



Article from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden is scaling up its efforts to leave no one behind

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

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

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

Marginalised groups particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic

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

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

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



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The fight against COVID-19 and its impact on democracy

Published 08 April 2020

How is the fight against COVID-19 affecting global efforts to defend human rights and promote democracy? As part of the Government's Drive for Democracy, Sweden has launched a series of digital meetings to contribute to the global conversation on these issues.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde and Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson today took part in a digital meeting with representatives of four key intergovernmental organisations:

- Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Eamon Gilmore, EU Special Representative for Human Rights
- Christos Giakoumopoulos, Council of Europe Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law
- Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

The aim of the meeting was to contribute to the global conversation about the risk of the COVID-19 response leading to – or being used as a pretext for – undue restrictions on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. As a next step, meetings with national and international civil society organisations and other countries are planned. Sweden's strong voice in defence of human rights, democracy and the rule of law is not silenced by a pandemic. The Drive for Democracy continues – but in different circumstances and different conditions.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Drive for Democracy takes shape

Published 27 November 2019

Strengthened engagement for democracy was announced in the 2019 Statement of Foreign Policy and in the Swedish Foreign Service's strategic vision for the electoral period. Sweden will stand up for democratic principles and support democracy in all contexts. On 21 November 2019, the Drive for Democracy was presented to the Riksdag Committee on Foreign Affairs by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde and Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

In brief, the Drive for Democracy makes it clear that Sweden will stand up for democratic principles in all contexts, work to help strengthen democracy, and voice criticism against democratic deficits or risks of backsliding. Like the feminist foreign policy, the idea is for the democracy perspective to permeate the work of the Swedish Foreign Service and cover all foreign policy and Ministry for Foreign Affairs areas of activity: foreign and security policy; international development cooperation policy and international trade and promotion.

The term 'democracy'

Sweden bases its work on a broad definition of term 'democracy', which means much more than free and fair elections. This definition and its components guide the work on the Drive for Democracy.

Citizen participation: a vibrant civil society, national and local elections.

Representative governance: free and fair elections, universal suffrage, independent political parties.

Rights: access to justice, enjoyment of human rights – not least freedom of expression, social and economic rights, and equality.

Separation of powers: well-functioning parliaments, independence of judicial systems, free and independent media.

Independent institutions: predictable execution of decisions, absence of corruption.

Framework of strategic objectives

A special framework of strategic objectives has been drafted to set out the direction of the Drive for Democracy.

Examples of concrete activities within the framework of the Drive for Democracy include the levelling up democracy assistance, the creation of a new network for enhanced dialogue with other countries and actors on democracy and the development of the feminist foreign policy through activities that contribute to improving women's enjoyment of human rights, and increased influence of women in democracy.

The Drive for Democracy also has a particular focus on engaging young people. As a part of this, missions abroad have been asked to hold local discussions on democracy, called Democracy Talks, with young people throughout the world. The ambition is for the participants' ideas and reflections to be funnelled into a larger Democracy Talks event to be held in Sweden in 2021 in connection with the centenary of Swedish democracy.

Priority areas

The following areas may be seen as starting points and inspiration for how the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and missions abroad are to continue working on the Drive for Democracy:

- Promote and strengthen civil society, including human rights defenders. Trade union organisations also play a crucial role in strengthening people's opportunities to influence their everyday lives and must be

supported.

- Strengthen free and independent media and democratic voices (such as cultural workers), including on the internet, to combat disinformation.
- Support democratic processes and election authorities.
- Promote the growth of effective and independent institutions, including the absence of corruption.
- Promote equality.
- Strengthen political systems with competing political parties (including parliaments).
- Support the strengthening of respect for the rule of law.
- Promote and protect the enjoyment of human rights by all.
- Strengthen women's political participation.
- Promote young people's democratic engagement.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

We must stand up for human rights, freedom of expression and confidence in the future

Published 10 May 2019

Minister for International Development Cooperation
Peter Eriksson talks about the most important political issues during this electoral period and what changes he wants to see.



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Innovation partnership programmes impact Swedish innovative environments

Published 04 September 2017

The collaborations, initiatives and projects that have resulted so far from the five innovation partnership programmes were presented when the National Innovation Council met on Monday 28 August. Together, the project managers and the Council looked to the future and discussed critical success factors, goals and opportunities for developing these partnerships. The experiences of partnership working, where the business sector, academia and organisations work together strategically, were highlighted and discussed by the Council.

The innovation partnership programmes originated from the three social challenges that the National Innovation Council highlighted at the beginning of the electoral period: digitalisation, life sciences, and environmental and climate technologies. The Council has followed the work over the year and provided input, stressing for example the importance of joining forces to increase skills supply.

The innovation partnership programmes were launched on 1 June 2016. The partnership groups associated with the programmes focused on identifying challenges and opportunities for each programme and priority setting of important areas for joint action. Several working groups have been established and a number of concrete partnership projects have been

developed.

Within the framework of a partnership project, available public resources and co-financing from the business sector can be used jointly to meet specified priorities. Even so, the Government has provided additional funds for measures related to the innovation partnership programmes, including through the Research and Innovation Bill adopted by the Riksdag in early 2017. These funds are primarily channelled through programmes and calls for projects from the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems, the Swedish Energy Agency and the Swedish Research Council Formas.