



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement delivered by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde at the 10th NPT Review Conference General Debate United Nations New York

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Mr President, dear colleagues,

Sweden associates itself with the statements of the European Union and Denmark on behalf of the Nordic countries. My remarks are made in a national capacity.

We meet here in New York against the backdrop of a severely deteriorated security environment. Sweden condemns in the strongest terms Russia's brutal and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine and reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. Russia's aggression and its threats to use nuclear weapons – which risks lowering the threshold of such use - are flagrant violations of international law, including the UN Charter. These actions stand in sharp contrast to the 3 January 2022 declaration by the leaders of the five Nuclear Weapon States reaffirming the central principle that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.

Mr President,

Russia's actions, the continuing expansion and modernization of nuclear arsenals, challenges to well-established norms and principles, the lack of transparency and restraint all give cause for great concern. In addition, Sweden remains deeply worried about regional proliferation challenges, in particular Iran's proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities and lacking cooperation with the IAEA, and the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missiles

program.

Multilateralism remains our best chance to address these challenges and realize the objectives of the NPT, including our common goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

As negotiations get underway we must bear in mind that Treaty obligations and commitments remain valid and should be fully implemented. There can be no backtracking.

Mr President,

While nuclear weapon states bear a special responsibility, all states can help drive progress for nuclear disarmament.

The Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament was launched by Sweden together with fifteen other Non-Nuclear Weapon States in 2019 to mobilize political support for concrete progress on disarmament.

The Stockholm Initiative has since developed 22 disarmament-related proposals - “stepping stones”. These include steps to reduce nuclear arsenals, reduce the role of nuclear weapons in doctrines and policies, proceed with negotiations on a treaty prohibiting fissile material production for nuclear weapons, support efforts to develop multilateral nuclear disarmament verification capacities and strengthen negative security assurances. Another crucial step would be the long overdue entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

In the current security context, efforts to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons use are more urgent than ever. While no substitute for disarmament, risk reduction can decrease tensions, increase trust and dispel misconceptions. The Nuclear Risk Reduction Package presented by the Stockholm Initiative puts forward concrete measures and a process for addressing risk reduction within the NPT framework.

If implemented, our proposals can contribute to make a real difference. They are ambitious in scope, yet realistic in nature. I am proud to report that 24 state parties have aligned themselves with our working papers and I invite you to support our proposals.

Mr President,

The IAEA plays an indispensable role in the service of the NPT. We owe it

to the Agency to provide it with the best possible inspection tools, including by universally applying the Additional Protocol, an integral part of the IAEA safeguards system under the NPT. Sweden supports the Agency's broad technical cooperation with the Member States, including through the Peaceful Uses Initiative.

Diversity is crucial for disarmament and non-proliferation to work. As a Government with a Feminist Foreign Policy and as a "Champion" for gender equality within the UN Secretary General's Disarmament Agenda, Sweden believes that full and effective participation of women and a further integration of gender perspectives in all aspects of disarmament and non-proliferation decision-making processes is key, as is engaging the younger generation.

Mr President,

This conference should result in the strengthening of the NPT and the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, from which we all benefit. It is my hope that we can find consensus and agree on a forward-looking agenda on some of the most pressing issues, with a view to adopting a final document of the conference. This is the time to show political leadership. We owe this to ourselves and to future generations.

Thank you!

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Government Offices of Sweden

Statement of Foreign Policy

On 10 June, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde presented a new 2022 Statement of Foreign Policy in the Riksdag. Check against delivery.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

A dark new chapter has begun in the history of Europe. On 24 February, Russia launched an unprovoked, illegal and unjustifiable war against its neighbour – the democratic state of Ukraine.

The Russian threat to the European security order will persist for a long time to come.

We have all seen the images of the brutal atrocities committed by Russian forces.

Civilians murdered and entire cities bombed. Missiles targeting children fleeing. Mothers with newborn babies hiding in cellars, seeking safety from the shelling.

During my visit to the Korczowa refugee reception centre in Poland, I was told about the Russian atrocities; about the mass graves, torture, attacks on children at a railway station, and about sexual abuse.

This invasion shows how far Russia is prepared to go. Russia's war has created a new and more dangerous reality for Europe and Sweden. It is in our security interest that Russia's war does not result in political gains, for reasons including preventing further aggression in the future.

At the same time, a number of global challenges we faced before Russia's invasion of Ukraine still need to be tackled: the climate crisis, growing geopolitical competition, the threat of famine, democratic backsliding and repeated human rights abuses.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's political, humanitarian, economic and military support to Ukraine is of historic proportions. Not since Stalin's war against Finland in 1939 has Sweden provided weapons during an ongoing conflict in our neighbourhood.

Last week, the Government presented its fourth support package to Ukraine amounting to SEK 1 billion. Ukraine's legal right to self-defence is, in practice, the defence of the territory of all countries. And that includes Sweden.

The EU sanctions were adopted unanimously and at an unprecedented speed and scale. The EU's sixth sanctions package, which our Government has been pushing for, means that 90 per cent of Russian oil imports to the EU will be phased out by the end of the year. Transatlantic cooperation has been crucial regarding support to Ukraine and the sanctions adopted against Russia.

Continued support to Ukraine and continued sanctions against Russia and Belarus are our most important contributions to bringing an end to this ruthless war.

Sweden's national defence capabilities will continue to be strengthened. We will reach two per cent of GDP as soon as practicable and by 2028 at the latest. The re-establishment of regiments, reinforcements on Gotland, reactivation of national military service, defence equipment procurements, and enhanced cyber defence and intelligence capabilities have been necessary. The significant deterioration of the security environment has also highlighted the importance of continuing to deepen Sweden's defence and security cooperation. This will strengthen Sweden's security both now and in the future.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

On 13 May, the Government presented a security policy report after two months of deliberations involving all the parties of the Riksdag. It is a strength for Sweden that all parties have supported the report's analysis sections, especially on Russia.

Russia's war of aggression has led to a fundamental deterioration of the security environment in our neighbourhood. NATO's response to the war has also brought to the fore that Article 5 of the NATO treaty, the collective defence clause, applies to NATO members only.

It is the Government's assessment that the best way for Sweden to protect its security is for Sweden to join NATO. With Sweden and Finland as NATO members, the security of all NATO countries would be strengthened.

As a member of NATO, Sweden would commit to the Washington Treaty in its entirety, including NATO doctrines. NATO membership may also change the conditions for the export of defence equipment in our national regulatory framework.

We have taken the step to apply for NATO membership hand in hand with Finland, our closest partner. The crisis we are now experiencing has shown how close our two countries are and how interdependent our security is.

Consensus within NATO is required to proceed with Sweden and Finland's applications. Our applications have received broad support from NATO members.

Sweden will contribute to the security of NATO as a whole, including Turkey, in the spirit of solidarity. Our ambition is to make constructive progress on the issues that Turkey has raised.

Sweden condemns terrorism in the strongest possible terms. A new and tougher Terrorist Offences Act enters into force on 1 July and the Government is preparing further tightening of terrorist legislation.

There should be no doubt that Sweden will continue to stand firm alongside other like-minded countries in the fight against terrorism.

Our vulnerability to external threats and attempts to influence will increase until the Accession Agreement enters into force.

In response to this uncertainty, several NATO countries – including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Spain, Norway and Denmark – have offered the Swedish Government clear assurances of support during the application period. The EU's mutual defence clause, Article 42.7, also plays a significant role in Sweden's security.

The bilateral declaration of solidarity signed by the Prime Minister of Sweden and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom also aims to enhance security in northern Europe.

Sweden's security policy is based on cooperation with NATO, the EU, the UN and through the strong transatlantic link.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden will not lose its global voice if it joins NATO. We have a long history of standing up for international law, solidarity, disarmament, democracy and gender equality. This will be our future too.

We will continue to promote greater respect for human rights, a rules-based world order and global security, with mediation as a tool and against terrorism.

This is also part of building a safer and more secure Sweden. Diplomacy will remain our first line of defence and national defence capabilities are of fundamental importance.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

We have a number of security policy tools we can use to respond to the deteriorating security situation in Europe. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is one of them.

When Sweden chaired the OSCE last year, we saw accelerating negative developments in Russia and Belarus regarding their willingness to live up to fundamental commitments.

We worked to strengthen the OSCE's role as a platform for dialogue and accountability. One result of this was the Ministerial Council meeting in Stockholm, where 48 foreign ministers held political discussions and made decisions. Sweden will continue to assist the OSCE as part of the Troika until the end of 2022.

The conditions for dialogue and conflict resolution have changed profoundly since 24 February, but the need for dialogue remains. And the OSCE is an important forum for this when circumstances allow.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

We are in the midst of an accelerating climate and environmental crisis. Sweden will lead the climate transition. But the global level of ambition is far from sufficient. Climate change and environmental degradation contribute to increased tensions and conflicts. The climate is of critical importance to our security. We must take climate-related security threats extremely seriously and have therefore appointed an ambassador for climate and security.

Intensive negotiations are currently under way in the EU on the

comprehensive package of legislative proposals called 'Fit for 55'. In this context, the Government is pushing for ambitious solutions to reduce the EU's net emissions by at least 55 per cent by 2030 in comparison with 1990 levels.

Last week, Sweden hosted Stockholm+50, the international UN meeting on the environment, climate change and sustainable development. The meeting highlighted concrete solutions and financing models to speed up adaptation and transition, including in developing countries. Politicians from all around the world agreed to move from words to action.

During our term as Chair, the OSCE took a landmark decision concerning the challenges posed by climate change. The OSCE now has a mandate to work on this crucial security issue. Sweden is also helping to strengthen the OSCE Secretariat to enable a greater focus on these issues.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The EU is Sweden's most important foreign and security policy arena. In uncertain times, the Member States stand stronger together. We will continue to build increasingly closer cooperation within the EU and with our Nordic and Baltic neighbours. Efforts to realise the vision of the Nordic region as the world's most sustainable and integrated region continue.

Next year, Sweden will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the third time, and at a time of fundamental challenges to Europe's security.

As the Minister for EU Affairs outlined for this chamber, our agenda is ambitious. The Government wants to see an EU that can assume greater responsibility for its own security. Work on the Strategic Compass will continue with the aim of deepening security and defence cooperation. At the same time, it is important for the EU to deepen its cooperation with strategic partners outside the EU and that the transatlantic link be safeguarded.

We need to continue to deal with the consequences of the war, deepen our support to Ukraine and work to gradually integrate Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia into the EU. The EU's ability to manage its own neighbourhood is critical to its credibility as a global actor.

The EU's fundamental values must also be upheld. Europe is currently experiencing the greatest refugee crisis since the Second World War. This

situation demonstrates how important it is that EU Member States act with solidarity and shared responsibility for refugees.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Feminist foreign policy is needed. Sweden was first. And it is gratifying that a growing number of countries are now following our lead – most recently Germany, Chile and the Netherlands which, like Canada, France, Luxembourg, Spain and Mexico, are also pursuing feminist foreign policy.

Our efforts must be intensified, not least given the backlash against gender equality that we have seen in the wake of the pandemic. Violence against women and girls has increased all over the world.

The pandemic, the climate crisis and the shrinking democratic space are putting us at risk of a global gender equality recession. Feminist foreign policy is needed now more than ever.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

For the fifth consecutive year, we are seeing more countries moving in an authoritarian direction than in a democratic direction. Not only is Russia's aggression against Ukraine a flagrant violation of international law, it is also a clear example of an authoritarian state's attack on a democratic state.

The Government's Drive for Democracy therefore continues with full force. More attention must be paid to the lack of democracy and respect for human rights in the world of work globally.

This year, Sweden holds the Presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, where we will continue to promote Holocaust remembrance and do our utmost to combat antisemitism and antigypsyism.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The nuclear threat is an increasingly worrying reality. Sweden will remain a strong voice for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control even as a future NATO member. The common goal is a world free of nuclear weapons.

Within the Stockholm Initiative, Sweden and 15 other countries have proposed 22 concrete and constructive steps for nuclear disarmament and a package of measures to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons use – an area of growing importance.

An increasing number of countries back our proposals. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has made our work more difficult, but all the more important.

We have also directly appealed to the five nuclear-weapons states. A number of the initiative's proposals for steps forward have been accepted. In a joint statement in January, the five affirmed that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought". Russia's threat to use nuclear weapons is unacceptable and in glaring contrast to this statement.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Humanitarian needs in the world are increasing dramatically. The pandemic has pushed more than 100 million people back into extreme poverty. Inequality and global gaps are growing.

More than 300 million people need humanitarian aid to survive. Almost 50 million women, men and children are on the verge of starvation. Roughly 100 million people have now been forcibly displaced.

Sweden's development assistance policy is world-leading in terms of both scale and quality. Setting aside funds for people in need of protection in Sweden due to war on our continent does not change this. Sweden's development assistance will continue to be equivalent to one per cent of our gross national income.

Sweden will step up its climate and environmental action. The target of doubling climate aid remains unchanged.

When anti-democratic forces gain ground, Sweden's development assistance will, with unwavering ambition, remain a counterweight. More democratic societies make the world a better place – and increase security in Sweden.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's foreign policy continues to be global, multilateral and based on international law. The European security order that we defend rests on the United Nations Charter and its principles.

This is also part of building security with others. A solidary world view goes hand in hand with the understanding that Sweden's security is furthered by a more secure and prosperous world.

Sweden continues to invest politically and financially in the multilateral

system with the UN at the core. This means support for peacebuilding and conciliation, deep commitment to human rights, democracy and the rule of law, gender equality and broad environmental and climate action.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Russia's aggression also cast the world into a deep food crisis that is hitting those who were already most vulnerable the hardest. Sweden is part of the global response to alleviate its effects. We are a large donor to the World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, which together save lives and improve livelihoods.

Russia must immediately cease blocking Ukrainian grain exports. This blockade is a major cause of the rising global food prices.

The EU is accelerating its initiatives for global food security. Free trade must be protected, and the root causes of hunger and starvation must be addressed. Sweden's efforts for sustainable development and peacebuilding are also critical in this context.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The COVID-19 pandemic has hindered implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Some of the global progress achieved in recent years, such as improvements in maternal and child health and gender equality, has been undone.

Global hunger and extreme poverty are on the rise for the first time in 20 years. The 2030 Agenda is our roadmap for reversing this trend.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Global challenges require global solutions. The pandemic, the climate transition and harsh sanctions against Russia require more trade, sustainable value chains, new sources of key raw materials, new output markets and strategic partnerships.

It is more important than ever to stand up for free, fair and sustainable trade and its significance for welfare in Sweden and Europe. This is needed at the same time as historically severe sanctions are imposed on Russia.

EU trade agreements with partners around the globe enable us to diversify trade and strengthen resilience ahead of future crises. The multilateral trade system, based on the World Trade Organization, is fundamental to growth

and welfare.

Innovation capacity and expertise is prevalent throughout Sweden, building the future's sustainable goods and services for the global market. By giving the green transition an export boost, we contribute to reducing climate impact globally. We also create the jobs of the future here in Sweden – thereby strengthening Sweden and Europe's competitiveness.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

A war is raging in Europe, and many feel a deep sense of global gloom. Yet, I want to say this: our joint efforts are important.

It may feel like an endless undertaking, but there is hope: through hard work and a clear direction, change is possible. We must not lose hope for peace and a better future. Or as a 14-year-old Ukrainian girl, Daria Chebotariova, wrote in a poem:

“We still believe in a happy future,
Where we will live in harmony and peace.
We'll not forget those who have fallen,
That's why we need to hurry up.”

Published 10 June 2022



Statement of Foreign Policy

On 16 February, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde presented the 2022 Statement of Foreign Policy in the Riksdag. Check against delivery.

Mr Speaker,

Our security situation is serious. Russia's increasingly confrontational rhetoric and military activities, both visible and covert, are unacceptable. The heightened Russian military presence at Ukraine's borders and Russian demands for security guarantees threaten the core of the European security order.

The European security order is not negotiable. Standing up for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is essential for the security of Europe as a whole.

Ukraine, like Sweden, has the right to make its own security policy choices. It is not Russia's place to dictate these through threats and violence. The rules of international law on state sovereignty and political independence are part of the European security order.

The way forward in terms of reducing tensions is continued dialogue and diplomacy, but at the same time we must prepare for the possibility of Russia choosing a different path.

Mr Speaker,

The right to make our own security policy choices is central to our security. The Government does not intend to apply for NATO membership. Our security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe.

We combine this with a defence policy that rests on two pillars: strengthened national capability and deepened international defence cooperation. Our

cooperation with Finland has a special status in this. Since 2014 we have built up a functioning defence and security network, and have concluded more than 30 agreements and around 20 cooperation agreements, not least with our Nordic and Baltic neighbours. We are building up our military capability both bilaterally and with NATO. And we are building up credible national defence capability through the largest investment in Swedish defence since the 1950s.

Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. An armed attack against Sweden cannot be ruled out. We must therefore be able to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military. But we alone decide with whom we cooperate and in what forms – in times of peace, crisis and war.

Sweden's foreign and security policy builds on cohesion in the EU and increased cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic region, in the Baltic Sea region, through the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and through deepened partnership with NATO. The UN and international law remain cornerstones of Swedish foreign policy. A strong transatlantic link is vital for Europe's security.

Mr Speaker,

We have a number of security policy tools with which to address the deteriorating security situation in Europe. The OSCE is one important tool. Sweden recently concluded its term as Chair of the OSCE, during which we made an impact that will endure.

We strengthened the platform for dialogue. The need for dialogue is greater now than at any time since the end of the Cold War. This was exemplified during the Council of Ministers in Stockholm, where some 50 foreign ministers held important political discussions and made decisions.

We also strengthened the platform for conflict resolution. As Chair, we focused on conflict resolution in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and the South Caucasus.

Meetings with civil society are always a priority, and Sweden's term as OSCE Chair was no exception. In Russia, the human rights situation has progressively deteriorated. An increasingly repressive society has made it impossible for human rights defenders to carry out their important work. The

closure of the human rights group Memorial is one of many alarming examples of this.

In Belarus, we have seen how the regime has cynically exploited migrants for political objectives. Belarus must release all political prisoners and hold democratic elections.

As Chair, Sweden also worked to ensure that Russia's aggression against Ukraine and Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea have remained high on the OSCE agenda. Eight years will have soon passed since the situation arose, and more than 14 000 people have lost their lives. But the passing of time does not make these violations of international law more acceptable. We now carry this work forward as a member of the OSCE Troika.

Mr Speaker,

We are living in the midst of an accelerating climate and environmental crisis. Sweden will take the lead in the climate transition. But the global level of ambition is far from adequate. Climate change and environmental degradation contribute to increased tensions and conflicts. The climate is of critical importance to our security. We must take climate-related security threats extremely seriously.

During our term as Chair, the OSCE took a decision to address the challenges brought about by climate change. Thanks to Sweden's catalytic role, the OSCE now has a mandate to take preventive action against the effects of climate change on security in the region.

We will appoint an ambassador for climate and security. We will incorporate new expertise into our international crisis management operations, peacebuilding, international development cooperation and climate diplomacy. We will continue to strengthen the Swedish-initiated UN mechanism for climate and security. In just a few years, this mechanism has become a mainstay in countries and regions affected by climate-related conflicts.

In June, Sweden will host Stockholm+50, an international UN meeting aimed at advancing an equitable and global green transition.

Mr Speaker,

The COVID-19 pandemic has hindered implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Some of the global progress that was achieved in recent years, such as

improvements in maternal and child health and gender equality, has been undone. Global hunger and extreme poverty are on the rise for the first time in 20 years.

The 2030 Agenda is our roadmap for reversing this trend.

Mr Speaker,

The need for a better global health system and the realisation that the pandemic's consequences have hit women and children the hardest are painful lessons.

The Government pursued the issue of more equitable COVID-19 vaccine distribution from an early stage. The COVAX global vaccine initiative has now delivered 1 billion vaccine doses to 144 countries around the world. Sweden is the world's largest per capita donor to COVAX and the fifth largest donor overall.

Efforts to strengthen global health security, not least efforts to combat antibiotic resistance and to develop a robust new global pandemic treaty, are a priority. The Government will therefore appoint an ambassador at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to work on global health security.

Mr Speaker,

The EU is Sweden's most important foreign and security policy arena. In uncertain times, the Member States stand stronger together. We will continue to strengthen our close ties with our partners within the EU and with our Nordic and Baltic neighbours. Efforts to realise the vision of the Nordic region as the world's most sustainable, integrated and digitally advanced region will be intensified.

The Government wants to see a strong EU that can take greater responsibility for its own security, but we also stress that this is not incompatible with openness to developing partnerships or a strong transatlantic link.

Next year, Sweden will hold the Presidency of the Council of the EU for the third time. The Minister for EU Affairs recently outlined how work on the Government's priorities will be pursued at EU level. It is an ambitious agenda.

The situation of refugees and migrants demands our continued attention. The

EU must establish a common asylum system that provides legal certainty and is humane and sustainable, in which everyone takes their share of responsibility.

We continue to maintain close cooperation with the United Kingdom, not least on security and defence policy, trade, and education and research.

The United States is once again a constructive partner in the global arena. This is encouraging for continued and enhanced cooperation, not least in the areas of climate change, democracy and gender equality. Cooperation with the US is central to security and defence policy, trade and technology.

Mr Speaker,

Feminist foreign policy continues to grow. Sweden was first. And it is gratifying that Germany is now following that lead, like Canada, France, Luxembourg, Spain and Mexico, who are also pursuing feminist foreign policies.

Our efforts must be intensified, not least given the backlash against gender equality that we have seen in the wake of the pandemic. Violence against women and girls has increased all over the world. The pandemic, the climate crisis and shrinking democratic space are putting us at risk of a global gender equality recession. Feminist foreign policy is needed more than ever.

In 2022, we will produce a new national action plan for women, peace and security, and we will also produce a new global strategy for gender equality in aid. Sweden is leading the action for women's economic empowerment within the UN Generation Equality Forum.

Mr Speaker,

For the fifth consecutive year, we are seeing more countries moving in an authoritarian direction than in a democratic direction. Military coups in Myanmar, Sudan, Mali and Burkina Faso, the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, a deterioration in the situation in Belarus and the conflict in Ethiopia are dramatic examples of democratic backsliding.

At the Summit for Democracy hosted by US President Joe Biden, Sweden was an active partner in several activities in which both the Prime Minister and I took part. Sweden's message was that the rise of right-wing populism and nationalism undermines democracy, and that human rights, the rule of law and women's political and economic participation are crucial to

democracy. LGBTIQ people's rights must be fully respected internationally.

This year, Sweden holds the Presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, where we will continue to promote Holocaust remembrance and do our utmost to combat antisemitism and antigypsyism.

More attention must be directed at the lack of democracy and human rights in working life globally. Workers are harassed, lose their jobs and are even killed for their trade union activities. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will continue its efforts in these areas, including within the Global Deal.

Mr Speaker,

The nuclear threat is a reality, and we must continue our disarmament efforts. The aim is a world free of nuclear weapons. Within the framework of the Stockholm Initiative, we have proposed 22 specific steps that provide a constructive and pragmatic approach to nuclear disarmament. An increasing number of countries now back Sweden's proposals.

We have actively addressed the five nuclear-weapon states. Gratifyingly, the Stockholm Initiative's message on the need for progress has been heard. On 3 January, the five affirmed in a joint statement that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought".

Mr Speaker,

Humanitarian needs in the world are increasing dramatically. Inequality is growing. Almost 275 million people need humanitarian aid to survive. Some 45 million women, men and children in 43 countries are on the verge of famine.

Sweden's aid policy will maintain a high level of ambition in terms of both scale and quality. Sweden's official development assistance will continue to be equivalent to one per cent of gross national income. And it will be used to reduce poverty and injustice around the world. It is a matter of solidarity – and also of the conviction that a better world makes for a more secure Sweden.

Sweden will step up its efforts to prevent climate change and its effects on food security and the environment, and promote sustainable living conditions. In 2022, we will increase climate aid by a further SEK 1 billion.

When anti-democratic forces gain ground, Sweden's aid will, with

unwavering ambition, remain a counterweight. More democratic societies make the world a better place – and increase security in Sweden.

Mr Speaker,

My visit to Israel was the first by a Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs in ten years. It is important that the Government has improved our relations with Israel. At the same time, we continue to recognise Palestine. Sweden continues to act for a two-state solution based on international law.

Terrorist groups have dramatically increased their activities in Mali. It is unacceptable that the Malian junta has postponed democratic elections and engaged in cooperation with Russian mercenaries. Sweden's military and civilian engagement in Mali aims to promote security, counteract terrorism and build sustainable development with respect for human rights.

The war in Yemen is now in its eighth year. It is one of the world's greatest humanitarian disasters. Sweden will continue to emphasise the need for peace talks in the UN. The inclusion of women in these talks is a prerequisite for a lasting peace.

Syria is a deeply ravaged country. The conflict is in its twelfth year. Millions of people are living in acute humanitarian need. Sweden is and will remain one of the largest humanitarian donors.

The conflict and humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia undermine stability throughout the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia is heading towards famine. Thousands have been killed in the conflict, including 24 UN aid workers. We will continue to work through the EU and the UN for an immediate ceasefire.

Mr Speaker,

As the Prime Minister has said: "We will leave no stone unturned in breaking segregation and cracking down on gangs." The underlying criminal structures are almost always transnational. The digital transformation of our societies brings an increase in international cybercrime. Shootings and explosions, often using smuggled weapons, remain a considerable security challenge. Far too often, the young men involved are tools used by more heavyweight international criminal actors.

Eighteen months ago, I appointed a special envoy on organised crime to identify how the Swedish Foreign Service can best support law enforcement authorities. A number of embassies have received special assignments to

work to combat organised crime. In the next stage, several embassies will be equipped to contribute more effectively to crime prevention. Cooperation between law enforcement authorities and embassies will be strengthened.

Mr Speaker,

We must stand up for free trade, particularly at a time when the winds of protectionism are blowing stronger. The multilateral trade system, based on the World Trade Organization, is fundamental to growth and welfare. A threat to the rules-based trade system is a threat to Sweden's economy and our trade relations. While cooperation is important, not least in trade, we will take action against any security-threatening activity directed at Sweden and Swedish companies.

Sweden and the EU need to work even more closely with likeminded partners to safeguard and develop global trade, focusing on the green transition to a fossil-free society. Our trade policy will contribute to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.

Through Sweden's participation in Expo 2020, we are showcasing how Swedish solutions enable a transition in a green and sustainable direction.

China's international significance also affects Sweden and Swedish interests, not least in trade. We engage in a frank and open dialogue with China in which human rights and freedom of expression are key. Sweden and the EU see global challenges that we can only address together with China – such as climate change, health and a functioning and fair free trade order.

Mr Speaker,

Last year, Sweden evacuated around 2 000 people from Afghanistan. In August, the situation at Kabul airport was at times chaotic and very difficult. Swedish Armed Forces personnel were just seconds away when a bomb exploded close to the airport.

On behalf of the Government, I would like to reiterate our thanks to everyone in the Swedish Foreign Service, government agencies and municipalities who worked day and night on the evacuations. I am proud of the collective operation that Sweden implemented.

Despite the grave sense of global darkness that many are undoubtedly feeling right now, and although the need for our joint efforts may seem never-ending, I would like to conclude by saying that there is hope that,

through hard work and clear lines, change is possible. Or as Archbishop Desmond Tutu said: “Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.”

Published 16 February 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde at the 2022 Folk och Försvar (Society and Defence) Annual National Conference

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde at The Folk och Försvar Annual National Conference 2022

Check against delivery.

Your Majesty,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have been to Ukraine many times. The last three times I have visited different areas along the ‘line of contact’, the border between government-controlled area and non-government-controlled areas. There, you experience up close how the conflict impacts people’s daily lives. Children have learnt that when they play outside they have to watch out for Russian mines, missiles and hand grenades. Very young children, who have yet to learn to tell the difference between a toy and a mine, can lose their lives or sustain life-changing injuries when a mine explodes in their hands. Every building calls to mind the thousands of shots that have been fired. The hospital I visited was falling apart. Schools were bombed to pieces. Roughly two million Ukrainians have fled the region, but not everyone has been able to. I met a family that has seen its entire village and family torn apart. It’s easy for us to forget that this conflict has already claimed almost 14 000 lives since 2014. That this is happening in a neighbouring country, just a three-

hour flight from Sweden, is hard to comprehend.

I have condemned, in numerous contexts, Russia's continuing military build-up along its border with Ukraine. Let me be crystal clear: the Swedish Government does not consider that Russia – or any other country – has the right to impede another State's sovereign right to make its own security and foreign policy choices. The rules-based world order, underpinned by international law and multilateralism, is something we must protect and must not take for granted.

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We have just concluded a successful year as Chair of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

From time to time, the question arises as to what Sweden's term as OSCE Chair has really meant for Sweden's and Europe's security. I can say that it has meant a great deal. Let me give you some concrete examples.

- The European security order and the concept of comprehensive security need to be protected. This is especially clear in light of the past month's open questioning of this.
- The need for a platform for dialogue based on our common commitments is greater today than at any time since the end of the Cold War. The OSCE's relevance as a forum for such dialogue was evident at the Ministerial Council in Stockholm in December. Around 50 foreign ministers were there and engaged in open and important discussions. In addition to the plenary sessions, roughly 200 bilateral meetings were held. We also adopted a decision that links the climate threat and conflicts. This decision means that the OSCE has a mandate to work on climate change and security, and identify where climate change can lead to conflicts.
- The OSCE's role as a platform for conflict resolution has been extremely important, particularly for our efforts in relation to the conflicts in Ukraine, Transnistria and the South Caucasus, just as it was when hostilities broke out on the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, although this received less attention. When the hostilities escalated, I initiated talks with the foreign ministers of the two countries concerned – before both Russia and Turkey did – to call for de-escalation and a diplomatic solution.
- As Chairperson-in-Office, it was important for me to visit all the field

missions and meet with civil society organisations on every visit. I always highlighted their important perspectives. This has helped us shine a light on the OSCE's high added value through its presence on the ground.

- As Chair, Sweden has worked to ensure that Russia's aggression against Ukraine and Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea have remained high on the OSCE agenda. Nearly eight years have passed since Russia illegally annexed the Crimean peninsula. But the passing of time does not make this violation of international law any more acceptable. We have emphasised the importance of the OSCE being able to operate in accordance with its mandate throughout Ukraine. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine sees the challenges associated with this every day. For example, Russia has both disrupted the OSCE's surveillance drones and sent interference signals to maritime traffic in the Port of Mariupol. All of this is of course unacceptable.

Sweden's term as Chair has definitely made an impact that will endure.

Let me now look ahead and highlight some of our foreign and security policy priorities for the year ahead.

The link between climate change and security has become clearer and more tangible. The climate threat is also a serious security issue and will be one of my main focus areas. Climate security is about issues such as water scarcity that leads to conflicts over resources, about places on earth where people are not able to live, forcing them to flee. It is about extreme weather conditions that contribute to increased risks in society. In the Arctic, the ice is melting faster and faster. Interest in natural resources and new trade routes in the Arctic is growing at the same time as more and more military capabilities are being established. Foreign and security policy must take climate-related security threats extremely seriously. Those who turn a blind eye to this are making a huge mistake.

The European security order must continue to be protected. Russia's express desire to deny other countries the indisputable right to make their own security policy choices and its attempts to recreate spheres of interest are unacceptable. There is complete agreement on this in the EU. And as far as Sweden is concerned, we are very clear: talks on the European security order affect our security and should therefore also include us. This is a standpoint that Sweden and Finland share.

Globally, Sweden stands up for human rights and civil society. Sweden has

consistently draw attention to the increasingly serious situation for Russian civil society and stood up for human rights. Our two-track policy – which combines our principled approach to upholding international law and the European security order with our pursuit of cooperation in areas where we have an interest, and support to Russian civil society – is of great importance.

Sweden will always stand up for civil society. As everyone has seen, the situation in Kazakhstan is now deteriorating rapidly. The deadly and violent response to the demonstrations is cause for great concern. The underlying cause of the protests is genuine popular anger over deep-rooted corruption and the State's inability to improve the life of its citizens.

Organised crime poses a growing threat to our societies. The underlying criminal structures are almost always transnational. The digital transformation of our societies brings an increase in cyber crime. That's why, eighteen months ago, I appointed a special envoy on organised crime. A number of ambassadors are specifically tasked with working actively to combat organised crime. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is thus an active participant in the fight against organised crime.

International terrorism, violent extremism and radicalisation are other areas requiring close international cooperation. Hybrid threats are occurring here and now. The list is long and includes cyber attacks, disinformation campaigns, investments in strategic infrastructure and attempts to instrumentalise migrants for political purposes.

China's growing ambitions are among the greatest global challenges since the fall of the Berlin Wall. China's rise presents Sweden and the EU with both challenges and opportunities. The Government's approach to China is a holistic one – based on the Government Communication entitled 'Sweden's approach to matters relating to China', unanimously adopted by the Riksdag – where the benefit to Sweden's security must be the focal point and the benefit to Swedish society must be safeguarded.

The pandemic has also taught us many painful lessons: the importance of a better global health system, where access to vaccines unfortunately became a foreign policy instrument. Rich countries initially ordered more vaccines than they needed, which had a negative impact on global supply.

But the pandemic is also an 'infodemic', with disinformation being spread daily. Different regions of the world have been challenged by a whole gamut

of false information. Over a six-month period in 2020, a UN study identified more than 250,000 messages with disinformation narratives related to COVID-19 in Ukrainian media and social networks. The ‘infodemic’ has directly affected the ability of Ukraine, and many other nations, to effectively protect human life and health.

The good news is that we have several tools we can use to manage the security challenges we face.

For Sweden, an EU that acts resolutely, stands together and acts on the basis of our shared values is indispensable. The EU is our most important foreign and security policy platform. The EU’s measures against Lukashenko’s instrumentalisation of migrants for political purposes are an example of such concerted action, in close cooperation with our partners. In twelve months’ time, Sweden’s will take over the Presidency of the EU, and we will be well prepared.

A strong transatlantic link is, and will remain, vital to European security. Sweden welcomes that steps are being taken to further strengthen cooperation between the EU and NATO. In October last year, the Government was able to welcome NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the North Atlantic Council to Sweden. The visit testified to our close partnership and further deepened our security dialogue.

The UN will also remain a cornerstone of Sweden’s foreign and security policy. The United States’ renewed commitment to the multilateral system significantly improves conditions. Participating in the military operations in Mali under the leadership of the UN and France is also a way of contributing to our security in Europe.

Sweden’s feminist foreign policy has gained considerable traction internationally. I am proud of that, not least because the women, peace and security agenda is important. It should go without saying that women must be included in all parts of a conflict cycle. But, unfortunately, there is still a huge need to affirm women’s and girls’ rights to security and to live free from violence, both in conflicts and in general.

In the current security situation, initiatives that lead to speculation about division and a changed security policy are not in Sweden’s interest. Let me be as clear about Sweden’s security policy as I was earlier: our security policy remains firmly in place. Sweden is not a member of any military alliance. An armed attack against Sweden cannot be ruled out. Sweden

builds security together with others, while reinforcing our total defence. The Government's deepened defence cooperation is an important part of this. Our close contacts with the US administration also reaffirm the value of a continued strong transatlantic link.

I visited Washington last week and met with Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman. She is now leading the US delegation at the talks with Russia, both bilaterally and with NATO. We spoke about this week's meetings and I was clear about Sweden's red lines when it comes to Russia's proposals. In other words, Sweden's security policy is decided by Sweden. This means, for example, that whether we choose to be militarily non-aligned or not is always our decision and not Russia's. Furthermore, all proposals that entail restrictions on, for example, exercise activities – in terms of where, how and with whom we carry them out – are unacceptable. Sherman confirmed that the European security order is not negotiable and she emphasised the importance of the good and close cooperation between Sweden and the United States. She also thanked me for Sweden's clarity regarding its priorities and for our work during our term as OSCE Chair. I also had talks with White House Deputy National Security Adviser Jonathan Finer on the same subject, and we discussed various scenarios that may become relevant.

Every nation must be able to make its security and foreign policy choices without outside pressure. Sovereignty is a cornerstone of a rules-based world order, and the Swedish Government will continue to protect it – both in our neighbourhood and globally.

Thank you.

Published 17 January 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Chairperson-in-Office Ann Linde at the opening session of the OSCE Ministerial Council

Check against delivery

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to Stockholm and the 28th Ministerial Conference of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

I am truly delighted to see all of you in person. I thank you for coming together despite the difficulties and constraints of the pandemic.

It is a clear sign of the importance that we all attach to this organization.

We have gathered here in Stockholm at a time of turbulence and multiple crises across our region, many of which feature high on the OSCE's agenda.

To respond to this situation, we need common solutions.

This is the opportunity that our meeting here in Stockholm is presented with: to rebuild trust and cooperation amongst ourselves, the OSCE participating States. To confirm our support for the institutions and structures of the OSCE.

I hope we can approach our discussions in this spirit.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

Sweden's year as OSCE Chair, like the year before, has been marred by a crisis without precedent in our lifetimes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed our vulnerabilities.

It has brought devastating human costs, new strains on international cooperation, vast disruption to daily life and increased inequality around the world. It has exacerbated democratic backsliding.

It has added pressure to an already fragile security situation, in Europe and elsewhere.

Polarisation is growing, between countries and within societies.

It is fuelled by international rivalry and public discontent.

By a decline of trust.

And like the COVID-19 virus itself, distrust is infectious and hard to contain.

We all know that a climate of resentment can turn into a climate of confrontation.

We need to reverse this trend.

Because almost eight years after the outbreak of conflict regarding Ukraine, the European security crisis is widening.

The tension that is currently building between Belarus and neighbouring countries sends us a warning. If we let this crisis in the heart of Europe escalate, the human and international ramifications could be severe.

Colleagues,

I fear that we – the countries and citizens of the OSCE region – are running low on trust just when we need it the most.

Because we are faced with challenges that can only be resolved through resilience and collective action.

Challenges that cut across borders, from climate change and pandemics to new and dangerous security threats.

We all experience this crisis of trust in the day-to-day work of the OSCE.

The breach of unanimously agreed principles and commitments, the abuse of the need for consensus as a weapon in negotiations, confrontation over dialogue.

This, sadly, is one part of our reality.

Yet the OSCE is based on the ideas of pluralism and trust, on the notion that even seemingly irreconcilable agendas can be brought together without confrontation.

That is what the OSCE can achieve in its best moments.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Sweden assumed the OSCE Chairpersonship with this mindset – to go back to basics. Back to the spirit and ideas that laid the foundation of the OSCE.

First, to the fundamental norms, principles and successful policies on which the OSCE was founded and which still form the bedrock of the European security order.

Because these commonly established rules – underpinned by the UN Charter and international law – are as righteous and powerful today as they were when the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter were signed.

Second, to the comprehensive concept of security that is at the heart of the OSCE.

Because meeting our citizens' legitimate aspirations for rights and freedom is as essential for peace and stability as military security.

And third, to conflict resolution based on international law and commonly agreed norms and principles.

Because accountability and predictability are preconditions for building trust. And distrust is a powerful promoter of instability and conflict.

This is why Sweden's Chairpersonship places emphasis on international law, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

On the pursuit of gender equality, women's economic empowerment and implementation of the women, peace and security agenda.

And on dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society and youth.

We will continue to do so even after our Chairpersonship has come to an

end.

Colleagues,

The success of our common efforts is measured by our ability to improve the lives and well-being of people in the most vulnerable situations.

As Chairperson-in-Office, I have met with all OSCE field operations and met with civil society in each of the countries I have visited.

Many of these meetings included first hand accounts of how conflict and human rights abuses affect people in countries afflicted by conflict.

But I also witnessed the positive difference the OSCE makes in those situations. If proof of the OSCE's vitality was ever needed, it is provided every day in the field.

I thank the dedicated women and men who take part in OSCE field operations.

And I commend my personal and special representatives for their tireless efforts to seek solutions through dialogue.

You make a real contribution to peace, justice and dignity across our region.

Colleagues,

No conflict has a more polarising effect on European security than the one regarding Ukraine, including the Crimea. A top priority for Sweden's Chairpersonship, it remains a fundamental challenge to the European security order and continues to claim casualties and cause suffering among the populations on both sides of the line of conflict.

The heightened tensions in and around Ukraine that we have seen during this year are a cause of grave concern. And I am disheartened by the lack of progress towards a sustainable political solution with full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and within its internationally recognised borders.

On my two visits to Ukraine, I witnessed first hand how the conflict is taking its toll on the population.

Humanitarian needs must prevail over political considerations, crossing

points should be opened on both sides of the contact line to ensure that civilians have access to their rights wherever they reside in Ukraine. International law, including international humanitarian law, must be respected.

The Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine remains an essential factor of stability. I commend the brave women and men in this mission. They must be granted unrestricted and unconditional access throughout Ukraine to impartially monitor the situation.

My two trips to Moldova made clear the central importance that the talks in the 5+2 format and the ‘Berlin-plus’ package have for regional security. We need to continue the confidence-building measures to improve the lives of people living on both banks.

When our Chairpersonship began, I pledged that we would play an active role in the Geneva International Discussions and the related Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism regarding Georgia.

Together with the EU and the UN, we have revitalised the discussions and helped the participants refocus on an issue-based agenda. This was necessary because the status quo – both political and humanitarian – is not acceptable.

Unresolved issues also remain in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict context, underlined by the renewed violence last month in the region. The OSCE has a vital role to play here, and we all need to lend our full support to the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office at this Ministerial Council and beyond.

I am also convinced of the merits of regional cooperation between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The OSCE is ready to facilitate this, and my Special Representative for South Caucasus has prepared the ground should the three countries decide to take steps in that direction.

Colleagues,

The OSCE arms control regime, meant to be a guarantor of security and stability, is running short on predictability and trust.

The Vienna Document and the Treaty on Open Skies remain at the heart of Europe’s security architecture. But the lack of compliance that we have seen over the years is undermining the very trust these instruments were designed

to create.

I deeply regret that the deficit of trust has grown so strong that key countries have decided to leave the Treaty on Open Skies. I hope that they will reverse their decisions.

Because we need to find a path back to making arms control and confidence- and security building measures an effective part of our mutual security toolbox.

A first step should be taken by all participating States fully implementing the Vienna Document. And we need to renew efforts to adjust the document to make it relevant for today's security situation with different force structures.

Colleagues,

Trust is created when we live up to our commitments and work together to meet our common threats and challenges.

I have mentioned conflict resolution and confidence building. These are core areas where we need to ensure that the OSCE is equipped to do its job.

Let me point to three other areas that demand our increased attention.

First, we see a worrying trend of democratic backsliding and violations of human rights in our region, despite our strong commitments.

The Human Dimension Implementation Meeting – the largest and most inclusive annual European manifestation of human rights – should have been held this year.

The fact that it was not is one of my more painful experiences at the helm of the OSCE.

But there are also encouraging developments.

The Stockholm Conference on Media Freedom provided important input, and I am confident that it reinforces the essential work of the OSCE in this field.

The Human Dimension Seminar was held for the first time in four years. We also came together to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, together with a broad spectrum

of civil society organisations.

The meeting on combating antisemitism in the OSCE region gave impetus to coalition-building, including with civil society, to fight intolerance and discrimination.

And I am impressed by the dedication and effectiveness shown by the new leaders of the autonomous institutions when assuming their duties.

Let me call on all of you, the participating States, to give your full support to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

These important institutions are there for us. They must be able to fully exercise their mandates.

Second, we need to do more to improve women's empowerment.

At the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum in September, we took an important step forward to follow up on the Vilnius decision from 2011 on promoting equal opportunities for women in the economic sphere.

And I trust that our work to mainstream the women, peace and security agenda will gain further momentum and continue after we have passed the baton on to Poland and successive OSCE Chairs.

Because we also need to keep an eye on the longer term.

When we stimulate the recovery of our societies and economies after the pandemic, we need to build for gender equality.

And we need to do it in ways that have positive and lasting effects on the autonomy, resilience and opportunities of women and girls. This will also lead to more resilient, secure and prosperous societies.

Finally, we need to make better use of the OSCE to counter new threats and challenges.

Recent developments in Afghanistan remind us of our interdependence and the indivisibility of our security.

Some of the challenges – from climate change to cyber – even have the

potential to transform the way we live, work and cooperate.

The OSCE does not have an all-inclusive response. But it can make important contributions to our broader efforts.

For instance, through its convening power.

As Chair, we put a text on climate change and security on the negotiation table for this Ministerial Council.

Why not make more use of the OSCE's convening power to inspire and share expertise on issues like climate-related security risks?

The OSCE provides us with an opportunity to explore these and other common challenges together.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

A quote from Swedish statesman Olof Palme captures the basic spirit of the OSCE.

When the Helsinki Final Act was signed, Giscard d'Estaing stated: "Now we can all agree". And Olof Palme replied: "No, now we can begin to disagree."

What Palme had in mind is that Helsinki established the rules of the game.

A framework to manage our differences without resorting to confrontation.

An inclusive space for dealing with the issues that divide us.

And, of course, for seeking compromise.

The OSCE is not a perfect instrument, but it is precious.

I hope that during our two days together here in Stockholm we will engage in real dialogue and seek common ground.

And, wherever possible, find common ways forward.

Thank you.

Published 13 December 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Chairperson-in-Office Ann Linde at the closing session of the OSCE Ministerial Council

Check against delivery

Excellencies, dear colleagues, friends,

The 2021 Ministerial Council is drawing to its close.

I am grateful to all 57 participating States and all the other participants for the frank discussions we have had on the security challenges facing our region.

This year, the high-level participation matched or even surpassed many previous Ministerial Councils – a clear sign of the importance we all attach to this organisation.

What makes the OSCE Ministerial Council unique is that discussions taking place here are not only reflections of today's political leader's priorities. They are guided by strong commitments that bind us all together in a community of comprehensive security.

As you know, Sweden has pursued three main priorities during our time as chair. We have sought to:

- Defend the European security order.
- Uphold the concept of comprehensive security, with focus on the respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, including gender equality.
- And we have sought to contribute to conflict resolution in line with our commitments and principles and international law.

We also knew that we needed to be prepared to manage crises that could not be foreseen beforehand, of which there have been several this year.

During the year I have visited around 20 participating States and met with all OSCE field presences to support these priorities.

I have seen first-hand the essential contribution that our organisation makes to improve the lives of the people affected by conflict in our region, for instance in supporting the freedom of movement for people in the non-government controlled areas in Ukraine.

In all my visits, I have prioritised meeting representatives of civil society to support their work for democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and to get the grass root perspective of the questions dealt with by our organization.

My Special representatives – on the conflicts as well as on thematic issues – have worked tirelessly on my behalf to fulfil the role of the OSCE in the face of today's challenges. I want to extend particular thanks to all of them.

Excellencies,

Our priorities were chosen as these are the areas where the biggest challenges to European security lie.

Over the course of this year, we have seen how violations of our commitments have continued to challenge the foundation on which the OSCE is built. As Chair we have worked to ensure respect for the commitments and accountability when they are breached.

The fundamental ingredient of trust that I mentioned in my opening address of this meeting, has continued to be eroded.

This is especially clear when it comes to the conflicts in our region. The notion of some that they are “frozen” is clearly wrong. The OSCE's engagement is needed more than ever.

This holds true in eastern Ukraine where civilians continue to fall victim of the armed violence at the contact line, a line which continues to separate hundreds of thousands from their friends and families [and limits their access to basic services].

In the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the ceasefire remains fragile and recent incidents demonstrate the need to address outstanding issues.

It is also true for Georgia and Moldova where the unresolved conflicts continue to violate fundamental principles and affect the lives of people.

The crisis in Belarus after the fraudulent presidential elections in 2020 is another example. As you all know, the OSCE stands ready to support Belarus in living up to its commitments, should it be invited to do so.

We have also seen how ODIHR has been hindered in performing its role to support participating States living up to commitments on democracy and human rights, due to limitations imposed by authorities on election observation. This is deeply problematic and in violation with our common commitments.

The rapid developments in Afghanistan this summer and the far reaching and acute challenge they poses to security also in the OSCE region provide new challenges for this organisation.

Excellencies,

Although these examples show the continued relevance and need for the OSCE, it must also be restated that our organisation can only be as effective as we, the participating States, allow it to be.

During the year, I have repeatedly seen how the consensus principle – originally the source of strength of our organisation – has been misused. Individual participating States have put their national agendas before our organisation.

The unified budget, the Annual Security Review Conference, and HDIM have all been severely affected by this during the year. As Chairperson, this is something that I deeply regret.

Next year, each and every one of us has a responsibility to ensure that the HDIM can be held.

Excellencies,

Given these severe challenges it would be easy to lose hope. But where urgent challenges have arisen, the OSCE has also been able to respond and live up to its potential:

- The SMM continues to play an important part in conflict management by monitoring the security situation and facilitating the functioning of

critical civilian infrastructure in eastern Ukraine. Without its contribution I am certain that the civilian suffering would have been even worse.

- The instruments of the OSCE have been used to counter the negative development in the human dimension, where the Moscow and Vienna mechanisms have been activated in accordance with our agreements. The Human Dimension Seminar could be held for the first time in four years, and for the very first time on the topic of Preventing and combatting violence against women.
- The work of the OSCE on combatting intolerance and discrimination has been strong this year. It was an honour to start this year with a seminar on fighting antisemitism with Rabbi Baker. I am also grateful to the Special Representatives Polak and Pacaci for their stalwart work.
- In political and military dimension, the Vienna Document was activated to seek clarity on Russian troop movements in and around Ukraine.
- Throughout the year, we have pushed hard to ensure that gender equality is part of all OSCE's activities, by asking the field presences and special and personal representatives to act and report specifically on the issue. Our efforts have ensured that gender equality will remain central to the OSCE also for the years to come.
- An advisory group on the agenda for Women, Peace and Security has been launched to support the Chair. And I am happy to say that we have taken steps as an organization towards implementing UNSC resolution 1325 better.
- Regarding Afghanistan, we have been able to come together to launch a framework and a financing mechanism to assist participating States in managing the challenges that developments in Afghanistan mean for the OSCE region.
- And although consensus is hard to achieve, this meeting has been able to decide on the chairpersonship in 2025 and these results show the continued relevance of the OSCE and how political engagement can contribute to resolution of our most difficult challenges. The key is trust – trust built on adherence and accountability towards our common commitments.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic support of the OSCE Secretariat under the strong leadership of our Secretary-General Helga Schmid. My warm thanks to you and your team, Helga, for all your commitment, hard work, and your assistance to the Chair.

Excellencies,

By our consistent focus on our priorities, I am proud to have contributed to security in our region and to the work of coming Chairs.

I am happy to hand over the chairpersonship baton to my dear colleague Zbigniew [Rau] at the end of the year. I know that the OSCE will be in safe hands given our shared views on many of the challenges that our region face.

As member of the troika, Sweden will support the Polish efforts for a more secure Europe – built on the foundation of our common commitments.

A final word of thanks goes to all those who have made this Ministerial possible – Ambassador Funered and her team in Vienna, Ambassador Lärke and the Task force and broader Swedish team in Stockholm and in your capitals. Here at XPO to our interpreters. And to all those behind the scenes without whom our meeting could not have taken place.

Thank you!

Published 13 December 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Opening statement by CiO Linde at ODIHR anniversary

Opening statement by the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs Sweden, at the 30-year anniversary for the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in Warsaw on 14 October 2021.

Check against delivery.

Your excellencies, Ambassadors, representatives from civil society, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here today, and to see that so many of us are able to attend this meeting in person here in Warsaw. I would like to start by thanking you for coming here, in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights - ODIHR. I thank you Director Mecacci and your staff for planning this event, and Poland and Minister Rau for hosting us. I believe those of us who are here in person today understand how important it is. But I would also like to thank all of you who are attending this meeting virtually. We can look forward to two intense days of engaging discussions and active participation.

Today and tomorrow, we are celebrating three decades of ODIHR achievements throughout the OSCE region thanks to this institution's crucial work. The OSCE participating States have unanimously agreed that democracy, human rights and the rule of law are central to the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security. The different strands of work within ODIHR's mandate all contribute to a free and democratic society where the human rights of all individuals are respected. This, in turn, contributes to a more secure OSCE region.

Initially established as the Office for Free Elections in 1991, the focus of this institution was on elections. With this focus and the mandate of the

participating States, ODIHR developed the gold standard in election observation, which is also widely used outside of the OSCE space.

ODIHR's unique election observation methodology recognises that a genuinely democratic election takes place long before and after the actual polling day. This is crucial to monitoring the welfare and state of democracy, where fully democratic elections are but one critical component. In 2006, at the Brussels Ministerial Council, the OSCE participating States formally recognised ODIHR's election observation methodology and encouraged its continued development. It has undergone constant improvement ever since. As a centre of excellence, ODIHR remains at the vanguard of election observation, advising and assisting States.

We have all committed to follow up promptly on ODIHR's election assessment and recommendations. Sweden benefited from ODIHR's election observation most recently in our election in 2018. The recommendations from ODIHR led to the initiation of an all-party commission of inquiry to examine the need to amend the election legislation to explicitly provide for the presence of observers. This to ensure full compliance with Paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document. We continue to improve our democracy, and ODIHR offers excellent support in this endeavour.

Over time, ODIHR's work has broadened. Expertise and support capacity have been bolstered with innovative and cutting-edge tools in many areas. These include human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law, promoting gender equality, tolerance and non-discrimination, Roma and Sinti Issues, and combatting trafficking in human beings, to name a few.

I travelled here from the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism. There I had the opportunity to highlight the important work by ODIHR in supporting participating States' work to combat racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. As the discussions in Malmö showed – there is no alternative to tireless work to combat these phenomena, which threaten the very fabric of our societies.

ODIHR's assistance over the last three decades has made a major impact throughout the OSCE region. Elections have been observed and made more democratic, democratic institutions have been strengthened and civil society has been heard and included. During my visits as CiO, I have seen the impact of the work of ODIHR and the other two autonomous institutions throughout the region. This has been mentioned by both participating States

and by civil society representatives with whom I have met on these visits. ODIHR has been invaluable in the shared commitment to becoming a more democratic and secure region. That being said, the responsibility to implement these commitments rests solely with the participating States themselves.

As important as ODIHR is for governments, it is equally important for civil society. I am very happy to see so many representatives from civil society – from all parts of the OSCE region – attending this event physically and virtually. Civil society's unique role in the OSCE has been reiterated time and again, including in Astana 2010. ODIHR's important work is amplified through effective partnerships, close contact and exchanges with civil society.

As many of you are aware, ODIHR traditionally hosts the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting around this time of year. This mandated conference is of paramount importance not only to the participating States, but also to civil society. It is very disappointing that the HDIM could not take place as planned between 27 September and 8 October this year due to the failure to reach a consensus among the participating States. This is a loss for the OSCE, for the participating States and for civil society. We, the participating States, must continue to hold each other accountable for how we implement our commitments, and civil society must be able to hold us to account. The HDIM must continue to provide this opportunity, as our heads of state and government agreed in Helsinki in 1992.

When the Swedish Chairpersonship began in January, I highlighted the importance of the autonomous institutions in supporting participating States in living up to our joint commitments. ODIHR, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the High Commissioner on National Minorities each have clear and strong mandates. They are the bedrock of this organisation. The work of our Chairpersonship is carried out in support of, and complementary to, the work of these institutions. Against the background of continuing democratic backsliding in parts of the OSCE space, the need to continue to safeguard the mandate of ODIHR and the other two autonomous institutions is obvious.

ODIHR has played a significant role over the past 30 years, and will continue to do so. Major gaps between the strong and clear commitments that participating States have agreed to in the human dimension, and their actual implementation, regrettably remain. We continue to witness harassment and arbitrary detentions of ordinary citizens for voicing their

opinions. We continue to see human rights defenders and journalists being threatened for carrying out their important work. The failure to follow through on our commitments is a threat to the security of the OSCE region and beyond. All participating States will continue to need the support of ODIHR and the other two autonomous institutions in implementing their commitments and in protecting and promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law. This we owe to all individuals of this region.

Thank you.

Published 18 October 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement by the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs Sweden, at the hearing with the U.S. Helsinki Commission on 11 June 2021

Check against delivery.

Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

Members of the United States Helsinki Commission, Senators and Members of Congress, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour for me to address you today.

When Sweden decided to take on the role of Chair of the OSCE, we did so well aware that the organisation was going through a difficult period, unlikely to improve soon. Old rivalries continue to pose challenges to international peace and security. New conflicts, crises and threats demand our attention – from the security impact of climate change to cyber security. Democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law are continuously being challenged.

We decided to take on the role of Chair because of the important part that the organisation plays regarding security, stability, democracy, human rights and the rule of law – both in our own neighbourhood and in the wider OSCE region. A well-functioning OSCE is in our own interest, but we firmly believe that it is also in the interest of all 57 participating States that make up the OSCE. We value multilateralism and international law because the problems of our time call for more – not less – common solutions. And the transatlantic cooperation is key in this regard.

The guiding principle of the Swedish Chairpersonship is to go ‘back to basics’: to return to the fundamental norms and principles on which the OSCE was founded, to which all participating States have committed and re-committed – in Helsinki in 1975, Paris in 1990, Istanbul in 1999 and Astana in 2010. Underpinning these are, of course, the UN Charter and international law.

Safeguarding these commitments, on which the European security order rests, is my first priority as Chairperson-in-Office. But it is our common task to ensure that principles such as respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, the duty to refrain from the threat or use of force, and every country’s right to choose its own security arrangements, are respected.

My second priority is to safeguard and promote the organisation’s unique concept of comprehensive security, with human rights, democracy and the rule of law at its core. There is a clear link between freedom within States and security between States.

My third priority is to seek continued and strong engagement at the highest levels for sustainable solutions to crises and conflicts in the region. I want us to make use of our extensive toolbox, ranging from OSCE field presences to the autonomous institutions.

At the outset of our Chairpersonship, I made a commitment to personally travel to all countries that have an OSCE field presence. I have now visited most of them. It has given me first-hand input from people in the region, including those affected by conflicts, human rights violations and abuses.

I have met civil society organisations on every visit. I have done this to ensure that their contributions inform all aspects of our efforts. I am committed to safeguarding the unique role and participation of civil society organisations in OSCE meetings.

These meetings have reinforced my conviction that there can be no security without respect for human rights. This is also why the Women, Peace and Security agenda and gender equality are guiding themes of our Chairpersonship.

No part of the OSCE region, including mature democracies, are immune to the global trend of democratic backsliding and the decline in respect for human rights and the rule of law. Inclusive democratic processes, freedom of expression and media freedom are key priorities in the human dimension.

Last month, we held a conference on media freedom in the OSCE region, together with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. Democracy and peace can only thrive when a plurality of views, opinions and voices are heard.

We must also continue to counter all forms of intolerance and discrimination. Our first event as Chair was to organise a meeting on combating anti-Semitism in the OSCE region. I have asked Rabbi Andrew Baker, who is my Personal Representative on Combating Anti-Semitism, to report to the Malmö Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism, which the Swedish Prime Minister is convening in October.

Let me briefly touch upon some country-specific developments in the region.

Ukraine remains the most serious challenge to the European security order, and an obvious example of violations of our common commitments and of international law in our region. The heated rhetoric, the continuous violations of the ceasefire and the Russian military build-up in April display the fragility of the situation in and around Ukraine. This is why, on my first trip as OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, I visited both Kyiv and the contact line in Donbass. This is also why I will return there in a few days' time.

My priority as Chair is to work for a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE commitments and principles respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine, within its internationally recognised borders. Militarisation and human rights abuses in Crimea are also serious and demand our continuous attention.

As Chair, I have put strong emphasis on relieving the humanitarian consequences of the conflict. I have worked actively for the opening of two new checkpoints on the contact line so that the people on both sides are able to gain access to their social benefits and see their relatives. Steps like these are important to help produce the climate necessary to achieve a politically sustainable solution to the conflict.

The renewed outbreak of hostilities in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict in the South Caucasus last year resulted in thousands of casualties and immense suffering. The recent tensions along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan demonstrate that the outstanding issues remain a serious challenge to international peace and security. The need for de-escalation and dialogue, for both sides to recommit to talks on a sustainable political solution in accordance with international law, and to address humanitarian

needs as well as the human rights situation is urgent.

It is essential to get the parties engaged in a diplomatic solution to remaining challenges and to renew efforts towards a lasting peace agreement. I have clearly expressed my belief that the process led by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, including the United States, is the best vehicle to resolve these issues. I fully support the efforts of the Co-Chairs and my Personal Representative to the conflict.

I am convinced that the OSCE's role is crucial for the regional development of the whole of the South Caucasus, including for Georgia. Both Georgia and Moldova are clear examples of the ongoing challenges to the European security order in the OSCE area. No efforts should be spared in finding sustainable solutions to these conflicts.

I am extremely concerned by developments in Belarus. Most recently I was appalled by the Belarusian authorities' reckless and dangerous diversion of a civilian plane for the purpose of arresting a journalist. I have called for the immediate and unconditional release of Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega, along with all others who have been arbitrarily detained. As Chairperson of the OSCE, I continue to call on Belarus to respect its OSCE commitments and obligations under international law. I am also supporting efforts to follow up on the recommendations of the Moscow Mechanism report on Belarus presented to the OSCE Permanent Council last year. We are in contact with representatives of the Belarusian opposition and civil society.

Confidence and security building measures like the Vienna Document and the Treaty on Open Skies are important elements of the European security architecture and play a crucial role in providing transparency and predictability. We have worked hard in Vienna to resolve the issues related to implementation of the Open Skies Treaty and we had hoped that the United States would choose to re-join it. The US was an important party to the treaty, and I regretted to see you leave. Russia has now signalled that it, too, will withdraw from the treaty. Our conviction is that the OSCE region gains from more confidence and security building, not less.

I know that you share the importance that we as the Swedish Chairpersonship attach to holding the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting this year. Rest assured that we are sparing no efforts to convening the HDIM, with its unique civil society participation. Together with ODIHR and Poland, we are working on a format that would allow for maximum

physical attendance while respecting COVID-19 restrictions.

I would also like to highlight the important role played by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and to all of you personally as members. Parliamentarians do so much to bring the reality of OSCE cooperation home to each participating State. Through your participation in election observation missions, you strengthen the connection between our organisation and the more than 1 billion citizens across our 57 participating States. You also contribute to the role of the OSCE when it comes to democracy and the rule of law. Thank you for your commitment and your contributions.

In the Swedish Parliament we had an OSCE debate last Wednesday. We had members from all eight political parties who were taking the floor and argued in favour of different kinds of OSCE achievements and activities. They also witnessed from their participation in election observation missions, including the one to the United States.

As Chairperson-in-Office, I will do my part to defend the commitments on which the OSCE rests. When we summarize our Chairpersonship at the Ministerial Council meeting in Stockholm in early December, I am confident that I will be able to state that our efforts made a contribution to increased dialogue, understanding and peace among the OSCE participating States.

Thank you.

Published 11 June 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Ann Linde speech to to the Council of Europe

28 April 2021 Check against delivery.

Dear Chair,

Dear Secretary-General,

Distinguished members of the Committee of Ministers,

It is an honour for me to address the Council of Europe today as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. With mandates and memberships that partly overlap, our two organizations mirror some of the finest human aspirations and achievements: human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

These ideas - the need to respect human rights and the rule of law and to promote peace, democracy and human equality - are at the heart of Sweden's OSCE Chairpersonship priorities.

I commend the German presidency of the Council of Europe for putting such strong emphasis on these issues, including the rights of those who are suffering the most under the pandemic. And I look forward to engaging with youth representatives of both our organizations this afternoon on these and other important topics.

Excellencies,

We have a situation in our part of the world that calls for more, not less, common solutions. The vision of “a new era of democracy, peace and unity in Europe” is under pressure. Old rivalries continue to fuel conflicts and pose challenges to international peace and security. And new conflicts, crises and threats demand our attention – from climate change to cyber security.

We are in the midst of a pandemic which has brought devastating human costs, new strains on open society, and disruption to economic activity

around the world. Our vulnerabilities have been exposed. Democracy, respect for human rights and economic development have suffered during the pandemic, in Europe and elsewhere.

Sweden's task as OSCE Chair is to seek a common response to these and other challenges before us. Our general approach is to "go back to basics", to the fundamental norms and principles on which the OSCE was founded and on which the European security order rests.

In the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and the Charter of Paris in 1991, the OSCE participating states committed to fundamental principles which still form the basis of the European security order, such as the respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Underpinning them are, of course the UN Charter and international law. Safeguarding these principles is my first priority as Chairperson-in-Office. Our common task is to implement them.

My second priority is to strengthen the OSCE's capacity for conflict resolution and crisis management, based on the concept of comprehensive security and the organization's principles and commitments. In the human dimension, the work of the OSCE and the Council of Europe is mutually reinforcing. The European Convention of Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights remain the most impressive system of international justice anywhere in the world.

My third priority is to seek continued engagement at the highest levels towards sustainable solutions to crises and conflicts in the region, in line with international law and with full respect for the OSCE principles and commitments.

As Chair, it is important for me to visit countries struggling with conflict throughout the OSCE region, to gain first-hand input from people affected by these conflicts and by human rights violations and abuses. And to learn from the people who work there.

Those meetings have reinforced my conviction that there can be no security without human rights. We know that societies where human rights are fully enjoyed by all are more secure and with better prospects for sustainable, resilient and prosperous development. This is why the Women, Peace and Security agenda and gender equality are guiding themes of our chairpersonship. Our efforts will be measured by how we improve the lives and well-being of people in the most vulnerable situations.

Excellencies,

The last few weeks have again displayed the fragility of the situation in and around Ukraine. This remains the most serious challenge to the European security order, one which requires us to use the conflict-related toolbox at the disposal of the OSCE. This is why, on my first trip as OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in January, I visited both Kyiv and the contact line in Donbass. Seven years into the crisis, we now see new tensions building up. In my contacts with Kyiv and Moscow, I have underlined the need to deescalate the situation, consolidate the ceasefire and intensify efforts towards a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE commitments and principles respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. Recent developments with regards to restrictions of access to parts of the Black Sea must be resolved in accordance with international law.

In February, I visited Georgia and met with President Zourabichvili and then-Prime Minister Gakharia to reiterate the OSCE's full support for the Geneva International Discussions and related Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism formats.

In my talks with President Sandu and other leaders in Moldova, the prospects to move forward with talks in the 5+2 format and to continue building on the "Berlin plus" package were discussed. I also confirmed our readiness to hold 5+2 talks in Stockholm during the year. This message was reiterated in my discussions with the representative from Transdniestria and was generally well received. Although we remain realistic, I hope it will be possible to make progress on the Settlement Process during the year. But to make progress – the full support of all parties to the conflict is needed.

The unresolved conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan remains a serious challenge to international peace and security. Last autumn, we witnessed a renewed outbreak of the Nagorno-Karabach conflict, resulting in thousands of casualties and immense suffering. The cease-fire achieved in November with the assistance of Russia brought about a necessary stop to hostilities. The challenge now is to renew efforts towards lasting peace. The OSCE has been given the international mandate to lead this process, under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs. As Chairperson-in-Office, I visited Baku and Yerevan in March and expressed my expectation that the sides recommit to talks on a sustainable political solution and to address humanitarian needs.

In situations where trust between States has eroded, confidence and security building measures play an important role to support transparency and predictability. The Vienna Document and the Treaty on Open Skies enable measures that are at the heart of confidence building in our region. These measures must be kept up to date and fully complied with and comprise as many States as possible to ensure their continued functioning and relevance. This is essential also in the context of current developments in and around Ukraine.

When crises erupt despite our efforts to prevent them, we remain ready to engage directly with the stakeholders involved to offer the OSCE's good offices to facilitate solutions. In line with this, the offer that Albania's Prime Minister Rama and I extended last year to facilitate a genuine dialogue between the government and opposition in Belarus still stands.

Excellencies,

This is a crucial time to ensure that the norms and principles that are fundamental to the Council of Europe and OSCE are respected. The global trend of democratic backsliding and decline in the respect for human rights and the rule of law is seen also in our part of the world. It has been exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We will continue to emphasize the importance of respecting and protecting human rights also in times of crisis. This includes the right to the freedom of expression and media freedom. We should mobilize around these issues in the period ahead. The virtual Stockholm conference on media freedom in the OSCE Region in May and the Council of Europe's high-level conference on artificial intelligence, media and democracy in June provide two such opportunities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected the full enjoyment of human rights of persons belonging to minority groups. It has a negative impact on the rights of women and girls. Gender-based violence has increased during the pandemic and women's economic situation has suffered.

The Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship will follow-up on the OSCE Vilnius decision from 2011 on promoting equal opportunity for women in the economic sphere. And the Council of Europe conference in Berlin in May will mark the tenth anniversary of the Istanbul Convention: it provides an important occasion to address the issue of men's violence against women

and girls.

As OSCE Chair, our efforts are carried out in support of, and complementary to, the work done by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the High Commissioner on National Minorities. These autonomous institutions all have clear and strong mandates. Together with them, we will do what we can to ensure that the OSCE can prevent conflicts and safeguard human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The Council of Europe is a key partner to us on all aspects of this agenda. And we have an excellent basis for cooperation through the 2005 Warsaw Joint Declaration. The mechanisms for day-to-day collaboration are in place, driven by contacts between the secretariats. You can also count on Sweden's OSCE Chairpersonship to take concrete steps on the issues that have been identified as common priorities for the OSCE and the Council on Europe. Activities such as the OSCE expert meeting in February on "Combating anti-Semitism in the OSCE region" and the annual OSCE conference on counterterrorism last week provide input also to our cooperation with the Council of Europe.

Excellencies,

I welcome the efforts of the German presidency to bring the Council of Europe close to the people. This is in line with what Sweden seeks to achieve in the OSCE context.

As OSCE Chair, I have met with civil society organisations from across the OSCE region, including from countries affected by unresolved conflicts, to ensure that their contributions inform all aspects of our efforts. I strongly believe in supporting these networks. It is through them that the ideals embodied in the OSCE are maintained and advanced also on the people-to-people level.

I have also appointed an advisory group of experts on the women, peace and security agenda. With their support, I hope that our work to mainstream the agenda will gain further momentum and continue long after we have passed the baton to Poland and successive OSCE Chairs.

Because we also need to keep an eye on the longer term. When we seek to lift our societies and economies after the pandemic, we need to build back better for a more equal and gender equal society. And we need to do it in

ways that have positive and lasting effects on the autonomy, resilience, and opportunities of women and girls.

And I fully share the German presidency's view that we need to engage young people in our work. We can only build a sustainable future if all generations are included. Inspiring and involving our young people is an investment in our common future.

I speak from personal experience. One of the things that inspired me as a young person was my participation here, in Strasbourg, as a member of the steering group of both the European Youth Foundation and the European Youth Centre. When I then started as a civil servant in the Government Offices, I continued my engagement in the Council of Europe, but changed my hat to representative of the Swedish Government.

Excellencies,

The Council of Europe was born from the ruins of World War II. The OSCE in the Cold War. Europe has come a long way since then, but important challenges remain. The pandemic reminds us that progress on security, prosperity, democracy and human rights cannot be taken for granted. It must be cultivated and maintained.

Here, we can learn from the men and women who had the courage and vision to seek common ground at those previous historical junctures. We owe it to them, to our citizens and to future generations to defend and nurture the ideals and values embodied in these two organizations.

Earlier this morning, I had the opportunity to discuss these issues with the Council of Europe Secretary-General. I thank her for her leadership and commitment.

As Chairperson-in-Office, I will do my part to defend the commitments on which the OSCE rests. When we reach the end of this year, I hope we can say that our efforts made a contribution to dialogue, understanding and peace among the OSCE nations. And to the justice and dignity of the people of our region.

Thank you.

Published 28 April 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Nationellt anförande om Syrien vid Brysselkonferensen

30 March 2021 (check against delivery)

Excellencies,

I would like to thank our hosts: the European Union and the UN.

We need to turn the coming decade for the Syrian people into a decade of peace, hope, and healing. Sweden stands ready to contribute, as we have done these last ten years. But for peace, refugee returns and reconstruction to be sustainable, there needs to be a political solution. We urge all parties to act responsibly and use their influence to this end. We fully support the efforts of Special Envoy Pedersen, including to ensure the full and effective participation of women.

Over the coming three years, we will increase Sweden's financial contribution through our regional aid strategy for the Syria crisis by more than thirty percent. We will continue to strengthen the resilience of the Syrian people and their host communities, in Syria and in the region. This includes supporting the neighbouring countries, which continue to show great generosity in hosting millions of refugees. We will also continue our substantial humanitarian efforts.

In total, Sweden pledges an initial 97 million US dollars to the Syria crisis response for 2021. In addition, we are one of the largest donors of core funding to the concerned UN agencies.

We will also strengthen our efforts to achieve accountability for the horrific crimes that have been, and continue to be committed, not least by the Syrian regime and Daesh. Fighting impunity and achieving justice for victims is fundamental in moving Syria towards sustainable peace and reconciliation.

Lastly, I urge the UN Security Council to assume its responsibility, renew the humanitarian cross-border mandate and reinstate former border crossings,

including to northeast Syria. Millions of lives depend on it.

Thank you.

Published 30 March 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Briefing by H.E. Ms. Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden and OSCE Chairperson- in-Office to the United Nations Security Council

10 March 2021 (check against delivery).

Madam President,

Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to brief the Council about the Swedish chairpersonship of the OSCE. As the world's largest regional security organisation under chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE plays an important role in many of the challenges on the Council's agenda. Our 57 members span three continents – North America, Asia and Europe: a diverse group of countries bound together by joint commitments dating back to the Helsinki Final Act of 1975.

Close collaboration between the UN and the OSCE remains essential, an example of the partnerships which the UN@75 declaration called on us all to strengthen. The Secretary General's vision for “networked multilateralism” gives new impetus to our partnership and provides a framework for how we can work together.

We have a security situation in the OSCE region that calls for more, not less, common solutions. Old rivalries continue to fuel conflicts and pose challenges to international peace and security. And new conflicts, crises and threats call for our increased attention – from climate change to cyber security.

We are in the midst of a historic and devastating pandemic which will have

long-term effects on the world.

As Chairperson-in-Office, I will do my part to ensure that the OSCE can make a real difference on the ground and to defend the principles on which the organisation rests. Ultimately, our efforts aim to contribute to resolving the conflicts and improving the lives of people in our region.

My first priority is to focus on the basic commitments and principles on which the OSCE was founded - the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe of 1990. These documents clearly state the sanctity of sovereignty, territorial integrity, the freedom from threat or use of force and the right of all states to choose their own security policy path.

Underpinning these documents are, of course, international law and the Charter of the United Nations. They are relevant not only to Europe, but globally. The participating States of the OSCE made commitments which constitute the foundation of the European security order and which remain valid and relevant to this day. Our task is to implement these commitments.

We will also seek to strengthen the OSCE's unique comprehensive concept of security, which makes a clear link between security and the respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This is a link well-known to the United Nations. Through this concept we will contribute to conflict resolution in our region in accordance with international law. We know that societies where human rights are fully enjoyed by all are more secure and with better prospects for sustainable, resilient and prosperous development. This is why the Women, Peace and Security agenda is a guiding theme of our chairpersonship.

Excellencies,

One of my main priorities as Chairperson-in-Office will be to seek continued engagement at the highest levels towards sustainable solutions to crises and conflicts in the region, in line with international law and with full respect for the OSCE principles and commitments

The crisis in and around Ukraine remains the most serious challenge to the European security order. It was therefore important for me to visit both Kyiv and the contact line in Donbass during my first trip as Chairperson.in Office in January.

Seven years into the crisis, it is clear that efforts towards conflict resolution need to intensify. As Chairperson-in-Office, I fully support the work of the

Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group to achieve a full implementation of the Minsk agreements and will seek to contribute to a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE commitments and principles respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

During my visit to the contact line, I saw first-hand the dedication and courage by which the women and men of the Special Monitoring Mission carried out their tasks on the ground. Their work is essential to the peace effort and must remain unimpeded throughout Ukraine.

The conflict also has dire humanitarian consequences and the cease-fire in force since July of last year should now pave the way for further steps to ease the burden on civilians. Recent violations of the cease-fire are deeply worrying. Respect for international law, including international humanitarian law is, of course, essential. As long as crossing points of the contact line remain closed, communities and families are separated, elderly struggle to receive care and access to government services is restricted for many citizens. I hereby reiterate my call to fully open the two new crossing points in Luhansk region on both sides of the contact line, as well as to re-open the existing ones. These were also some of my key messages during my recent visits to Kyiv and Moscow.

During my visit to Georgia in February I had the opportunity to meet President Zourabichvili and then-Prime Minister Gakharia and to reiterate the OSCE's full support for the Geneva International Discussions and related Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism formats. This dialogue process, co-chaired by the OSCE, UN, and EU, is another important example of UN-OSCE cooperation in conflict resolution.

In addition to meeting with leaders in both government and civil society, I also visited one of Georgia's administrative boundary lines in its conflict context, where I saw first-hand the need for increased contacts and communication between local communities. Together with the European Union, the UN and the OSCE should seek to step up our joint efforts to build the confidence necessary to bring the conflict closer to its resolution.

In my talks with President Sandu and other leaders in Moldova the prospects to move forward with talks in the 5+2 format and to continue building on the "Berlin plus" package were discussed. I also confirmed our readiness to hold 5+2 talks in Stockholm during the year.

This message was reiterated in my discussions with the representative from Transdniestria and was generally well received. Although I remain realistic, there may be some cause for cautious optimism to make progress on the Settlement Process during the year. But to make progress – full support of all parties to the conflict is needed.

The unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains a serious challenge to international peace and security. Last autumn, we witnessed a renewed outbreak of the armed conflict, resulting in thousands of casualties and immense suffering, including among civilians.

The cease-fire achieved in November with the assistance of Russia brought about a welcome stop to hostilities. Now we must seize this moment to renew efforts towards a lasting peace agreement. The OSCE has been given the international mandate to lead this process, under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs. As Chairperson-in-Office, I fully support their continued engagement in the peace process and I will use my visits to Baku and Yerevan next week to express my expectation that the sides recommit to talks on a sustainable political solution. We must also address a number of humanitarian needs, reminding us all of the need for implementation of international humanitarian law in this as in other conflicts.

Excellencies,

In situations where trust between States has eroded, confidence and security building measures play an important role to support transparency and predictability. As Chair, I call on all participating states of the OSCE to comply with the measures that are at the heart of confidence and security building in our region, including the Vienna Document and the Open Skies Treaty. These measures must be kept up to date and fully complied with and comprise as many States as possible to ensure their continued functioning and relevance.

When crises erupt despite our efforts to prevent them, I remain ready to engage directly with the stakeholders involved to offer the OSCE's good offices to facilitate solutions. In line with this, the offer that Albania's Prime Minister Rama as Chairperson-in-Office and I extended last year to facilitate a genuine dialogue between the government and opposition in Belarus still stands.

Secretary General Guterres' call for a global cease-fire during the pandemic is much needed. The adoption of resolution 2352 on the 1st of July 2020 and

the recent resolution 2565 on vaccine access in conflict areas shows the importance that this Council attaches to combatting the pandemic and resolving conflicts. It is my strong wish to see these resolutions implemented to support peace efforts in the OSCE region.

Unfortunately, the pandemic has added another layer of challenges by putting strains on open society. During this last year, we have seen a backsliding of democracy and respect for human rights in the OSCE region, as we have seen elsewhere. The Swedish Chairpersonship will emphasize the right to the freedom of expression and the freedom of media as well as other democratic rights which our states have committed to respect. As Chair, our efforts will be carried out in support of, and be complementary to, the important work done by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the High Commissioner for National Minorities.

Excellencies,

As Chair, we will draw on the expertise of civil society to ensure that their contributions inform all aspects of security. Before this meeting, I met with civil society organisations from across the OSCE region, including from countries affected by unresolved conflicts, to exchange views on the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Key takeaways were that impunity for sexual and gender-based violence prevails, and that the pandemic's negative effects on women's economic and social rights are especially hard felt for those in already vulnerable situations. The meeting reconfirmed my conviction of the need to involve civil society organisations in conflict resolution and peace building; to engage women in all parts of peace processes; and to address threats to civil society actors. Here, close cooperation between the UN and the OSCE in the field can make a difference.

Our strong focus on advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda will continue in the same spirit as during our tenure in this Council in 2017-2018. On this agenda we also plan to work together with UN Women, including on how to promote women's economic empowerment in our region. I have appointed an advisory group of experts on these issues, which held its first meeting at the end of February. Through their support, I hope that our work to mainstream the agenda will gain further momentum and continue long after we have passed the baton to Poland and successive OSCE Chairs.

Excellencies,

In the period ahead, I plan to visit OSCE field presences across our region from Southeastern Europe to Central Asia. I will continue to highlight the priorities outlined here today, while seeking common solutions to the challenges facing our region. We will continue to work for enhanced collaboration between the UN and the OSCE. Throughout the year, you can count on our commitment and efforts to defend and advance the OSCE agenda of peace, prosperity and respect for human rights.

Thank you very much.

Published 10 March 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement of Foreign Policy

On 24 February, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde presented the 2021 Statement of Foreign Policy in the Riksdag. Check against delivery.

Mr Speaker,

I want to begin this year's Statement of Foreign Policy by saying something that is obvious to us all.

Politics matters.

This year marks 100 years since women were first able to exercise their right to vote in a parliamentary election. This was the milestone that made Sweden a democracy. Democracy is something we take for granted, but it is still denied to the majority of the world's population.

The Government is working for an international order based on international law, with rules and agreements rather than 'might is right'. With our clear security policy line, solidarity-based aid, climate and environment investments, feminist foreign policy and strong trade policy, we not only safeguard our own country, but also contribute to peace, security and development, and democracy globally.

Mr Speaker,

The COVID-19 pandemic has claimed more than two million lives worldwide.

Sweden has pushed for global equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. Through the EU, we are part of the COVAX global vaccine cooperation initiative. The EU has mobilised EUR 853 million for COVAX, making it the largest donor. Sweden has contributed SEK 200 million and is participating in the efforts to strengthen COVAX's access to vaccine supplies.

To secure vaccine supplies for the European Economic Area countries,

Sweden has undertaken to sell vaccines on to Norway, Iceland and Switzerland.

Mr Speaker,

As Chair of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2021, Sweden is standing up for the European security order based on international law and the UN Charter. We want to highlight the relationship that the OSCE identifies between respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and security within and between states.

The unresolved conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Ukraine, Georgia and Transnistria are examples of the consequences of disregarding the European security order. These challenges also affect Sweden.

Mr Speaker,

The EU is Sweden's most important foreign and security policy arena. In an uncertain world, the EU must be a strong voice for peace, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

A well-functioning EU is a prerequisite for Sweden's welfare. The majority of our trade is with other EU Member States, and at EU level we can strengthen the green transition and safeguard jobs.

The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement lays the foundations for an important future partnership. The Government intends to deepen Sweden's and the EU's relations with the UK, including in the area of foreign and security policy.

Nordic cooperation is important, but is facing severe trials during the COVID-19 pandemic. Cooperation with the Baltic States is also of great importance to our region and our common security. The Government has presented a new strategy for the Arctic region.

The countries of the Western Balkans are an important part of the EU's neighbourhood.

Turkey plays a key role for the EU. We will support the democratic forces in Turkey and be clear in our criticism of human rights violations in the country and Turkey's actions in its neighbourhood.

The UN remains a cornerstone of Swedish foreign policy, and we remain an

influential voice in the UN.

In the follow-up to the declaration commemorating the 75th anniversary of the UN – which was adopted following negotiations led by Sweden and Qatar – we showed that it is possible to agree on an ambitious way forward to strengthen the UN.

The value of the UN's actions to alleviate suffering and prevent hunger cannot be overestimated. As one of the world's largest donors, Sweden supports the UN's work in a number of humanitarian crises. Last year's Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the World Food Programme – proof that the UN's work makes a difference.

Mr Speaker,

Sweden's foreign and security policy builds on cohesion in the EU and cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic and Baltic Sea regions, in the UN and the OSCE, and with NATO. A strong transatlantic link is important for the security of Europe and the United States.

Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or a Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. We must therefore be able to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military.

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. It requires an active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy combined with enhanced defence cooperation – particularly with Finland – and credible national defence capabilities. We will contribute to long-term stability and security in our part of Europe.

The security situation in Sweden's neighbourhood and in Europe has deteriorated over time. In response to this trend, a historic investment in total defence is under way, and we are continuing to reinforce our international defence and security policy cooperation.

Through our participation in civilian and military operations in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali and Ukraine, Sweden is contributing to security, preventing conflicts and creating the conditions for sustainable development. This engagement is an important part of our solidarity-based security policy and contributes to common security.

Mr Speaker,

It is currently more important than it has been for some time to pursue a feminist foreign policy to promote women's and girls' rights. Several countries have now followed Sweden's example.

The Government has given additional support totalling more than SEK 260 million globally to counteract the effects of the pandemic on activities linked to sexual and reproductive health and rights, for example.

Sweden has taken on a leading role in the global Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights. Sweden will work for women's and girls' economic empowerment, including through the introduction of social and economic reforms and gender equality in the labour market.

The women, peace and security agenda is an important priority of Sweden's term as Chair of the OSCE.

Mr Speaker,

The ongoing pandemic affects our consular work. In the spring of 2020, the consular efforts of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs helped bring around 9 000 stranded Swedes home on 400 transports.

The Swedish Foreign Service works constantly and intensively on the most difficult consular cases. We always have the best interests of the individual in mind, and we will never give up our efforts.

Mr Speaker,

The United States has elected a new president, and his statements on cooperation with allies and partners are important for us in Sweden and the EU.

There are many areas in which we can renew and deepen our cooperation, including security policy and multilateralism, trade, the green transition and new technologies, democracy, and gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The Government plans to adopt new strategies for development cooperation in Latin America in the first half of 2021.

The Government is monitoring the consequences of the demonstrations in

Chile and the work to draw up a new constitution.

Sweden is working, through both the EU and the UN, to support a negotiated political solution in Venezuela.

Mr Speaker,

The Government supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and every country's right to choose its security policy path. Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its illegal annexation of Crimea are unacceptable. These violations of international law undermine the European security order and are grounds for continued sanctions against Russia.

Where we have common interests we can and should cooperate with Russia. One example of this is the Council of the Baltic Sea States, in which cooperation with Russia works well. At the same time, we are concerned at the negative trends in terms of human rights and civil society space in Russia, and we condemn violations of international law and poisonings.

The fraudulent election and the brutal abuses committed by the regime in Belarus are unacceptable. Along with the other EU Member States, we have introduced targeted sanctions against those responsible.

The challenges that have marked the EU's eastern neighbourhood over the last year make EU engagement in the region through the Eastern Partnership more important than it has been for some time.

Mr Speaker,

A year ago, I visited Yemen. It was clear how much Sweden's engagement is appreciated. Sweden continues to provide comprehensive humanitarian aid to Yemen's long-suffering population and support to the UN-led peace process.

The conflict in Syria remains one of the world's most serious crises. The only way to achieve peace in Syria is through a political solution.

The Government values relations with both Israel and Palestine. Sweden is working with the EU for the resumption of meaningful negotiations between Israel and Palestine and a resolution based on international law in which two states can coexist in peace and security.

Preserving the nuclear deal with Iran is essential to non-proliferation and the

security situation in the Middle East. Iran must resume full compliance and the United States must rejoin. We also underscore the serious human rights situation in Iran.

Sweden has a comprehensive and longstanding commitment to peace, democracy and development in Africa. In Ethiopia, the conflict in Tigray threatens to undermine the country's democratic development, with far-reaching regional consequences. In Sudan, the political transition continues under a civilian-led transitional government after 30 years of authoritarian rule.

The security situation in the Sahel is cause for great concern. In August, a military coup took place in Mali. A transitional government is now in place and general elections are due to be held in 2022. Sweden contributes to security and development in the Sahel.

Mr Speaker,

Asia's growing importance means opportunities for trade and investment, green technology and innovation. The Government is developing its cooperation with countries such as India, Japan and South Korea. Sweden also has a role to play in conflict resolution and disarmament on the Korean Peninsula. The coup in Myanmar is unacceptable and the Government condemns it.

China's international significance affects Sweden and Swedish interests to a growing extent. Sweden and the EU see global challenges that we can only address together with China – such as climate change, health and a functioning and fair free trade order. While cooperation is important, we will take action against security-threatening activity directed at Sweden and Swedish companies. We engage in a frank and open dialogue with China in which human rights and freedom of expression are key aspects.

The Government is particularly concerned about the shrinking democratic space in Hong Kong. Hong Kong residents' human rights must be respected.

Sweden must increase its knowledge of China. The national knowledge centre on China began its activities in January this year.

The Government looks positively on increased trade cooperation with China and welcomes the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment.

Mr Speaker,

It is concerning that democracy is being challenged in many parts of the world. Growing authoritarian forces are often linked to economic and social disparities.

Through the Drive for Democracy initiative, 600 activities have reached 1.7 million people. We have held 70 Democracy Talks, providing a platform for civil society, trade union members, LGBTIQ people and women's rights activists. Swedish democracy assistance has increased in recent years.

The internet has opened up new possibilities to participate in democracy, but it has also lowered thresholds for those seeking to curtail democracy and freedom of expression. For this reason, the Government will initiate a dialogue with platform providers to discuss how they can work with civil society to combat threats and hate, strengthen democracy and protect human rights on the internet.

Antisemitism on social media is one of several important themes that will be covered at the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism.

To address the shrinking space for trade union organisations, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs intends to implement continuing professional development initiatives in this area. The Swedish Global Deal initiative promotes good labour market relations.

Organised crime is a major challenge for our society. The violence expressed in shootings and explosions is only one aspect of organised crime. This type of crime often has clear international connections.

Work is now under way to determine how our missions abroad can assist law enforcement authorities. Five embassies have been specially tasked with developing the capacity of the Swedish Foreign Service.

Mr Speaker,

The threat of nuclear weapons is a critical issue. The Stockholm Initiative is one of the leading political initiatives for nuclear disarmament.

The decision of the United States and Russia to extend the New START disarmament treaty is especially welcome. The world cannot afford another nuclear arms race.

Just over a month ago, the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear

Weapons entered into force. I have written to the UN to reaffirm Sweden's intention to participate as an observer.

Sweden's disarmament policy should continue to be informed by a strong knowledge base in the future. For this reason, a national knowledge centre for research on nuclear disarmament is now being established at Uppsala University at the Government's initiative.

A future scenario of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) that do not comply with international law must be avoided. With the objective of an effective international ban, Sweden is actively participating in the important work within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Sweden will take the lead in implementing the 2030 Agenda. It is our roadmap towards a stronger, more resilient and sustainable world. The Government is continuing its efforts to promote international corporate social responsibility.

Sweden's development assistance is effective and world-class, and the Government remains committed to the target of one per cent of GNI.

Mr Speaker,

The climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, and depletion and pollution of the world's oceans are global and cross-border issues that affect us all. They threaten to irreversibly alter the conditions for humankind, exacerbate famine and increase the number of conflicts and pandemics around the world.

Next year, Sweden will host the global high-level meeting Stockholm+50.

We will continue to lead the way through our own transition to a fossil-free society and via our climate diplomacy.

The Government has tasked the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) with enhancing efforts to promote the sustainable use of biodiversity.

Mr Speaker,

The Government is strengthening the promotion of strategic investment in Sweden to improve our competitiveness. Sweden should work for a stronger

link between the Paris Agreement and trade. Sweden's trade policy should contribute to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement, and to sustainable development and the green transition. The Government wants to see more ambitious sustainability chapters in EU free trade agreements.

With their worldwide presence, Swedish companies have not only great opportunities, but also a responsibility to strengthen respect for human rights. We will highlight ways in which international regulatory frameworks for export credits should contribute to achieving the global sustainable development goals and the Paris Agreement.

A key factor in responding to the pandemic has been to secure access to staff, equipment and medicines. For this reason, a well-functioning single market with freedom of movement and free trade is critical.

Mr Speaker,

I began this year's Statement of Foreign Policy by looking to the past, so let me conclude by looking to the future. We face a decade of possibilities.

Technological advances are apparent in the green transition and in vaccines being developed at record speed. Social progress has resulted in a global increase in prosperity in which millions of people have been lifted out of poverty. What must now follow is political transformation, because without politics and without democracy and freedom for people, technological advances and social progress are to no avail.

Let me therefore conclude with a passage from American poet Amanda Gorman's reading at Joe Biden's presidential inauguration in the United States.

“But while democracy can be periodically delayed, it can never be permanently defeated. In this truth, in this faith, we trust, for while we have our eyes on the future, history has its eyes on us.”

Published 24 February 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Presentation by Chairperson-in-Office and Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde on Sweden's Chairpersonship programme and priorities for the OSCE to its Permanent Council

Vienna, 14 January 2021 (check against delivery)

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Dear Colleagues.

It is an honour to officially launch the Swedish Chairpersonship of the OSCE, 28 years after we last held this role. The situation in Europe today is very different from that faced by our region in the 1990s. New conflicts, crises and threats have emerged – from climate change to cyber security and pandemics. The importance of our organisation and our commitments does, however, remain intact.

In a situation where multilateral cooperation and international law are increasingly being challenged, and our agreements and instruments to strengthen security are being questioned, we need to remind ourselves why we designed them in the first place.

Sweden is convinced that multilateral cooperation is the best way to address our common challenges. Sweden has shown that we are ready to shoulder our responsibility for the multilateral system before.

The experiences from our time on the UN Security Council show that, through dedicated diplomacy, it is possible to make a difference. It is with this mindset and experience that we take on the task of leading the OSCE for the coming year.

Through the shared commitments on which the OSCE was founded, the link between security and respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law is crystal clear. Together we have declared all OSCE principles and commitments to be matters of immediate and legitimate concern to all participating States. By holding each other accountable, we make sure that our commitments remain relevant. By honouring our commitments, we make sure that our region is safe. This is where the unique value of our organisation lies.

During the coming year, I will do my part to ensure that the OSCE can make a real difference on the ground and to defend the principles on which our organisation was founded. I will do this as an honest broker, representing all participating States. I will work to support discussions and measures that can lead to sustainable conflict resolution. But being an honest broker also means that I will not shy away from pointing out violations of our commonly agreed principles.

Ultimately, our priorities aim to contribute to resolving the conflicts in our region. Threats to international peace and security, as well as the suffering caused by conflicts, are simply unacceptable. We therefore need to keep the resolution of the conflicts in our region at the top of our agenda.

Excellencies,

My first priority as Chairperson-in-Office will be to focus on our common principles and joint commitments. The Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris For a New Europe constitute the foundation of the European security order. They contain the elements we need to resolve conflicts and avoid future crises. Upholding these commitments is our shared responsibility and should be in the interests of all OSCE participating States. Underpinning the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter are, of course, international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

As Chairperson-in-Office, I will also prioritise upholding the OSCE concept of comprehensive security. Political and economic security, human rights, democracy, the rule of law and equality are interrelated and interconnected. The notion that security depends on issues that are broader than ‘hard security’ is as powerful as it is simple.

We know that states that implement human rights commitments and respect democratic principles are more secure and able to provide better economic prospects and living conditions for their citizens.

The OSCE has unique instruments to support participating States in living up to our commitments. The autonomous institutions – the office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the representative on Freedom of the Media and the High Commissioner on National Minorities – each have clear and strong mandates. I am grateful to the Albanian Chair for successfully managing the process of appointing new executive leaderships for these institutions. I would like to point out that our work as Chair will be carried out in support of, and complementary to, the work of these institutions.

The conflict cycle, devised and decided by all of us ten years ago, remains as relevant as ever and we will seek to utilise it in our efforts to resolve and prevent conflicts and crises. The important Confidence and Security Building Measures linked to the OSCE are under increasing pressure. We will support the FSC chairs to ensure their continued functioning and relevance.

When crises erupt despite our efforts to prevent them, I will remain ready to engage directly with the stakeholders involved to offer the OSCE's good offices to facilitate solutions. I will also make good use of the troika format, to ensure political continuity. In line with this, the offer extended by Prime Minister Rama as CiO and I extend last year to facilitate a genuine dialogue between the government and opposition in Belarus last year still stands, should the conditions for such talks materialise.

Excellencies,

Comprehensive security can only be achieved if everyone in our populations is included. As CiO, I will also focus on strengthening gender equality in all aspects of the organisation's work. In line with this, we will seek to strengthen women's economic empowerment. If this can be achieved, we will not only see stronger economic development across our region, but women will increasingly enjoy full human rights. The economic empowerment of women is a key aspect of viable societies, just as the meaningful inclusion of women in conflict-resolution efforts strengthens the prospects for sustainable peace. This is fully in line with UN Security Council resolution 1325 and the agenda for women, peace and security, which will also be important priorities of our term as Chair.

Democracy needs to be defended consistently. As I recalled in response to events in Washington last week, we all need to stand up for our democratic principles.

Our joint commitment to civil society participation in the OSCE is strong and unique. Safeguarding this will be a priority for me as Chairperson-in-Office. The voices of civil society are beneficial to participating States and to the organisation as they help us implement our joint commitments. The perspectives and contributions of civil society are valuable in the work of all three dimensions and bring added value to exchanges within the OSCE.

The OSCE's presence on the ground through field missions is another crucial way it contributes to conflict resolution and improving security and democratic conditions for the people in our region. As CiO, I plan to visit as many of the field offices and missions as possible, the pandemic permitting. I will want to follow up their work to strengthen gender equality and the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, increasing women's meaningful participation in conflict resolution efforts.

Excellencies,

Contributing to and supporting conflict resolution is a strong priority for the Swedish term as Chair. Last year's outbreak of armed conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, its heavy death toll and human suffering made abundantly clear the risks inherent when conflicts remain unresolved. In this case, the OSCE has a vital role to play in conflict settlement, including on the ground. The Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office have our full support.

The most blatant example of violations of our common commitments and of international law remains the crisis in and around Ukraine. As Chair, Sweden recognises the vital importance of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and will seek to contribute to the ongoing efforts in the Normandy Format and the Trilateral Contact Group to find a sustainable political solution to the conflict. This must be done in line with OSCE principles and commitments, in full respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

We will continue to reaffirm strongly that the SMM is mandated to have safe and secure access without restrictions throughout Ukraine and recall that the SMM must be provided with the conditions necessary for the implementation of its mandate. Already next week, I will travel to Ukraine to meet with Ukrainian officials as well as with Special Representative Grau, the SMM and the PCU to assess the situation and support the efforts for sustainable conflict resolution.

As with Ukraine, we will play an active role in the Geneva International Discussions and the related Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism regarding Georgia. We will also act in support of the Transdniestrian Settlement Process. Here too, the Special Representative will play a key role, as will the OSCE Mission to Moldova. Unfortunately, an OSCE field presence has not been possible in Georgia for over ten years.

In all conflicts, we will call for respect for international law, including international humanitarian law. We will back measures to mitigate the humanitarian consequences and advocate an inclusive approach.

Excellencies,

We have lived through an extraordinarily difficult year, with the COVID-19 pandemic affecting all our countries as well as international cooperation, in general. Although vaccines are now being distributed and there is light at the end of the tunnel, we are still facing a challenging time over the coming months.

I am grateful to Albania for its leadership in finding solutions to keeping the fundamental tasks of the OSCE functional, even during this situation. We will build on their efforts to ensure that the OSCE continues to deliver both political accountability – through the work of our delegations, the secretariat and the institutions – and assistance to participating States through the crucial role of the OSCE field missions and autonomous institutions.

I hope that activities will be able to gradually return to normal during the year. In December, I look forward to welcoming your ministers to the Ministerial Council in Stockholm. As was shown by the successful Ministerial Council meeting in Tirana, crisis can also spur innovation. Some of the new ways of working that were introduced by the Albanian Chair will also inspire us to conduct an efficient and successful meeting.

The OSCE is only as effective as we, the participating States, allow it to be. Too often, important decisions are blocked by the opposition of a few. The negotiations for the Unified Budget is one such example that has an impact on the ability of the whole organisation to deliver on its mandate. We stand ready to do our part in leading the negotiations, and I urge all of you to engage constructively.

Excellencies,

I am under no illusions that progress will be easy or that I, as Chairperson-in-Office, will be able to bridge all the gaps that exist in our organisation. My role as Chairperson-in-Office will be to support and facilitate steps that can increase trust and security. In doing so, I will leave no stone unturned.

In the end, it is about our commitments, our security and our OSCE.

Thank you.

Published 15 January 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

National statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde at the Conference on Disarmament

Geneva, 24 February 2020 Check against delivery.

President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

We cannot take a passive stance on the nuclear threat.

A worsening global security environment has led to milestone treaties and agreements being abandoned or facing an uncertain future and new nuclear capabilities being developed.

Long-established norms are being challenged, as is the integrity of multilateral institutions.

The current polarization and paralysis of multilateral disarmament frameworks are both deeply worrying and dangerous. The absence of trust is moving states further apart from each other in areas where agreement and cooperation are crucial.

This year marks the 75th commemoration of the nuclear bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It should serve as a reminder of the indisputable fact that one single nuclear explosion causes catastrophic humanitarian consequences.

Our collective goal of a world free from nuclear weapons is more relevant than ever – yet it remains distant.

Consequently, disarmament and non-proliferation remain a central foreign and security policy priority for the Swedish government.

President,

We are meeting today in the Council Chamber of the Palais des Nations in

Geneva, the seat of the Conference on Disarmament. For well over two decades, this forum has not conducted any negotiations, nor has it been able to agree on something seemingly obvious – its own programme of work.

Regrettably, the beginning of this year's session of the CD has been no exception. Nevertheless, I welcome your announcement made last Friday, Mr President, that we may be close to an agreement on a programme of work already this week. I would therefore like to echo your call for common sense to prevail. We have a shared responsibility to revive an ossified disarmament diplomacy.

President,

On 5 March we will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty entering into force. This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the treaty's indefinite extension. It is an historic occasion for a treaty that has served our collective security very well for decades.

The NPT constitutes the cornerstone of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. It has been successful in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, laying the foundation for significant reductions in nuclear arsenals and facilitating the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It is truly an impressive achievement.

The 2020 NPT Review Conference will begin in less than two months.

The Review Conference provides an opportunity for states parties to strengthen the NPT. This opportunity must be seized.

I would like to congratulate and warmly welcome Ambassador Gustavo Zlauvinen who was recently nominated President-designate of the conference. I am confident that he will steer the states parties in the right direction and will receive full support and cooperation.

President,

Tomorrow my colleague the German Minister of Foreign Affairs Heiko Maas and I will co-chair the second Ministerial Meeting of the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament.

This initiative brings together 16 non-nuclear weapon states at a high political level. We are united in our engagement to strengthen the NPT. We strive to mobilize political momentum for an ambitious yet realistic outcome

of the Review Conference and beyond, with particular focus on disarmament.

This should not be interpreted as a lack of engagement on the other NPT pillars. The Review Conference will need a balanced outcome which includes all three pillars. They are an indispensable part of the NPT fabric: important and mutually reinforcing. They all need to be part of a consensus package.

The disarmament-related commitments and obligations from past Review Conferences – notably in 1995, 2000 and 2010 – remain valid. Several are still outstanding and should be implemented urgently.

The main features of the Stockholm Initiative can be described through six C:s.

Common ground - the explicit purpose of the Stockholm Initiative is to build political support for a pragmatic and result-oriented disarmament agenda within the NPT framework. The Initiative aims to reach common ground and promote a successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference.

Compatibility - the Stockholm Initiative does not seek to replace any other initiatives or groupings that already exist. Instead, it seeks to complement others by building broad political support for an ambitious and realistic disarmament agenda. There are many points of convergence where various initiatives and groupings could reinforce each other in the run-up to and at the Review Conference.

Composition - the Stockholm Initiative brings together a quite diverse group of sixteen engaged non-nuclear weapon states – we have different geographic perspectives and security policy profiles. This is in itself a source of strength and credibility because it requires a degree of internal bridge-building and a constructive mindset, which also must be applied among the broader NPT membership ahead of the Review Conference.

Collaboration - the Stockholm Initiative has a collaborative and inclusive approach. It is an invitation to all states parties to the NPT - nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states - to engage in a result-oriented dialogue. All state parties must be ready get out of their "comfort zones" and engage in a spirit of compromise in order to reach concrete results. I look forward to broad outreach by members of the initiative in the weeks to come.

Concept – a crucial part of the Stockholm Initiative is the steppingstones approach which can be best described as an action-oriented methodology. It takes a new look at the traditional disarmament agenda – in breaking down long-standing items into more digestible parts - it seeks to identify "actionable" measures which are within reach in the current security environment.

Confidence-building - the Stockholm Initiative also tries to support rebuilding of trust. The absence of trust between states is a major barrier to disarmament progress. The steppingstones approach seeks to re-build mutual confidence by engaging key actors in a practical, rather than normative, incremental process. It seeks to engage states in a cooperative and inclusive process moving in a positive direction – through concrete steps – towards disarmament.

By identifying and implementing short-term measures we can mitigate current risks but also pave the way for further steps and progress on nuclear disarmament –this is the essence of the approach. Our meeting in Berlin tomorrow will be the occasion – at Ministerial level– to agree upon the political message and the steppingstones we jointly want to bring to the Review Conference.

Already in the Stockholm Declaration, the founding document of the initiative, we identified potential areas such as;

more transparent and responsible declaratory policies,
measures to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in doctrines and policies,
ways of enhancing transparency and of reducing risks of any use of nuclear weapons,
strengthened negative security assurances,
work on nuclear disarmament verification, and
the importance of addressing the production of fissile material.
From a Swedish perspective - a comprehensive approach should be applied with steppingstones being adopted in each of these mutually reinforcing categories.

What we need is a political leadership, constructive engagement on substance and contributions from all states parties. The nuclear weapon states have a special responsibility in this regard.

President,

Overcoming the present crisis in strategic arms control is desperately needed. I call upon the United States and Russia to come to an early agreement of the extension of New START. This treaty is a crucial component of global security and would provide a key scene setter for the Review Conference.

I am convinced that progress is possible, even in challenging times. We can - with strong political will and forward-looking mindset - start the journey of unlocking disarmament diplomacy through delivering upon commitments.

We should take the chance.

I thank you!

Published 24 February 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

National statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde at the High-Level Segment of the 43rd session of the Human Rights Council

24 February 2020, Geneva Check against delivery.

Thank you, Madam President, High Commissioner, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

This is the first time I have addressed the Human Rights Council. It is a great honour.

I would like to begin by stating three things.

First, that Sweden reaffirms its support to the Human Rights Council and its unique and important role to address, prevent and remedy human rights violations and abuses. We continue to safeguard the independence of the Office of the High Commissioner and the special procedures.

Second, that we, in this hall, represent a world where human rights are being pushed back and democracy is in decline. This is a global trend that warrants our urgent action just as the Secretary General spoke of this morning when presenting his Call to Action on Human Rights. Which Sweden fully supports. Let us all keep in mind that our obligations as states are towards the individual as the rights bearer and that all our work should be guided by a Human Rights Based Approach.

Third, that multilateral cooperation and dialogue are needed more than ever. It is when we disagree that we need to come closer. Talk more. Try our utmost to build support for democratic values.

And against this background, I wish to add a fourth point: Sweden's response.

Madam President,

The first one, you already know. Few world leaders have not heard of Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy. Some of you may think: do we need to hear this again?

To you I say: yes, actually, you do.

Because half of the world's population still does not enjoy the same rights, representation and resources as the other half.

As long as women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights is considered less important to that of men and boys, the world stands to lose.

It stands to lose in terms of peace and security. It stands to lose in terms of economic development.

And it stands to lose in terms of democratic participation and social justice.

Not applying a feminist perspective simply means losing out on half of the potential human capital. What nation in today's world can afford that?

So, Sweden will continue pushing for respect for women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights. This includes women's equal participation in political, economic and social life, and not least sexual and reproductive health and rights for all – a crucial prerequisite for the enjoyment of other rights.

It is our firm position that every person should have the right to decide freely over their own body, sexuality and reproduction, free from discrimination, coercion and violence.

These efforts are especially important this year, which marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the 20th anniversary of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and the 5th anniversary of the Sustainable Development Goals. This is a year of delivery.

We will also continue to push for the protection of the human rights of LGBTI persons. Sweden's position is crystal clear: human rights are universal and apply to all.

Everyone must be able to fully enjoy their human rights whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity.

It is the duty of states to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all persons, without discrimination of any kind.

Madam President,

The second initiative Sweden offers in response to today's global challenges is our Drive for Democracy.

For years, the protection and promotion of human rights, multilateral cooperation and the rules-based international order has been the foreign policy identity of Sweden.

Today, we are facing new challenges.

Three decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, liberal democracy is coming under increasing pressure – in all parts of the world, even in stable democracies.

People's frustration is growing. Social and economic inequality, corruption and lack of a genuine social contract are fuelling this frustration and sowing the seeds of discord. Populism is on the rise.

Civil society and the free media are seeing their legitimate space shrink.

These are dangerous trends.

This is why my Government has added this new focus area to our foreign policy. The Drive for Democracy initiative cuts across our comprehensive foreign policy engagement. It runs parallel with our feminist foreign policy, and the two agendas are mutually reinforcing.

We will work with countries, multilateral organisations and civil society to highlight the role of democracy in equality, participation, sustainable development, inclusive growth, governance, human rights and security. Action to promote and strengthen the role of political parties and media freedom is crucial in this regard.

Trade union rights are also a key component of our Drive for Democracy. In certain countries, standing up for trade unions and decent working conditions means risking your life. This is unacceptable.

As part of the Drive, we will emphasize the rule of law – from the democratic fundamentals of legislation to combatting corruption to fighting for accountability. I have directed the Foreign Service to increase its contribution to the fight against organized crime – that parasitic drain on democratic societies.

Madam President,

I would like to conclude by saying this:

Democracy is being eroded, so Sweden is mobilising.

Human rights are being challenged, so Sweden is strengthening its resolve.

Throughout the entire Swedish Foreign Service, we are stepping up our efforts to strengthen democracy and human rights. We want to strengthen the conversation about the principles of democracy, the merits of democracy, and the urgent need to safeguard democracy.

We will ask you all – governments, international organisations and civil society actors – to engage with us.

Because global conversations, dialogue and cooperation are needed more than ever.

This is how we build peace and security. Sustainable and inclusive growth. Freedom and justice.

This is standing up for human rights.

Thank you.

Published 24 February 2020



2020 Statement of Foreign Policy

On 12 February, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde presented the 2020 Statement of Foreign Policy in the Riksdag. Check against delivery.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sweden's foreign policy is conducted with the aim of creating security in our country and around the world.

The conflicts, climate emergency and refugee flows of recent years show that events far from our national borders also affect us in Sweden.

The world is becoming increasingly unpredictable – and it's getting closer. The ongoing coronavirus outbreak shows how interconnected the world is.

There are those who think we should close the door to cooperation. As if the problems would disappear if we just shut our eyes. I am convinced that we must respond to a troubled world by increasing cooperation and solidarity. International problems require international responses.

People around the world are demonstrating for freedom and justice. The climate movement brings millions of people together on the streets. We have a responsibility to listen to their urgent calls.

Well-functioning international cooperation and international law are the foundation of an international order in which rules and agreements take precedence over the concept of 'might is right'. This order is necessary for Sweden to be safe and secure.

We stand up for diplomacy, dialogue and cooperation. This is how we defend our interests, values and security. This is how we make the world safer.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The EU is our most important foreign and security policy arena. No other actor is a greater guarantor of Sweden's economy, security and peace. Sweden will participate fully in EU cooperation and in shaping it in a way that safeguards Sweden's interests.

The United Kingdom has now left the EU and the time has come to look to the future. Sweden will continue to maintain as close and comprehensive a relationship as possible with the United Kingdom.

We are also strengthening relations with leading Member States, such as Germany and France, and enhancing Nordic cooperation. This makes our region more secure and sustainable. In the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Government is pushing for implementation of the common vision that the Nordic region will become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030.

A renewed Arctic Strategy will be presented during the year.

For several years, the rule of law and respect for the EU's fundamental values have been undermined in some Member States. Together with the European Commission and other Member States, Sweden takes a clear stand against this trend.

Many people today are concerned that EU enlargement is moving too fast. We take this seriously. At the same time, close relations with the countries of the Western Balkans are important to our common security and economy. We want to find a way forward that unites the EU and that clearly contributes to reform efforts in the Western Balkans. Here, the prospect of eventually becoming a member is important.

The European Commission has previously proposed that negotiations be started with Albania and North Macedonia. Sweden has been prepared to support this.

Sweden supports the proposal for a review of the enlargement process, and it is important that all essential requirements are met before a country can become a member.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Diplomacy is our primary line of defence.

The Defence Commission emphasises the importance of safeguarding our sovereignty and Swedish interests. This means being able to use all the instruments we have at our disposal – political, diplomatic, economic and military – in a coherent manner. This is how we build common security.

I would like to express special thanks to the Swedes taking part in our civilian and military operations in areas such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali and Ukraine. You are making an invaluable contribution to peace and security – internationally and in Sweden.

Europe must take greater responsibility for its own security.

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy must be strengthened so as to defend the EU's interests and values around the world.

Our security is strengthened by stability and economic growth in the EU's neighbourhood. We stand by our commitments to support reform processes in Ukraine and other countries in the EU's eastern neighbourhood.

The Eastern Partnership recently reached its 10-year milestone. Sweden will continue to promote the Partnership in the EU.

We also want to show that a southern partnership is possible. Close cooperation with the countries of North Africa is already in place. But this must be enhanced and the EU must provide support for the stability and development of these states.

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. It requires an active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy combined with enhanced defence cooperation – particularly with Finland – and credible national defence capabilities. We will contribute to long-term stability and security in our part of Europe.

Rapid technological advances, not least within cyber security and AI, are creating new challenges in the grey area between competitiveness, trade and security policy.

Sweden's foreign and security policy builds on cohesion in the EU and

increased cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic and Baltic Sea regions, in the UN and the OSCE, and through partnership with NATO. A strong transatlantic link is important for the security of Europe and the United States.

The UN plays an important role for peace and security, development and human rights, and is a central arena for Sweden's response to global challenges. The UN will remain a cornerstone of our foreign and security policy. We support Norway's candidacy for a seat on the United Nations Security Council.

Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or a Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. We must therefore be able to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military.

Sweden's role as Chair of the OSCE in 2021 will be based on our strong engagement for the European security order. Upholding the OSCE's jointly agreed principles and commitments is a major security interest for Sweden.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Everyone has the right to live in safety regardless of where they live. This applies both here at home and in other countries. No one should need to look anxiously over their shoulder on their way home from school or work.

Since autumn 2014, the Government has implemented a range of measures against organised crime, including stricter penalties and more police officers, and has also conducted important crime prevention activities.

But we know that this kind of crime also has links abroad.

We are therefore introducing new initiatives to reinforce law enforcement via our embassies and international cooperation.

We will appoint an ambassador at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs tasked with coordinating the MFA's work against organised crime and supporting Swedish law enforcement authorities.

Our embassies will be instructed to monitor the issue of crime with links to Sweden. Our embassies in places such as the Western Balkans, the South Caucasus and Latin America will be specially tasked with prioritising this

issue.

The Government will continue the successful efforts against organised crime in the Council of the Baltic Sea States and within the framework of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the EU Eastern Partnership and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Sweden will enhance efforts to stop the flow of weapons and drugs, and take new steps against cross-border crime and terrorism. Europol and Eurojust are central to this work.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Global warming is affecting us here and now.

It is not just a matter of direct consequences of more extreme weather – an unstable climate also disrupts the economy, food security and our welfare and security.

Climate change exacerbates tensions and conflicts. Sweden will continue to show leadership through climate diplomacy that encourages other countries to raise their ambitions.

The EU is a necessary force in global climate action. Sweden will continue to show leadership both in and outside the EU and will be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. Our climate efforts are ranked the highest in the world. We have doubled our contribution to the Green Climate Fund. We are working at home and internationally for a just transition.

Functioning ecosystems are essential for all life. Forests, wetlands and oceans are home to a rich biodiversity. The marine environment is under enormous pressure from climate change, overexploitation, pollution and eutrophication. The Government wants to see a global target of 30 per cent of oceans designated as marine protection areas.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Democracy around the world continues to be challenged and questioned.

This trend is threatening the foundation of our safety and security. Sweden is therefore increasing its efforts to defend and promote democracy around the

world through the Drive For Democracy initiative.

We are building alliances with like-minded countries and organisations that want to help strengthen democracy. The appropriation to democracy aid has been increased.

We are increasing support to ensure open societies, particularly for free and independent media and freedom of the press.

We are defending and promoting the rights of LGBTI people.

We are strengthening our measures to combat corruption, which is one of the worst obstacles to development. All suspicions of corruption in aid are followed up and addressed.

We are boosting the significance of trade as a platform for dialogue on human rights and democracy. Swedish export credits for investment in exploration and exploitation of fossil fuels must cease by 2022.

Increasing antisemitism is a growing concern all over the world and a threat to democracy. The Prime Minister has therefore taken the initiative to hold an international conference in Malmö in October 2020 for Holocaust remembrance and combating antisemitism.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The rights of women and girls are under attack. Conservative forces are trying to restrict the right of women and girls to decide over their own bodies and lives.

Issues relating to women, peace and security, as well as women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, are especially important to stand up for.

To reverse this trend, courageous action is needed at all levels. This is why we are pursuing a feminist foreign policy.

It is gratifying that we have been joined by countries such as Canada, France, Luxembourg and Mexico.

Within the EU, Sweden and France have taken the initiative to improve the effectiveness of the EU's gender equality work, and we are establishing a

feminist trade policy.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Around the world, more than 165 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. The 2030 Agenda provides a roadmap for sustainable development that permeates Sweden's work. Sweden's development assistance is effective and world-class. The Government remains committed to the 1 per cent goal.

War is a catastrophe for people and societies. Children are often the worst affected. Here at home, in the UN and in the EU, Sweden is working to safeguard rights and strengthen the protection of children.

It is important that the EU has a common asylum system that provides legal certainty, is humane and sustainable, and in which all countries take their responsibility. The right to asylum must be protected.

Extreme poverty has been falling since 1990, but inequality is rising.

Inequality is not only unjust and a barrier to economic development – it also creates a breeding ground for tensions and conflict. We have seen examples of this in several major demonstrations around the world, not least in Chile. Greater equality is part of Sweden's foreign policy.

The Global Deal initiative promotes social dialogue and sustainable growth globally. In certain countries, standing up for trade unions and decent working conditions means risking your life. Trade union rights are part of our Drive for Democracy and will be raised in all Ministry for Foreign Affairs country reports on human rights.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

World trade contributes to lifting entire countries out of poverty and to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

As a member of the EU, Sweden is pursuing a policy for free and fair trade that contributes to sustainable development and creates jobs throughout the country. Every third job in Sweden depends on our trade with the rest of the

world.

We are mobilising our efforts with an updated export and investment strategy for the whole of Sweden.

Expo 2020 in Dubai will showcase Swedish companies' competitiveness in innovation and sustainability.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

We cannot take a passive stance on the nuclear threat.

Developments are alarming: arms control agreements are being abandoned. Nuclear weapons arsenals are being expanded and modernised.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are central foreign and security policy priorities for the Government.

Through the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, the Government is contributing to the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This work is now being advanced at a new ministerial meeting in Germany.

As Chair of the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors, Sweden is taking responsibility for non-proliferation. Compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal is central.

Within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Sweden is pushing for an effective international ban on lethal autonomous weapons systems that are incompatible with the requirements of international law.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Our close relationship with the United States is of central importance to Sweden's security and prosperity.

A functioning international community presupposes an engaged United States. It is troubling that the United States is withdrawing from some forms

of multilateral cooperation. The Government is working to ensure that trade relations with the United States work well, and that threats of new trade barriers are not carried out.

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The Government's Russia policy remains unchanged.

Where we have common interests we, like the EU, can and should cooperate with Russia. This benefits our security, and stability in our neighbourhood.

We condemn Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its illegal annexation of Crimea. These breaches of international law challenge the European security order. Sweden supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and every country's right to choose its own security policy path.

We are working to ensure that the EU sanctions against Russia are maintained for as long as the reasons for their introduction remain.

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Sweden stands ready to contribute to the easing of regional tensions and to dialogue in the Middle East.

We are continuing our engagement in the global coalition against Daesh. Kurds, Christians and other minorities in the region must be protected.

The Government is keen to have good relations with both Israel and Palestine. Sweden – like the rest of the EU – is working for a solution based on international law in which two states can coexist in peace and security.

The Government has condemned Iran for the shooting down of a civilian aircraft which claimed the lives of 17 people who were resident in Sweden. We demand an independent and transparent investigation.

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We both cooperate and engage in critical dialogue with Turkey. The EU has condemned Turkey's offensive in north-eastern Syria. At the same time, the Syrian regime has ruthlessly bombed its own country to rubble for almost nine years. All licences for Sweden's exports of military equipment to Turkey have been withdrawn.

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The humanitarian, political and economic crisis in Venezuela is worsening day by day. Together with the international community, we are working for a peaceful solution.

Increasing polarisation in Bolivia is serious and has led to escalating violence and vandalism.

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China's increasingly active role in the global arena presents opportunities and challenges. We welcome the Riksdag's consensus on the written communication on our China policy.

We are conducting a frank and open dialogue with China based on our own interests and those of the EU. Human rights and freedom of expression are important aspects of this.

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India is an important global actor and partner for Sweden. It is a significant market that will play an increasingly important role for growth and employment in our country.

At the UN Climate Action Summit in New York, Sweden and India launched the Leadership Group for Industry Transition to ensure a fossil-free future for heavy industry.

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The African continent has a young population. If the many young people there receive access to education and employment, a number of African countries could develop at a rapid pace. But the challenges are also great.

Human rights, democracy and gender equality are priorities in Sweden's Africa policy, along with migration and trade. It is important to support sustainable development in Africa. This can involve girls' schooling and increased access to electricity.

The security situation in the Sahel continues to be very troubling, not least in Mali. The region is characterised by weak states. The situation is a breeding ground for radicalisation.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs handles many consular cases. These can involve anything from crises and disasters to deprivation of liberty. Most people are helped without publicity, but some cases receive a lot of attention.

The work to help Swedes in distress abroad is always conducted with the best interests of those affected in mind.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

In troubled times, with a harsh tone from world leaders and aggressive big-power behaviour, Sweden is showing that another path is possible.

With an open and democratic environment, with tough debates but also a striving for consensus, we are showing that freedom, equality and openness are not yesterday's solutions.

Sweden is, and will continue to be, one of the world's best countries to live in, and we are making a difference around the world. This is something we Swedes should be proud of.

Published 12 February 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde on United Nations Security Council open debate on Women, Peace and Security

Check against delivery

Madam President, Mr Secretary General, dear briefers, dear colleagues and friends,

The adoption of UNSCR 1325 in October 2000 was a true milestone.

The resolution reformed the way we see and conduct conflict analysis and engage in peace keeping. The resolution was an answer to generations of neglect of women as peace makers, as negotiators, mediators and parties to conflict.

Since then, deepened commitments by the UN system and Member States; important initiatives locally, regionally and internationally have moved the agenda forward. Yet, we have a long way to go.

Madam President,

Let me thank South Africa for organising this debate and for their strong focus on implementation. As portrayed in the Secretary General's report the challenges are profound. To deliver more sustainable results we need:

- leadership to keep women's rights and participation at the top of the agenda,
- implementation of concrete steps that matter in the field, and
- accountability to ensure that decisions are acted upon.

Let me briefly elaborate on each of these three components:

Firstly, leadership. To achieve full integration, strong leadership is key. We, as Member States and as the UN, must take concrete steps forward in 2020. We need to counter attacks on women's human rights, including the sexual and reproductive health and rights, and we need to defend our multilateral achievements. Resources need to be committed. Messaging needs to be clear.

Secondly, implementation. Practical measures must be taken by national governments, multilateral institutions, and individual missions. A gender perspective should influence our work, what we talk about and our next steps. There needs to be a gender perspective in conflict analysis and inclusion of sex disaggregated data in all reporting. We welcome the renewed commitments made by the Peacebuilding Commission to adopt an integrated gender perspective in all of its work and we fully support the suggestions presented by the PBC chair to the Security Council today.

Thirdly, accountability. We need clearly defined responsibilities to implement the full WPS-agenda. Follow-up is essential to ensure that analysis and data reflect realities on the ground. There have to be strategies, by the UN and Member States, for women's participation in peace processes and decision-making bodies. Prevention and prosecution of conflict-related sexual violence needs to be central in peace efforts.

Let me stress the role of civil society. During our time on the Security Council, more civil society briefers than ever were invited, resulting in more inclusive and better-informed discussions. Yesterday in our Multi-stakeholder Forum, civil society organisations expressed great concern that progress on women, peace and security is slowing down.

They also stressed increased hostility towards civil society, especially women human rights defenders. Member States, in particular the Security Council, need to take concrete steps to implement decisions and to include civil society as partners.

Not least, there is an untapped potential for civil society to play a role in preventing conflict through early warning.

Madam President,

As we speak of the importance of civil society and strong political leadership, I would like to highlight the recent developments in Sudan. As we heard from Ms Salah, Sudanese women's strong participation was critical in

the movement for change. We are encouraged by the emphasis on women's participation by the new government. We should all stand ready to support the Sudanese people as they move forward on this new path.

Madam President,

It is impossible not to mention what is happening in north-east Syria. After years of defending their homes and our countries against the terrorist sect IS/Daesh, the women and men that make up this region's ethnic and cultural mosaic are now suffering the consequences of the Turkish military offensive. We know that women are among those hardest hit by conflict but in the fight against Daesh they have also been the ones fighting on the front lines. This is especially true of Kurdish women.

We have a moral obligation to stand up for them in times like these.

After more than eight years of conflict, for which the Syrian regime bears the overwhelming responsibility, Syria and the region need peace. Sweden reiterates its support for the UN-led political process – the only path that can lead to sustainable peace.

Madam President,

Finally, let me express my appreciation for the specific commitments in the Secretary General's report. Many of the recommendations Sweden put forward after two years as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council have been addressed in the report.

I am proud of Sweden's contribution to the WPS agenda during our time on the Council. Let me assure you that Sweden will continue to champion these issues in close coordination with you and other partners.

Thank you.

Published 31 October 2019



Government Offices of Sweden

Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde at the EU Arctic Forum, Umeå, 3 October, 2019

Check against delivery.

Your Royal Highness, Ministers, Commissioner,

Dear friends of the Arctic,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to Umeå - the gateway to the Swedish Arctic. And more specifically to the University of Umeå, proud to call itself the Arctic University of Sweden.

I would also like to extend a special ‘welcome home’ to all European Union partners. This is what the EU Arctic Forum is all about: to bring the Arctic to Europe and Europe to the Arctic.

I remember those early years when Sweden and Finland had just joined the EU, back in 1995. When the maps in Brussels cut Europe off just north of Stockholm and Helsinki and had to be exchanged for maps showing also the vast new northern territories of the union. The European Arctic. Now you are here. So welcome home to the Arctic part of Europe.

But, in fact, the Arctic is a global asset. We all have stakes in this vast, beautiful, fragile and rich region. We all have a responsibility to understand and address the challenges that we’re facing in the far north. They impact on the planet as a whole, as well as at regional and on the local level. That is what we will discuss today. And at the indigenous peoples’ dialogue tomorrow.

Let us remember that the Arctic is a part of the world that long has been characterized by peace, stability and constructive international cooperation based on respect for international law. And let me immediately say that it’s a core interest for Sweden to keep the Arctic that way.

We have succeeded so far, not least thanks to the Arctic Council, in building a political environment that generates win-win solutions.

We have concluded a number of legally binding agreements to foster closer ties – on Search & Rescue, Oil Spills prevention and Science cooperation. Arctic Council working groups continue to produce world class scientific reports on Arctic challenges. Observers, including the European Union, provide outstanding contributions to this work.

And let me also highlight the Barents Euro Arctic Council, not least focusing on regional, project-oriented cooperation, youth and other people-to-people contacts. This is important in a time of increasingly closed borders.

Later today I will hand over the gavel to my dear friend, Minister Ine Søreide, as Norway assumes the national chairmanship of the Barents Council. While the County of Finnmark passes the torch to Västerbotten on the regional level.

The Arctic is a showcase that we should be proud of. By working closely together, and in good faith, we are now in a position to realize the great potential of this region.

Peace and stability are preconditions for development. We therefore have every reason to continue our efforts and further strengthen our cooperation in the Arctic Council, together with other Arctic states and stakeholders as with engaged non-Arctic nations. The indigenous voices, including that of the Saami people, are key to these efforts.

But the Arctic is not only about opportunities. It is also very much about challenges.

The scientific findings are robust: a climate crisis in the Arctic is not a future scenario – it is happening as we speak.

The Arctic Council reports that annual air temperatures in 2014, 15, 16, 17 and 18 were all higher than any year since 1900. Sea ice volume in September has declined by 75 percent in forty years.

It is commonly said that what happens in the Arctic, doesn't stay in the Arctic. But it is also true that the source of what happens in the Arctic is often not to be found in this region.

A global mobilization of resources and action is required to deal with Arctic

challenges. From Arctic and non-Arctic states alike.

There is a new Arctic emerging that requires new responses, new action geared at adaptation and resilience. We are all in this together.

Global warming and its effects on the Arctic may not only lead to an environmental and ecological disaster in the region.

They are a potential security threat of global proportions.

There is an invoice waiting: Arctic warming could have a cumulative net cost of 90 trillion dollars at the end of this century.

The Agenda 2030 and the Paris agreement represent a shift of paradigm, enabling us to embark on the development of our societies and aspirations to provide a good life, not only for ourselves but for future generations.

But let me be clear. This transformation does not mean that we should reject economic development or growth. We are on the verge of a global transformation of our energy systems, from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

And this transition is just as morally right, as it is financially smart:

We know from history that major transformations driven by technology and innovation create opportunities and economic growth.

And the future belongs

to those who embrace the new green economy,

to those who invest in sustainable technologies and renewable energy systems,

and to those who seek innovations rather than solutions from the past.

That is why Sweden has set a target to be carbon neutral by 2045.

In the long term, the low carbon story is the only growth-story on offer.

Dear friends,

Here's where the European Union comes into the picture. As was pointed out in the recent EPSC report "Walking on thin Ice": With three EU Member States, and some half a million EU citizens in the Arctic, the EU has a natural role to play in the region.

And, as the Arctic becomes a focal point of economic and geopolitical competition and is increasingly recognized as being central to human and planetary survival, the EU must step up its engagement with Arctic states and other stakeholders. Never has ensuring a peaceful and sustainable Arctic been so essential.

I hope that the EU Arctic Forum will reflect on what has been achieved over the past years. I also hope – more importantly – that it will provide guidance on how the European Union, with a new Commission soon in place, could further contribute to addressing Arctic challenges.

Sweden pledges to do its part.

Let me finally thank all the organizers – the Commission, the MFA, the County of Västerbotten, the City of Umeå and the University for all your work.

Once again welcome to Umeå.

I wish you all a great stay here.

Thank you!

Published 11 October 2019



Government Offices of Sweden

Address by Ms Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, at the 74th Session of the General Assembly of the UN

28 September, 2019 Check against delivery.

Excellencies,

Next year, we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. Born from the ashes of the Second World War to maintain peace and promote prosperity and human rights for future generations. Created to resolve differences. Created to prevent violent conflicts, devastation and human suffering.

It was created to learn lessons from the past, and to meet international threats through cooperation.

It was created to enable nations, no matter their size, to achieve these goals by acting together.

The anniversary is an opportunity to celebrate many significant achievements – most recently, the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Paris Agreement and the Sustaining Peace agenda.

At the same time, the UN and other multilateral institutions – such as the World Trade Organisation and the International Criminal Court – are increasingly questioned.

This is a disturbing trend that threatens to weaken international cooperation, accountability and our nations' growth, trade and development.

Excellencies,

The climate crisis is the defining issue of our time.

Millions of young people are now demonstrating and demanding urgent action. Their commitment and engagement have inspired school strikes and protests around the world. They have left few of us unmoved.

Their voice was, once again, loud and clear at last Saturday's youth summit. We must not let them down. We cannot let them down.

To keep global warming under one point five degrees and prevent the most extreme impacts of climate change, we need to halve global emissions by 2030. Scientists – the IPCC included – warn of devastating consequences if we do not take immediate action.

Climate change is a driver of conflict. Action is about the survival of our peoples, of our nations. The world cannot afford the cost of inaction. The challenge facing us is enormous. But we can turn this challenge into an opportunity.

I would like to raise two main points.

First, we need long-term policy at all levels. The European Union has put in place a legally binding climate framework, sending a clear message to the international community about our commitment.

In Sweden, our Climate Act and net zero emissions target also send a clear signal. But we can do more. And we will do more. Our goal is to be the first fossil-free welfare nation in the world.

At the Climate Action Summit, we announced the launch of the Leadership Group for Industry Transition, together with India and the World Economic Forum.

This initiative will speed up industry transition to pathways that will ensure that we deliver on the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. The role of trade and labour unions in this transition is essential.

Second, transforming financial flows is key. We are proud to see the commitment of our businesses and financial institutions to align with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Through our development cooperation, Sweden is investing in renewable energy, energy efficiency and climate-sensitive agriculture.

We are the largest per-capita contributor worldwide to the Green Climate Fund, and we have now decided to double that contribution.

Excellencies,

Today, in many parts of the world, democracy is losing ground. Inequalities are growing. Social and economic gaps are feeding into nationalistic narratives. Anti-democratic forces are creating uncertainty and division. Corruption is a threat to democracy, to economic and social development, and to trade and investment.

Together, we must do more to counter these forces. Because democracy is the bedrock of open and free societies, of equality and prosperity. It invites all citizens to take part in building sustainable societies and societies free from oppression.

Sweden will increase its support for democratic and vibrant civil societies. Voices of democracy need our support.

Excellencies,

Human rights around the world are under attack. We must act against all attempts to weaken respect for human rights and to restrict their universality.

Sweden will continue to be a strong voice for LGBT rights. No one should suffer discrimination, violence or oppression because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Sweden will continue to champion the independence and integrity of the human rights system. Persecution of religious and other minorities occurs in many parts of the world; this is unacceptable. Sweden is strengthening efforts against antisemitism; next year we will host an international forum on Holocaust remembrance and combating antisemitism.

We will continue to protest when freedom of expression is restricted – whether online or offline – when journalists and media actors are silenced, and when human rights defenders are harassed or even killed.

Excellencies,

I am proud to be the Foreign Minister in Sweden's feminist Government, and to pursue a feminist foreign policy. Gender equality is an issue that concerns us all – it is about human rights, democracy, development and peace and

security for all.

We are encouraged by the considerable advances made in certain areas. But progress remains uneven. Every day, in many parts of the world, women's and girls' rights are still being violated.

We are also witnessing growing opposition to women's and girls' human rights. This must stop. Every woman and girl should have the right to make her own decisions about her body and her life. This is a basic human right. Sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the right to safe and legal abortion, are fundamental human rights.

Next year marks several anniversaries of gender equality commitments.

The tasks laid out remain unfinished and need our urgent attention.

Implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda and the Beijing Platform for Action is not only the right thing to do – it is key to achieving sustainable peace and development.

On International Women's Day this year, Sweden and France launched a diplomatic initiative to combat trafficking and prostitution, focusing on reducing the demand for, and protecting the victims of, prostitution – in Europe and globally.

Empowering women and increasing their political and economic participation are key to global development.

Sweden fully supports the United Nation's ongoing efforts to mainstream a gender perspective throughout the UN system and its reform agenda. The Secretary-General's determination to ensure gender parity in the organisation is an important part of these efforts.

Excellencies,

In adopting the 2030 Agenda, we all committed to taking significant responsibilities.

I am pleased that the political declaration adopted earlier this week not only reinforces the 2030 Agenda, but also sets the course for faster action on the Sustainable Development Goals.

The UN plays a central role in this endeavour. With the reforms initiated by

the Secretary-General, the UN will become more effective and enable action on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Sweden will continue to give one per cent of its Gross National Income in Official Development Assistance.

At present, more than 50 per cent of this assistance is channeled to, or through, the multilateral system. This demonstrates our strong commitment to international cooperation, and the importance we attach to the 2030 Agenda for our shared future.

I am encouraged by the high level of engagement from the business sector. Together, as partners, we will achieve the goals. The business benefits of science-based climate action are clear. We look forward to the launch of the Global Sustainable Development Investors in October.

Trade is an important instrument for sustainable economic development and poverty reduction, and for the 2030 Agenda as a whole. We need more trade, not less. A strong rules-based and transparent multilateral trading system is vital. Support to developing countries to increase their capacity for international trade is also crucial.

Free trade is a powerful engine for growth. We need to make growth sustainable and inclusive, and to promote decent work for all.

Sweden will continue to be an active partner in the Global Deal partnership, with its vision of a world of decent work and inclusive growth that guarantees workers' rights.

Excellencies,

Security must be built collectively. Current security threats leave no nation or no person untouched.

Sweden's membership of the Security Council was based on conflict prevention, early action and respect for international law. Our membership has ended but our commitment continues.

This week, Sweden co-hosted a meeting with key partners in support of peace in Yemen, based on the Stockholm Agreement. The UN-led process is key.

We emphasise that international law must be respected. International law

serves as a basis for conflict resolution and prevention – as in the case of Israel and Palestine. An end to the occupation and a two-state solution within secure and mutually recognised borders is the only way to resolve this conflict.

The illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and the aggression in eastern Ukraine challenge core principles of international law. We will continue to work with international partners until Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty have been fully restored.

The Council needs to adopt a comprehensive approach to peace, and to include new risks – such as climate change – on the Council's agenda.

Excellencies,

We are one year away from the 50th anniversary of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The Treaty has been successful in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. However, the deteriorating international security environment has once again increased the threat of the use of nuclear weapons.

The situation on the Korean peninsula remains a cause for concern. We must continue to pursue our common goal of a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation – and of peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula, through diplomatic means.

We need full implementation of the JCPOA. We must act urgently and pursue dialogue to restore trust, which is presently lacking in the international arena. The termination of the INF treaty, basically a result of Russian non-compliance, is a further setback.

In June, Sweden launched a nuclear disarmament initiative together with 15 countries in different regions. This initiative aims at building political support for a successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference in 2020.

Concrete measures that can reduce nuclear risks and increase transparency can serve as stepping stones and unlock disarmament diplomacy. Full and constructive engagement by the nuclear-weapon states will be a necessary ingredient as we move forward.

The IAEA is an essential part of the NPT. On 23 September, Sweden took

over as chair of the Agency's Board of Governors for 2019 and 2020. We are honoured to shoulder this great responsibility in these challenging times.

Excellencies,

Today, millions of people on our planet are struggling to survive, day by day. More than 140 million people need life-saving humanitarian assistance. Most of them are women and girls.

Sweden is proud to be one of the world's largest contributors of humanitarian assistance to save lives and alleviate human suffering.

We stand behind the Secretary-General's vision that tensions and crisis can be prevented from escalating into major conflicts.

The role that the UN plays in resolving conflicts – through political and diplomatic efforts or peace operations – is crucial for securing inclusive and sustainable peace.

Post-conflict reconstruction will be successful only if all segments of society are included. This is especially important when it comes to women's participation.

We are firmly committed to supporting the Secretary-General's initiative to strengthen peacekeeping. We will continue our engagement in MINUSMA and other peace operations.

Excellencies,

The late poet Claes Andersson once wrote:

“Fear those who say they only want to be left alone – for they fear no means.”

History has shown us that isolationism, populism and nationalism are all paths to failure.

Sweden's foreign policy rests firmly on democracy, international law, respect for human rights, gender equality, a humanitarian perspective, and free, fair and sustainable trade.

The UN system is a global public good – and it is in our shared strategic interest to keep investing in it. The long-term gains are far greater than any

short-term costs.

The prosperity of one nation is not part of a zero-sum game in which nations either win or lose. On the contrary, we can – and we must – choose a path that will ensure that we continue to rise together.

Thank you.

Published 28 September 2019



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech by Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Article XIV conference on the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

New York, 25 september 2019. Check against delivery.

Chairpersons, Under-Secretary General,

Let me first thank the Secretary-General for convening this conference, and congratulate Germany and Algeria for taking over as Article 14 coordinators.

I would also like to thank the outgoing coordinators Belgium and Iraq for their persistent efforts in promoting the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Sweden aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like to add some points in my national capacity.

Chairpersons,

For my Government, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is a key priority. Threats posed by nuclear weapons are greater now than they have been for several decades.

Nuclear weapon states are developing new capabilities. The international security environment is characterised by increasing polarisation and lack of trust. The web of nuclear arms control agreements which have served global security so well is now fundamentally challenged. Important treaties are being terminated or facing an uncertain future.

The CTBT is a crucial part of the international disarmament and non-

proliferation regime. It contributes to preventing the development of new nuclear weapons as well as the emergence of new states in possession of nuclear weapon.

The urgency of CTBT's entry into force has been agreed upon in the NPT framework as well as the UN General Assembly. There can be no valid excuse to further delay action to sign and ratify this important treaty.

In June, Sweden convened a ministerial meeting in Stockholm where 16 engaged countries conveyed a clear message that nuclear disarmament must be put back on the international agenda. This must be done ahead of the NPT Review Conference in 2020.

Chairpersons,

I urge the DPRK to formalise its commitments to cease nuclear testing by signing and ratifying the CTBT. This would constitute a clear demonstration of the DPRK's commitment towards peace, security and denuclearisation on the Korean Peninsula.

I also call on India and Pakistan to further formalise their moratorium on nuclear testing by signing the CTBT as a first step.

I urge all Annex 2 Signatory States to take concrete steps towards ratification. Meanwhile, all signatories must continue to act in accordance with the object and purpose of the treaty.

Pending the entry into force of the CTBT, all existing moratoria on nuclear test explosions must be maintained.

I sincerely welcome the ratifications of Thailand and Zimbabwe as well as the signature of Tuvalu – all important steps towards the universalisation of the Treaty.

Chairpersons,

The International Monitoring System (IMS) is today playing an important role in providing reliable information on nuclear explosions.

However, only the entry into force of the treaty will allow for the full use of the verification regime, which is so urgently needed to uphold trust in a difficult security climate. Sweden is proud to contribute to the IMS through the SAUNA system for noble gas detection, and to support the upcoming

field exercises with our technical expertise.

Chairpersons,

Sweden's political and technical engagement against nuclear testing will remain steadfast. We will do our part to ensure that nuclear tests are relegated to the history books.

Our goal remains a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you.

Published 26 September 2019



Speech by Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the Biarritz Partnership event on gender equality and women's empowerment September 23, 2019

Check against delivery

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to start off with a couple of questions:

Today, there is an ongoing global debate on so called “moral issues”. But what is moral? Is it that someone else decides over your body? Or should you yourself be in charge?

I see it as good moral when every man, boy, woman and girl have the same right to decide over their own lives and bodies.

In 45 economies, there are no laws protecting women against violence in the home. In 104 countries around the world there are laws preventing women from carrying out certain jobs.

In almost all aspects of life there is a gender perspective;

Before becoming Minister for Foreign Affairs, I was Minister for trade. Could there be a gender difference in trade? To my surprise there are.

For example, there are higher tariffs on sportswear for women than for men. And a silk blouse for a woman has a higher tariff than a silk shirt for a man.

Trade has great effects on women, as well as men.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a feminist Government, Sweden warmly welcomes the important initiative by the G7-group to establish the “Biarritz partnership”.

The 25th anniversary of Beijing offers an opportunity for us all to reaffirm our political will and commitment for the empowerment of all women and girls.

But I would like to make use of this opportunity to talk about something else.

I would like to talk about the difficult times that we find ourselves in at the moment.

To illustrate what I mean, let me remind you of UN resolution 2467 on sexual violence in conflict, that was adopted earlier this spring.

It is a resolution that advances the agenda of conflict-related sexual violence, by focusing on the survivors. Because of that it was needed and welcome.

But remember what happened during the adoption of this resolution. Sexual and reproductive health and rights was not mentioned. Some countries blocked such language.

In other words: In front of Nobel prize Laurates Dennis Mukwege and Nadia Murad, the international community could not agree on stating the need for basic sexual and reproductive health and rights of survivors of sexual violence in conflict.

Should we deny the victims emergency contraceptives? Safe abortions? Sexual education? The right to know about their bodies? To know about HIV and AIDS?

Apparently, this is what this new movement of ultra-conservative moralists want.

But let me assure you, we are many that will not accept this.

When some countries say that women should dress differently, should behave differently, should live differently, our response is:

Let girls and women decide for themselves. It is their human rights.

It's that easy.

Let women chose their own lives and the world will be a better place.

How do we do it?

By making sure that women get a seat at the table. By supporting women's organizations. By proving that female participation in the labor market increases economic growth. By fighting child marriage, female genital mutilation and the use of sexual violence as weapon.

By refusing to let anybody else decide what we do with our bodies and with our lives.

While a few seek to restrict the rights of half of the world's population, we represent a global movement for the empowerment of women and girls and their full enjoyment of human rights.

I call on everybody who supports us in this cause, to join me in spreading the message and making your voices heard under the hashtag #EmpowerWomen

Thank you.

Published 24 September 2019



Government Offices of Sweden

Address by Ms Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, at IAEA General Conference, 16 September, 2019

Check against delivery.

Thank you, Madam President,

Allow me first to congratulate you on your election as President of the 63rd General Conference and underline Sweden's full support of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Let me at the outset pay tribute to the late Director General, Ambassador Yukiya Amano, who served the IAEA and its Member States with great determination, commitment and dignity.

Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement made by Finland on behalf of the European Union. In addition, let me make the following national remarks.

Beginning next week, pending confirmation, Sweden will for the first time serve as Chair of the Board of Governors. This is a great honour and responsibility, and a continuation of Sweden's long history of political and technical support for the IAEA.

The work of the Agency is essential in the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear technology and our shared responsibility for peace and security.

Madam President,

By ensuring that States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty are following their obligations, the IAEA safeguards system is a fundamental part of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The Additional Protocol, which enables the IAEA to draw the broader conclusion that all nuclear material in a State remains in peaceful activities, is an indispensable tool. However, universalisation of the Additional Protocol must remain the highest priority.

Sweden welcomes that Serbia and Liberia have joined the large group of Member States that apply the Additional Protocol – now 134 in total.

Madam President,

The issue of Application of Safeguards in the DPRK remains of significant concern. We welcome the diplomatic developments since early 2018 and it is important that this momentum can be maintained, on all levels.

Sweden believes in combining a policy of upholding unity in the Security Council on sanctions, with a readiness to support diplomatic efforts. The DPRK should formalise its commitments towards denuclearisation in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

We call on the DPRK to promptly resume cooperation with the IAEA and implement its safeguards obligations. The IAEA must play a key role in any future verification effort in DPRK.

Madam President,

Sweden has full confidence in the Agency's impartial and professional work to verify Iran's nuclear programme, and we have made an additional extra-budgetary contribution of SEK 3 million to facilitate those efforts.

We urge Iran to cooperate fully – and in a timely manner – with the IAEA in the implementation of its NPT Safeguards Agreement.

Together with our partners in the EU, Sweden remains a steadfast supporter of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). A disintegration of the agreement would be seriously damaging for the global non-proliferation regime.

In this context, Sweden, and the EU, deeply regret the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and the re-imposition of sanctions.

Like the EU, we are deeply concerned about Iran's recent breaches of the JCPOA. We note Iran's stated intention to remain within the JCPOA and urge Iran to reverse these steps and to return to full compliance without delay.

We underline the importance of Iran's early ratification of the Additional Protocol as a crucial confidence-building measure.

Madam President,

The threat of nuclear and radiological terrorism remains. Sweden strongly supports the role of the IAEA in supporting efforts by States to upgrade their capabilities to prevent, detect and respond to such events.

Madam President,

Sweden has taken yet another step towards a government decision on the construction of a repository for spent nuclear fuel.

The Land and Environmental Court and the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority handed over their statements on the Swedish Nuclear Fuel and Waste Management Company's applications to the Government early last year.

Madam President,

Sweden attaches great importance to the field of human, technology and organisation, and particularly the area of safety culture.

Last year, the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority, together with Swedish licensees, explored the impact of Swedish customs and social behaviour on safety culture with great success. We are pleased that other countries have been inspired to follow this example.

Madam President,

Nuclear science and technology have a significant role in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The IAEA's technical cooperation programme contributes to, among other areas, human health, food security and water management.

This year Sweden has provided SEK 5 million in voluntary contributions to the Peaceful Uses Initiative, in support of water resource management in the Sahel, ocean acidification, tackling marine plastics and cervical cancer control. Women's perspectives must be included in order for projects to be realised in a sustainable and effective way.

Madam President,

Sweden attaches great importance to gender equality at the IAEA secretariat as well as gender mainstreaming in programmes and activities. The full and equal participation of men and women, including at the highest levels, remains essential and will benefit the Agency and its Member States. In this regard, we very much hope that the Agency continues to pursue the goal set

by Director General Amano to achieve gender parity among senior officials by 2021.

Madam President,

To conclude, let me underline the importance that Sweden attaches to the Agency's work. We will do our utmost to assist the IAEA in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the Agency's important work in non-proliferation. Only with this in mind can we guarantee a safer and more peaceful future.

Thank you.

Published 19 September 2019