gender equality is simply smart economics. We cannot afford not to use the resources of 50 per cent of the population.

Mr President,

The time has come to mobilise our political energy and leadership to ensure successful outcomes – in Addis, New York and Paris.

The outcomes of these processes will have a major impact on the course of events in the world for a long time to come.

To make robust and genuine sustainable development possible, we need a strong and dynamic Global Partnership – one that will mobilise the commitment and resources, skills and enthusiasm of all major stakeholders.

If we succeed in that – really engaging all stakeholders, including business and academia – we have the means of implementation.

This is a historic opportunity and I truly hope that we seize it.

I can assure you that the Swedish Government will engage at all levels with the aim of delivering in each and every instance throughout this year.

The risk of not succeeding is simply much too great.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Sweden's Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin at the Green Climate Fund Pledging Conf

Published 20 November 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Green Climate Fund Pledging Conference, Berlin 20 november 2014 Check against delivery.

Ministers, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank the German Government for its hospitality in hosting this very important conference. I very much look forward to a fruitful discussion during this panel discussion.

The proposed theme of this discussion, ‘Climate Action Now – What is the Green Climate Fund to deliver?’ is very much to the point.

My simple answer to the question of what the Green Climate Fund should deliver is: security.

Security for the world.

Security for investors and businesses.

Security for developing nations.

Security for future generations.

We all know that global action on climate change is long overdue and greatly needed. The amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere reached a new record high in 2013.

The global carbon budget – which is the amount of carbon that can be burnt before it becomes unlikely we can avoid more than two degrees of global warming – is being rapidly used up.

If we go on with business as usual, without changing our energy systems, we have only 15 years left before the world has emitted so much greenhouse gas into the atmosphere that we cannot use any more of the planet's fossil reserves – unless we are ready to accept a world that is warmer than the two degree Celsius target agreed at the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in 2009.

We also know that if we do not succeed in staying below the target of keeping temperature rises below two degrees Celsius, relative to preindustrial levels, the consequences are likely to be disastrous. We will have an insecure world. Climate change poses a serious threat to the livelihoods of millions of people, causing unprecedented refugee flows and, in the worst case scenario, new conflicts and wars.

Climate change will hit poor countries and poor people the hardest. Unless concerted action is taken, small Pacific island states even face the threat of disappearing completely. Other countries, particularly around the equator, risk being laid waste by extreme drought or flooding, leading to climate refugees. The truth is that if we do not succeed in tackling climate change, it will be extremely hard to eradicate extreme poverty, ensure food security, foster a world free from violence or deliver on any other development ambitions that we, as an international community, have set forth.

The Green Climate Fund is about creating hope that the world will not be one of such insecurity.

But of course, developed countries will not be immune to the consequences of climate change. This summer Sweden suffered exceptional natural disasters – the largest forest fire in our history, and floods and torrential rain that destroyed houses and knocked out infrastructure. Similar disasters have occurred in several other developed countries this year. Just this weekend, I saw pictures of extreme flooding in Italy. Before that it was in the UK, and this spring in the Balkans.

But no country can act alone in order to successfully curb global warming. Our efforts must be shared and genuinely cooperative. Yet developed countries have a particular responsibility to take the lead. Sweden is one of the rich countries whose economic development has been made possible by

exploiting fossil energy. It is therefore clear to us that we have both the responsibility and the self-interest to make a substantial contribution to this Fund that can help the world avoid the insecurity posed by a warmer planet.

In light of this, the new green-red government in Sweden has promised USD 580m (GBP 370m) to the GCF, a contribution covering the period 2015–2018.

Sweden sees the GCF as pivotal in furthering momentum to tackle climate change – by strengthening mutual confidence among all parties involved, rich countries and poor, and catalysing new capital for effective finance for climate action in developing countries.

The GCF is also about security of investments. Applying a wide range of instruments – public and private, grants and other non-grant instruments – offers a unique opportunity to mobilise the resources needed to make a difference in supporting developing countries to embark on low-emission and climate resilient pathways.

In creating this new Fund, let us also draw on lessons learned from past experiences in establishing and managing other multilateral funds, as well as bilateral agencies. Guarantees are one example of financial instruments, in which public money can be used to unlock significant investments on a transformative scale, not least from the private sector. In this context we want to emphasise the importance of social and environmental standards always being fully met when public money is involved. And we also want to highlight the importance of a gender perspective in the work of the GCF. Women are hit disproportionately by climate change, but women can also be powerful agents of change. We should therefore ensure that we make use of the full potential of a robust gender policy and a gender plan of action.

We are particularly pleased that the fund will now be operational ahead of the climate conference in Paris in December next year. This will make it possible to demonstrate that projects for climate mitigation and adaptation in the most vulnerable countries can actually be financed – and this offers hope that change is possible.

The Swedish Government is strongly committed to helping advance global progress on climate change in all areas in which we have influence. Our development policy will be one instrument. And of course we will continue to advocate an ambitious and just climate agreement to be adopted in Paris next year.

Many people regard the UN climate summit in Paris as the last chance for the world to unite on a climate agreement that will enable us to meet the two degree Celsius target. Little time remains before then. For this reason, today's pledging conference represents a crucial opportunity for the international community to demonstrate its commitment to addressing global warming, with Paris firmly in sight.

The Swedish Government hopes and expects that many more of the developed countries will put enough money into the new GCF today to enable it to send a real signal that the world is jointly taking its responsibility, and that we believe that a zero carbon economy – what scientists tell us we have to create within the next century – is possible.

It is my hope that the Green Climate Fund will kick-start this new economy. The Fund should function as a security for investors, and be a catalyst of innovation and real transition to a society based on clean and renewable energy. I hope this conference will be portrayed in the history books as the one where that transition took off. Where we created the hope of a peaceful, more resilient and just world in which we all strive towards a common goal.

Once again, contributing money to the Green Climate Fund is nothing less than investing in a more secure world for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you.

Isabella Lövin



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries

Published 03 November 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, Vienna 3 november 2014 Check against delivery.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to drastically change perspective just for a brief moment. This is a conference about the challenges of being a landlocked country. Being landlocked is by definition being locked away from the vast blue surface of our planet – the ocean. It is quite ironic really, that I, in my brand new capacity as a Minister of International development cooperation in Sweden, would be asked to speak on this High-level Round table on the particular challenges of being landlocked, when I have up until now, both in my political life, and in my former life as a writer, have always been an ardent champion for - let's call it the other side of the coin – the protection of our oceans! In 2007 I wrote the book “Silent seas”, mainly describing the global problem of overfishing, and I have since then, as a member of the European Parliament, been working very intensively on reforming the destructive EU Common fisheries policy, and dealing with the particular challenges of industrial distant water fishing fleets, vacuuming the worlds oceans, not least in developing countries waters, including the SIDS.

However, the challenges of protecting the oceans, as well as supporting the peoples of landlocked countries - in the end all come down to the same principles - rights and responsibilities of all peoples – principles that are beautifully described in the most successful piece of globally binding legislation the world has produced so far – the UN Law of the Seas

(UNCLOS).

In UNCLOS the rights of landlocked countries access to the sea, as well as equitable share of any surplus of living marine resources is clearly described. As well as the notion of “The Area” – the vast part of our oceans that lie beyond national jurisdiction. Are you all aware that 50 per cent of the globe – everything beyond 20 nautical miles from the shorelines - is defined as “The common heritage of Mankind”? And that activities in this area shall be carried out for the benefit of mankind as a whole – irrespective of whether states are landlocked or not?

So – with this perspective in mind – the benefit of mankind as a whole – I am greatly honoured to make my contribution to this roundtable on achieving structural changes in Landlocked developing states. In an increasingly interconnected world, problems such as Climate change, ocean degradation or political instability is no longer the problems of just a few states, but is the responsibility of humankind. And I believe the 32 landlocked developing countries with a population of 450 million people - with their perspectives and particular problems - are very important players in a world that needs to learn how to cooperate more, not less.

Now, throughout our conference preparations, LLDCs have raised structural transformation as a priority need. Sweden, as co-chair of negotiations towards the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs, to be adopted here on Wednesday, has listened carefully to those concerns.

LLDCs notoriously face vast distances and high transport costs to major markets. They have a locational disadvantage.

To some, this handicap is exacerbated by trade barriers and political factors. And yet, it clearly is not the case that all landlocked countries are lagging behind or on the other hand that all coastal states are prospering. Other factors than just geographical location are of course even more important for the wellbeing of people and creation of prosperity in any country.

This is one of my most fundamental messages here today: Being landlocked has important implications for a country’s development strategy, but it does not necessarily undermine the potential for development. LLDCs can make conscious political choices that create intentional societal rewards.

Due to high transport costs, the scope for ‘traditional industrialization’ is smaller in LLDCs than elsewhere. Production of goods with basic

technology and low value added is rarely successful. This is a disadvantage that should be turned into an advantage. As land-locked countries it will be hard to compete on the market with other countries that export commodities with low value added, or raw materials. Instead, progress lies in a development strategy that combines investment in human capital and sustainable, smart technologies with a view to develop comparative advantages that are not 'God given'.

Export of services that do not require personal contact, such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT), has proven to be effective since trade in services entail low transportation costs. Tourism and care-based services are other possible niches. In landlocked countries with only limited trade and foreign direct investment, it is important that the government adopts special measures to promote technological change and increase competitiveness.

Sweden's devotion to free and fair trade works to enhance opportunities for LLDCs. The priority that the Swedish government attaches to bringing the benefits of ICT to developing countries is also of special importance to LLDCs.

In this decisive moment in history where the world needs to address climate change, I am also convinced that landlocked countries must seek comparative advantages by focussing on climate-smart green skills and technologies. Many landlocked countries are already struck by droughts and other natural disasters. Investing in oil and gas pipelines - while the world knows we cannot use four fifths of the known fossil reserves if we want to stay within the 2 degree target- is not a good idea. Investing in clean solar and wind power is – making the LLDC:s self-sufficient in energy would be the greatest comparative advantage imaginable in our time.

Sweden wants to continue to give support that encourages regional transportation and energy systems, including smart supergrids based on renewable energy.

However, infrastructure is not all. Every country has its particular circumstances, and I would like to take the opportunity here to mention the State of Palestine which is a special case of locked-in country, with most of its territory on the West Bank. More than 20 years have passed since "The Oslo Agreement" stated Palestinian Statehood within five years. Yet, Palestine remains under occupation. Sweden's firm belief is that the appropriate time has come for the recognition of Palestine as an independent

state.

Last Thursday, the Government of Sweden recognized the State of Palestine. At the same time, the Swedish government also adopted a five year development cooperation strategy in support of Palestinian state building.

In addition to Sweden's traditional strong ties with the State of Israel, we will from now on have a relationship of corresponding nature with the other partner in that two-state solution which is seen by the broad world community as the way to achieving lasting peace in the Middle East.

Sweden has a long-standing history of development cooperation. Our ODA has doubled over the past ten years and will remain at 1 % of GDI. Swedish partnerships with LLDCs provide us with appreciation of their conditions. Rwanda and Moldova beautifully illustrate my point today that strategic policy choices matter.

Moldova, though not far from the heart of Europe, was exceptionally isolated after independence and, indeed, until quite recently. While the Russian market was shut down for political reasons, non-tariff trade barriers inhibited access to EU markets. Strict EU visa requirements further added to the isolation. Swedish support to Moldova, which goes back to the early days of independence, has helped break down the non-geographic barriers. In just eight years, since 2006, Moldova has brought down its national poverty rate by just about half, to 16.6 %.

Similarly, in Rwanda, Sweden was early on the scene to assist with economic and social reconstruction of the country after the genocide. During the 20 years that have passed, economic progress has been remarkable. Rwandan exports of top-quality brand named coffee sells at 2-3 times the price of regular coffee. This compensates neatly any costs incurred by geographic location. Rwandan gender equality adds greatly to economic success – the country just climbed to 7th place (out 142) on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index. Women are half of the world's population. Through education, empowerment and economic opportunity, women double the potential of any country – land-locked, or, let's call it "gender-locked"!

My message should hopefully be clear by now: LLDCs deserve access to global markets and goods. They merit international support for transportation and communication systems. In that spirit, Sweden has supported this conference, Sweden is a leading donor in multilateral organisations and Sweden partners with several landlocked countries. On the part of

landlocked countries themselves, the best recipe for development is never to accept a role as victim, but to pursue a determined sustainable strategy for comparative advantage. To the benefit not only of their own people – but also for all humankind, which I think is the perspective we should always have.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at the Berlin Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation

Published 28 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Berlin Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation 28 oktober 2014 Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first of all thank the Government of Germany for hosting this timely event. It is high time that we increase our efforts to support the host nations.

The number of casualties and wounded in Syria is staggering and the number of refugees and internally displaced persons keeps growing. It has been said time and again but it needs to be repeated: the only way to end the suffering of innocent civilians is a sustainable political solution. Every effort must be made to once and for all find a peaceful solution to the crisis. It will never be possible to respond to the overwhelming needs solely through humanitarian aid.

Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt have all received and supported people fleeing the fighting in Syria. The generosity of the countries in the region should be recognised and applauded. The need to maintain that generosity is crucial to alleviate the suffering of millions of people.

The international community must come together to share this burden.

We welcome the important role of the UN system in coordinating and implementing the humanitarian response to the Syria crisis. Having said that, we need to get better at coordination between humanitarian actors and development actors. Finding ways to bridge humanitarian response and development efforts is fundamental. There is no room for in-fighting over mandates.

Sweden has contributed more than 175 million USD in humanitarian aid since 2011. In addition to this, we have provided significant un-earmarked core budget support to the main UN humanitarian actors. To mention one example this year alone, more than 24 million USD of our core budget support to the World Food Programme has been allocated to help alleviate the Syria crisis.

Sweden and Germany are by far the two largest recipients of Syrian asylum seekers within the EU. More than 55 000 asylum seekers from Syria have sought protection in my country since the conflict started. The determination to give Syrians protection should not be the task of a few. We strongly encourage all other European and Western countries to share this responsibility.

Mere gratitude does not ease the burden on the host communities and the humanitarian response alone is not enough. Therefore, Sweden has decided this week to allocate an additional 13 million USD to support host communities in the region.

I would again like to thank the Government of Germany and High Commissioner Guterres for calling this meeting. We must all come together to try to support those suffering the consequences of the fighting in Syria. This support must go both to those fleeing their homes and to those generously receiving people in need of shelter.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement on the situation in Guatemala

Published 30 August 2017

Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

The Swedish Government regrets the decision to expel the Commissioner for the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), Ivan Velásquez, which was taken by the country's President Jimmy Morales on Sunday. Under Commissioner Velásquez's strong and active leadership, the Commission has had a central role in efforts to counter corruption and strengthen the rule of law in Guatemalan society.

Sweden is the second largest donor to the CICIG, whose work is now held up as a model in the region and globally. Support to the CICIG is a central component of Swedish development cooperation with Guatemala, which partly aims to strengthen civil society in the country and promote a strengthened democracy and increased respect for human rights.

It is of the utmost importance that Guatemala's government protects the rule of law and fundamental democratic principles in this situation. We stand united with large sections of the international community in our intention to continue to support the democratic forces in Guatemala and to strengthen respect for human rights.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Security Council Briefing on Preventive Diplomacy and Transboundary Waters

Published 07 June 2017

National Statement on behalf of Sweden, Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister, at the Security Council briefing on Preventive Diplomacy and Transboundary Waters. Tuesday, 06 June 2017, New York.

Mr President,

Let me first express my condolences and that of the Swedish government and people on the loss of life following the vicious and cowardly attacks in Kabul and London. Our thoughts are first and foremost with the families of those who have lost loved ones and those who are now recovering from their injuries. We share the shock and outrage of the British and Afghan people and I assure you that Sweden stands with you at this time.

Mr President,

[Moving to the subject of today's discussion,] I would like to thank Bolivia for putting the issue of Preventive Diplomacy and Transboundary Waters on the agenda. Water is indeed one of the essential building blocks of human life; without it nothing can survive.

I also thank the Secretary-General, for his insightful and thought-provoking intervention today. You have vividly underlined for us both the challenges and opportunities presented by transboundary waters. You have also

underscored the vital importance of preventive diplomacy as a tool for averting conflict and fostering cooperation through water management.

Today's meeting coincides with another important meeting focusing on water, this time our seas and oceans. Sweden, together with Fiji, is proud to co-host the Oceans Conference, which, as you know, started yesterday. We believe this conference can be a game changer, leading to a reversal in the decline of the oceans to the benefit of people, planet and prosperity.

This is vital and urgent. The effects of climate change are real. They are being felt every day, not least by those who depend on rivers, lakes, seas and oceans to sustain their lives and livelihoods. For instance, in Sweden we are currently facing unprecedented low groundwater levels in some parts of the country, which in time could affect water supplies. It is imperative that we all respond to this challenge by raising the level of our global ambition to meet our global responsibility.

Mr President,

Sweden is deeply and fully committed to the prevention agenda being pursued by the Secretary-General and discussed by this Council in January. This commitment to a more holistic approach to prevention builds on an acknowledgment of the many varied and interlinked drivers of conflict. The issue of the management of transboundary waters is an important example.

A large proportion of the world's population depends on shared water resources for domestic, agricultural and industrial uses. How shared water is managed between communities has a profound effect on all aspects of human life as well as economic growth and sustainable development.

Considering its importance, it is not surprising that shared waters can also be a source of tension – fuelling conflict and threatening peace.

The negative effects of climate change have the potential to increase these tensions. To quote the Secretary-General: "Climate change is a threat in itself and a multiplier of many other threats – from poverty to displacement to conflict".

In response, we need to support countries' efforts to make informed and efficient decisions when responding to the effects of climate change, including on transboundary waters. The UN needs an institutional home for the climate change related security risks already affecting countries. Such a

home would ensure that the UN has the skills set needed to provide adequate risk assessments and to deliver comprehensive risk management strategies with regard to the impact of climate change. Together with increased capacity for more integrated, cross-pillar analysis, such work would also provide the early warning needed to support this Council's work to prevent conflicts emerging. This need was underlined in the Council's resolution on Lake Chad in March.

Mr President,

Improving the management of water resources so as to ensure water security must be a top priority at global, regional and national levels. We simply cannot afford not to responsibly and sustainably manage our waters. Issues of shared waters must, and can, be turned into opportunities for cooperation. Doing so can help prevent conflicts and deliver positive outcomes for all communities across borders. We have a number of tools to support these efforts.

Firstly, international law relating to water, which sets out key principles, amongst others, around prevention and avoiding transboundary harm, can play a significant role in preventing conflict.

The Århus Convention is an important instrument for ensuring the participation of the public and non-governmental organisations in environmental decision making. In this regard, it is equally important that the rights of indigenous peoples are recognised, taken into account and included in decisions regarding water resources.

Secondly, regional actors have a crucial role to play. Europe has a long history of managing shared waters. We have developed extensive systems for transboundary water governance, including an overreaching treaty framework. The European Union has lessons to share in this regard.

So too has Sweden, where we have made efforts to build experience in the area of water-diplomacy for the benefit of all countries. The Stockholm International Water Institute, and the UNESCO International Centre for Water Cooperation and Global Water Partnership, hosted by Sweden, hold extensive knowledge pertaining to transboundary water and actively engages in Water Management Dialogues.

Finally, we should enhance and deepen our efforts to work together around transboundary waters. Cooperation needs to be extended beyond managing a

shared resource, to areas such as increasing the quality of water and protecting the environment. Cooperation over shared waters can have far reaching positive impact and build trust far beyond the issue of managing a shared resource, further reducing the risk of conflict.

Mr President,

The waters that we share – whether rivers, lakes, seas or oceans –sustain life and support our common prosperity; however, they are more and more under threat.

No one country acting alone can respond; instead we must work together, as partners, across borders to secure our shared future and protect our planet for everyone.

Thank you



Statement from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement from Isabella Lövin regarding United States decision to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement

Published 01 June 2017

Through this decision, the United States – historically the largest emitter of greenhouse gases – chooses to isolate itself from a global agreement aimed at reducing emissions and addressing the impacts of climate change. Future generations and the world's poorest will be hardest hit by the effects of climate change.

The Paris climate agreement has received global support and the transition to a sustainable society has already begun. The rest of the world will not slow down to wait for the US. Those who opt out now will be left hopelessly behind once the world goes ahead and makes the transition.

Sweden remains committed to the Paris Agreement, to becoming one of the world's first fossil-free welfare nations, and to continue supporting actions in developing countries. We will continue to push the climate agenda forward. It is now even more important for progressive countries and regions to join together and show leadership – not least US actors, companies and states. The global level of ambition must be raised.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement in connection with the decision to stop US aid to organisations that support abortions abroad

Published 30 January 2017 Updated 30 January 2017

The Swedish Government is seriously concerned at President Trump's decision to reinstate the Mexico City policy, which prevents US aid funding organisations that work with issues related to abortion abroad. As a result, millions of women and girls may be forced to undergo unsafe abortions, risking their lives in the process. All women and girls should have the right to decide over their own bodies.

Sweden's feminist government is, and will remain, one of the strongest international voices for the universal right to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to safe and legal abortions. We are now in discussions with governments around the world to explore how, together, we can increase political and financial support for these issues. We are also talking to the parties in the Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament), where there is solid support for the Swedish line.

Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate



Statement from Ministry of the Environment

Comment by Karolina Skog on the European Commission's proposal for endocrine disruptor criteria

Published 21 June 2016 Updated 21 June 2016

"My preliminary assessment is that the European Commission's proposal for scientific criteria to identify endocrine disruptors is inadequate. Although we welcome the fact that the Commission is finally taking action after significant pressure from Sweden, this proposal is insufficient to effectively regulate endocrine disruptors and prevent damage to the environment and health," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog in a comment.

"The Commission wants to impose very strict criteria for defining what can be deemed to be an endocrine disruptor, and I am concerned that the proposed criteria will not be able to prevent damage to the environment and to people's health, which is the actual intent of the legislation.

"In the worst case scenario, we will primarily be able to regulate after the fact any endocrine disruptors that have already proven to cause serious damage. This is not compatible with the legislator's intentions or the precautionary principle.

"At the Environmental Council meeting on Monday 20 June, I will therefore put questions to the Commission to obtain further clarity concerning the meaning and function of the proposal," says Ms Skog.

Sweden has long demanded that the European Commission must present

scientific criteria to define endocrine disruptors. Establishing scientifically based criteria is crucial to being able to regulate the use of endocrine disruptors, which are currently used in a considerable number of products. But to date, the Commission has failed to produce this scientific basis. Sweden therefore brought an action against the Commission in 2014, and in December 2015, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled in Sweden's favour.



Statement from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Today we celebrate the United Nations' 70th anniversary and Sweden's UN membership

Published 24 October 2015 Updated 24 October 2015

Today we celebrate United Nations Day. And we are doing so in a world that is more uncertain than for many years and in which the United Nations is needed more than ever. Global crises and challenges require common solutions.

Sweden is ready to assume its share of responsibility. This is why Sweden is strengthening its engagement in the UN and why we are seeking a seat on the Security Council for 2017–2018.

Sweden's UN policy contributes to peace, security, sustainable development and gender equality. It is part of a solidarity-based foreign policy and a means for responding to crises that affect us.

Sweden is one of the top contributors to the UN. We contribute personnel to peace operations, aid, climate financing and humanitarian assistance. Our contributions also include engagement, resources and ideas.

We also set clear requirements for a modern, effective, transparent and legitimate United Nations that is equipped to meet future challenges and take advantage of future opportunities.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by Margot Wallström and Isabella Lövin on the earthquake in Nepal

Published 25 April 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Joint statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin on the earthquake in Nepal

"We feel deep sorrow about the thousands of people who have died, been injured or otherwise suffered from the powerful earthquake in Nepal and neighbouring countries.

Our thoughts and sympathies - and those of the entire Government - are with those who have lost loved ones, who are living in uncertainty about the fate of their families and friends, and whose homes have been destroyed.

The earthquake has caused great devastation and many people are still missing. Large-scale rescue operations and measures to assist the victims can be expected. Sweden will contribute through its core support to UN humanitarian bodies and is ready to respond to calls for additional assistance."