



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Government intends to open embassy in Dublin and consulate-general in San Francisco

Published 03 November 2021 Updated 03 November 2021

The Government today decided to strengthen Sweden's presence in Ireland and the US, and intends to open an embassy in Dublin and a consulate-general in San Francisco. The Government has also strengthened Sweden's presence in Ouagadougou and La Paz. As part of a regular review of Sweden's missions abroad, the Government will also close the embassies in Angola and Peru.

Ireland is an important partner for Sweden in the EU, bilaterally and multilaterally. Sweden will therefore strengthen its presence in Ireland for political agency and increased trade and investment exchange.

“A stronger Swedish presence in both Ireland and the US will create new opportunities for Swedish foreign policy and our promotion activities to make an impact. Reopening an Embassy in Dublin has been eagerly awaited – Ireland is an important partner for Sweden, not least in light of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde.

Establishing a consulate-general in San Francisco will create new opportunities for trade promotion and promotion of Sweden on the US west coast and will support Swedish companies with matchmaking activities in tomorrow's technologies and the cultural and creative industries.

“A consulate-general in San Francisco will strengthen Sweden’s presence on the US west coast and improve our opportunities to conduct active trade promotion and promotion of Sweden. The business sector in particular has looked forward to the opening the consulate-general as it will facilitate new partnerships for Swedish companies in the area of green technologies and new innovations,” says Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg.

The Government has already upgraded two missions abroad – one in Africa and one in Latin America – to full embassies under the leadership of an ambassador. These are the missions in Ouagadougou and La Paz, whose positions have now been reinforced.

“I am pleased that we have been able to strengthen our diplomatic relations in Africa and Latin America. Our embassies provide us with important tools to help combat poverty and support climate transition, and to push demands on democracy, human rights and women’s rights,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Per Olsson Fridh.

The changes are one step in the continuous adaptation made by the organisation abroad in relation to changes around the world, altered requirements and needs, and the budgetary situation, to create the best possible conditions to implement Sweden’s foreign policy and promote Swedish interests abroad. This is a constant process of change in which Sweden sometimes opens or closes embassies and consulates.

Sweden has good bilateral relations with both Angola and Peru, which include close cooperation in areas such as trade. These relations will continue to be safeguarded, preserved and developed. In the future, this will take place in other forms, as the embassies themselves will be closed.

The missions abroad affected by today’s decision may open or close at different times, depending on the situation of each mission. All changes are planned to take place in the second half of 2022.



Government Offices of Sweden

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

# Ahead of UN Climate Change Conference COP26: Government intends to double climate aid by 2025

Published 13 October 2021

The world is in an acute climate crisis. The world's poorest are the least to blame but are the hardest hit. The richer countries have a special responsibility to contribute to the developing countries' climate transition. The Government therefore intends to double Swedish climate aid to SEK 15 billion by 2025.

In less than three weeks, negotiations will begin at the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow. The Conference is taking place at a critical time in world history. We are in the midst of a climate crisis, where catastrophes such as protracted droughts, violent fires and devastating floods are becoming more common. The world's poorest are the least to blame for climate change, but they are hit the hardest by its consequences. All countries must reduce their climate impact to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, but the richer countries have a special responsibility to take the lead and contribute to the developing countries' climate transition. Sweden continues to take responsibility and the Government intends to double Swedish climate aid to SEK 15 billion by 2025.

“With today's decision on doubled climate aid, Sweden not only contributes to greater opportunities for the world's developing countries to implement the green transition, but it also sends an important message ahead of the climate negotiations in Glasgow. The developed countries must live up to

their commitments if we are to have a chance to jointly limit global emissions at the necessary pace,” says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The trend can be reversed, but not if we wait to take action. That is why the world must now join together to raise climate ambitions.

“By doubling its climate aid, Sweden is showing even stronger leadership on climate change. We make it possible for poor countries to reduce their emissions and make necessary climate adjustments. A doubling of Sweden’s climate aid puts pressure on other countries to contribute more. It increases the chance of achieving a breakthrough in the climate negotiations in Glasgow and thus a faster climate transition worldwide,” says Per Bolund, Minister for Environment and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister.

Swedish climate aid contributes to important investments in both reduced emissions and more climate-friendly and resilient societies in poorer parts of the world. Sweden’s increased climate aid also increases pressure on other rich countries to help fulfil the promise from 2009 of USD 100 billion per year in climate finance. More countries increasing their climate aid would improve the chances of achieving real results in the climate negotiations in Glasgow and thus increasing the pace of global climate transition.

The Government is now making a broad international effort to mobilise additional capital for climate finance and to encourage countries to adopt ambitious climate plans to reduce emissions.

“The world is in a climate crisis with major consequences for human life, health and security. Climate change affects us all, but hits those who are already vulnerable the hardest. Thanks to the Government standing by the 1 per cent goal, we can keep raising ambitions and increasing support to poor countries for climate transition and expansion of renewable energy. Sweden will be part of the solution for the world to meet the 1.5 degree Celsius goal,” says Per Olsson Fridh, Minister for International Development Cooperation.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Yemen's Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed Awad Bin Mubarak visiting Stockholm

Published 09 September 2021

Yemen's Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed Awad Bin Mubarak is visiting Stockholm on 9–10 September for talks on the situation in Yemen and Sweden's support to the international peace efforts.

“The situation in Yemen is extremely serious. The visit of Dr Bin Mubarak is an important opportunity to discuss the crisis and how Sweden and other countries can contribute to a positive change in the conflict. The visit follows on from my trip to Yemen earlier this year and is a continuation of Sweden's strong engagement in the peace efforts,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde.

During the visit, the ministers will discuss UN efforts for new talks between the parties to end the conflict, as well as the need of more international support to the Yemeni people. On 5 September, Swedish diplomat Hans Grundberg took office as UN Special Envoy for Yemen and is now leading UN efforts for a political solution to the conflict.

During the visit, Dr Bin Mubarak will also meet with Minister for International Development Cooperation Per Olsson Fridh, State Secretary Karin Wallensteen, the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Sida and the Folke Bernadotte Academy. It is the first visit of a Yemeni minister to Sweden since 2018, when Sweden hosted the UN-led talks between the parties which resulted in the ‘Stockholm Agreement’.

The Yemeni conflict has caused the world's largest humanitarian crisis in which two thirds of the population – 21 million people – depend on

humanitarian assistance. More international financing for the UN's humanitarian efforts in Yemen is needed during the year. This will be discussed at the meeting with Mr Fridh.

“We are seeing a growing risk of widespread starvation in the country. More countries need to do more to keep the UN's life-saving measures in place. Sweden and Switzerland co-hosted the UN's pledging event for Yemen in March, during which USD 1.7 billion was pledged for the UN's humanitarian activities, but more is needed. We will also discuss how a combination of humanitarian aid, development initiatives and diplomatic support can pave the way for peace,” says Mr Fridh.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Defence

# Sweden's new Government

Published 09 July 2021

Today in the Riksdag, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven announced the ministers who will serve in the Government. The change of government will take place at a Council of State at the Royal Palace presided over by His Majesty The King. The Council of State will begin at 14.15.

Sweden's new Government consists of the Prime Minister and 21 ministers.

## Prime Minister's Office

### Prime Minister

Stefan Löfven

### Minister for EU Affairs

Hans Dahlgren

## Ministry of Employment

### Minister for Employment

Eva Nordmark

Minister for Gender Equality and Housing, with responsibility for urban development, anti-segregation and anti-discrimination

Märta Stenevi

## Ministry of Finance

Minister for Finance

Magdalena Andersson

Minister for Public Administration

Lena Micko

Minister for Financial Markets and Deputy Minister for Finance

Åsa Lindhagen

## Ministry of Defence

Minister for Defence

Peter Hultqvist

## Ministry of Infrastructure

Minister for Infrastructure

Tomas Eneroth

Minister for Energy and Digital Development

Anders Ygeman

## Ministry of Justice

Minister for Justice and Migration

Morgan Johansson



Minister for Home Affairs

Mikael Damberg

Ministry of Culture

Minister for Culture and Democracy, with responsibility for sport

Amanda Lind

Ministry of the Environment

Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister

Per Bolund

Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation

Ibrahim Baylan

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Minister for Health and Social Affairs

Lena Hallengren

Minister for Social Security

Ardalan Shekarabi

Ministry of Education and Research

Minister for Education

Anna Ekström

Minister for Higher Education and Research

Matilda Ernkrans

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ann Linde

Minister for International Development Cooperation

Per Olsson Fridh

Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs

Anna Hallberg



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for International Development Cooperation Per Olsson Fridh appoints international advisory group for environment, climate and biodiversity

Published 04 June 2021

With a view to inspiring and influencing Swedish development policy, Minister for International Development Cooperation Per Olsson Fridh will launch an international advisory group for action on the environment, climate and biodiversity in connection with World Environment Day on 5 June. The advisory group will make an important contribution to fine-tuning Sweden's global engagement in the most affected countries ahead of coming international high level meetings on climate, environment and biodiversity.

Swedish climate and environmental aid has increased significantly in recent years. On this year's World Environment Day on 5 June, Mr Fridh will launch an international advisory group for environment, climate and biodiversity within the scope of development policy. The purpose of the group is to further strengthen Sweden's global agency to address climate change, halt the loss of biodiversity and the depletion of ecosystems. Strong global action on these issues is necessary for sustainable and equitable development, and also to prevent conflicts and new pandemics.

The group consists of international experts and top names who all provide

deep commitment and knowledge in the field.

*“International efforts must be further developed to address the climate crisis and the crisis facing nature. By gathering insight and ideas from a global group of outstanding individuals, we can take development policy for a green and equitable future to the next level,”* says Mr Fridh.

*“By establishing this advisory group, Sweden is showing its willingness to incorporate curiosity, innovation and new perspectives into its development policy. This is urgently needed, as we must act quickly to address an accelerating climate crisis and the biodiversity crisis,”* says Wanjira Mathai, Regional Director for Africa at the World Resources Institute and a member of the group.

Group discussions will be lead by Mr Fridh.

Participants:

- Ili Nadiah Dzulfakar, climate activist and founder of Klima Action Malaysia;
- Wanjira Mathai, Regional Director for Africa at the World Resources Institute think tank;
- Ulrika Modéer, UN Assistant Secretary General and Director of the United Nations Development Programme’s Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy, former State Secretary at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs;
- Sunita Narain, Director General of the Centre for Science and Environment and editor of the Indian magazine Down to Earth;
- Olof Skoog, Head of the European Union delegation to the United Nations in New York, Swedish diplomat.
- Peter Winsor, Professor of Oceanography and Director of the World Wildlife Fund’s Arctic Programme.

A first meeting of the informal advisory group is planned for early autumn.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Humanitarian community takes action to stop famine in Yemen

Published 02 June 2021

The humanitarian situation in Yemen is alarming, with millions of people facing famine. On 1 June, the European Commission and Sweden co-hosted the third Humanitarian Senior Officials Meeting on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

European Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič said: “Yemen remains the world’s largest humanitarian crisis, with looming unprecedented famine. The EU is committed to support the people in need. I welcome the humanitarian community discussing how to better support the Yemeni population. I call on the parties to the conflict to respect International Humanitarian law and allow to deliver urgently needed aid to the affected population throughout Yemen.”

Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs Per Olsson Fridh stated: “We remain committed to supporting the Yemeni people, who have borne the brunt of this devastating conflict for more than 6 years. Today, we have reaffirmed our steadfast support to the lifesaving work of humanitarian actors and the collective message is clear: relief efforts must reach all Yemenis in need of emergency assistance and protection. The SOM approach is unique and has demonstrated that tangible improvements can be achieved when we speak with one voice as a humanitarian community. It is crucial that we jointly monitor progress and continue to push for more improvements.”

During the meeting, the participants expressed their continued concern about the humanitarian situation in Yemen, as the needs reach unprecedented levels and the threat of widespread famine remains as tangible as ever

before. The humanitarian crisis is exacerbated by a collapsing economy, restricted access for humanitarian actors, continuing import restrictions and shortages of humanitarian funding.

Donors, United Nations agencies, and international and Yemeni non-governmental organisations reaffirmed their commitment to continue joint action in line with the collective and coherent stand adopted at the first Senior Officials Meeting in February 2020, further cemented at the second meeting in November 2020. Participants remain committed to upholding humanitarian principles and global accountability standards in the delivery of vital humanitarian assistance through a constructive and sustained engagement with the parties to the conflict.

Donors reaffirmed their full support for the humanitarian organisations that are operating under extreme and difficult conditions on the ground and stressed the need for unimpeded access for humanitarian actors. Important progress has been made, but the improvements are far from enough to address the growing needs. All restrictions, obstructions and interference violating humanitarian principles should be removed once and for all.

In addition, participants highlighted the importance of urgently mobilising additional resources, and their timely disbursement in support of the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan. Lifesaving programmes are being disrupted by funding shortfalls, and more are at risk if additional funds are not received soon.

Participants stressed the critical need to enhance humanitarian and development coordination. Recovery and development investments are required in parallel to emergency response efforts to avoid an imminent famine, while supporting longer-term and sustainable recovery.

Participants reiterated that a sustainable solution in Yemen requires an urgent, nationwide ceasefire and a comprehensive peace agreement reached through an inclusive political process.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Ny The Government plans to donate one million vaccine doses to the COVAX global vaccine cooperation

Published 04 May 2021

Due to the very serious pandemic situation, vaccine deliveries to the COVAX global vaccine cooperation have been delayed. Sweden is therefore planning to donate one million doses of the Astra Zeneca vaccine to COVAX to help meet the acute need for vaccines around the world. The donation will not affect Sweden's national vaccination efforts.

Global access to COVID-19 vaccines is a priority issue for the Government. Vaccines play a crucial role in the fight against the pandemic. But to succeed, vaccines must be available to everyone, not just certain countries. If the virus continues to circulate in any part of the world, the risk of harmful virus mutations increases. This is why Sweden is already one of the world's largest donors to COVAX. Vaccine deliveries to COVAX have been delayed as a result of the rapid spread of the virus, and COVAX and the World Health Organization (WHO) have appealed to Sweden and others to donate vaccines to meet the acute need in COVAX recipient countries. The Government is therefore planning to donate one million Astra Zeneca vaccine doses to COVAX, without this affecting Sweden's national vaccination efforts. The donation will be financed through development assistance and is intended for COVAX aid-funded countries, particularly those affected by delayed vaccine deliveries.

“I am pleased that by donating one million vaccine doses we can respond to the COVAX and the WHO appeal. We are in a critical phase of the pandemic and Sweden continues to contribute forcefully to fighting the pandemic around the world. The donation will not affect Sweden’s national vaccination plan,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Per Olsson Fridh.

Sweden’s national vaccine programme will not be affected by the donation since this vaccine is used for a limited group of people in Sweden – primarily those over 65 – who will be fully vaccinated. Even taking into account a possible further need for vaccine doses in the autumn, Sweden has contracts for more doses than it needs, and these will not go to waste.





Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden to make major investment in global access to vaccines in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic

Published 14 April 2021 Updated 14 April 2021

Today the Government is presenting an extensive investment in global health totalling more than SEK 2.5 billion to increase access to COVID-19 vaccines, prevent and manage the risk of corruption and counter displacement effects on health systems in the world's poorest countries.

More than a year has passed since WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Worldwide, over 130 million people have been infected and at least 2.8 million people have lost their lives. Meanwhile, 114 million people have lost their jobs, 120 million have been pushed into extreme poverty and for more than 168 million children schools have been closed for almost a full year. The fact that we now have safe and effective vaccines is a major success, but to be effective the vaccines must reach all countries, not just the richest. COVAX, the global vaccine initiative, has already reached more than 100 countries – with more than 60 countries receiving donor funded doses – but more resources are needed for these efforts to continue. Global access to vaccines is not just a question of solidarity – without vaccines, there is an increased risk of harmful mutations that threaten all countries including Sweden, economic recovery will be hampered and years of development risk being lost. The pandemic has also led to extensive displacement effects on health systems in the world's poorest countries. That is why there is a need for continued investments in essential preventive measures such as routine vaccination and resilient health systems. Furthermore, there is an increased

risk of corruption when there is such great global demand for vaccines.

The Government is responding to the challenges through a comprehensive global health initiative:

- Instructions to Sida will be made more explicit, with an emphasis on counteracting displacement effects and investing in resilient health systems.
- The Government intends to also contribute SEK 2.25 billion to COVAX, which together with previous contributions amounting to SEK 200 million will make Sweden the world's largest donor to COVAX in terms of population size. The contribution is made via the International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm), with payments over a 10-year period.
- At the same time, Sweden will also provide an additional SEK 250 million to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (Gavi) to ensure access to essential vaccinations in low- and middle-income countries.
- The Government has decided to provide SEK 10 million to Transparency International to combat corruption and counterfeit vaccines during the vaccination phase. In addition, Sweden will take part in a global initiative to leverage new technologies to help ensure that vaccines actually reach their intended destination.

Sweden's increased support to COVAX is presented tomorrow via a video message from Prime Minister Stefan Löfven in connection with the virtual launch of the COVAX AMC Investment Opportunity, together with heads of state from Colombia, El Salvador, Moldova, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Norway, New Zealand, Portugal, and Cabo Verde, hosted by the US.

“This initiative demonstrates the Government's firm commitment to global health and access to COVID-19 vaccines in particular. This makes Sweden the world's largest donor to COVAX relative to our population, and the fourth largest donor overall. We're doing this to show solidarity, but also to contribute to our common goal to end the pandemic,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Per Olsson Fridh.

## **Background**

Instructions to Sida will be made more explicit through a revision of the ‘Strategy for Sweden's global development cooperation in sustainable social development 2018–2022’. The SEK 2.25 billion contribution to COVAX and the contribution to Gavi's regular work with on routine vaccinations of SEK

250 million will be channelled via the International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm) and paid over a 10-year period. Sweden already gives SEK 350 million annually in core support to Gavi. The contribution to COVAX goes to the Advance Market Commitment (AMC) mechanism for COVID-19 vaccines for 92 low- and lower-middle income countries, and is additional to the already disbursed contribution of SEK 200 million. On 3 February, COVAX presented plans to begin delivery of vaccine doses to a total of 145 countries in the first half of 2021, and the first doses were delivered to Ghana on 24 February. By April 8, over 100 countries had received deliveries from Covax. Sweden is part of the EU's vaccine procurement programme, which pushed for global vaccine access from the start. Sweden is also a member of COVAX through the EU.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden intends to contribute an additional SEK 100 million for global access to COVID-19 vaccines

Published 12 February 2021

The Government intends to provide an additional SEK 100 million in grants to COVAX to make COVID-19 vaccines accessible in low and middle income countries. This means that Sweden is doubling its support to the COVAX global vaccine access initiative.

The Government is now planning to allocate an additional SEK 100 million to COVAX so that more people in low and middle income countries and in humanitarian crisis areas get access to vaccines. The pandemic has now claimed more than two million lives around the world, and more than 100 million COVID-19 cases have been registered. The pandemic also has serious indirect effects, not least as regards access to health and medical care and sexual and reproductive health and rights. International humanitarian needs are also greater than they have been in a very long time as a direct result of the pandemic. In the fight against the pandemic, vaccines play a crucial role in ending the effects of the virus, speeding up the economic recovery and reducing the risk of virus mutations. This means that global vaccine access also benefits people in Sweden. To succeed, vaccines must be available to everyone, not just certain countries. This also means that health systems must be able to implement vaccination programmes. In this, Sweden's long-term support to strengthen health and medical care systems also plays an important role.

- "No one is safe until we're all safe. Not helping ensure that people all over

the world can get access to safe and effective vaccines is not an option. This is about solidarity and decency, but also stopping a pandemic that has serious consequences everywhere. I am proud that Sweden can continue to help in the global fight against COVID-19,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Per Olsson Fridh.

The contribution of SEK 100 million is planned to go to COVAX AMC, led by the World Health Organization and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (Gavi). The contribution is for COVID-19 vaccines for 92 low and lower-middle income countries and will be a supplement to an earlier contribution of SEK 100 million given in 2020. On 3 February, COVAX presented plans to begin delivery of vaccine doses to a total of 145 countries in the first half of 2021. Sweden is part of the EU’s vaccine procurement programme, which right from the start pushed for global vaccine access. Sweden is also a member of COVAX through the EU.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# New State Secretary at Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Published 10 February 2021

The Government has appointed Janine Alm Ericson as State Secretary to the Minister for International Development Cooperation at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Ms Ericson was previously group leader of the Green Party in the Riksdag, member of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and gender equality policy spokesperson.

She took up her new position on 5 February 2021.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Anna Hallberg, Ann Linde

# Statement of Foreign Policy

Published 24 February 2021

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.”