



Government Offices of Sweden

Op-ed by Ann Linde and Matilda Ernkrans: Stockholm+50: Drafting the narrative for a green future

Opinion piece by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde and Matilda Ernkrans, Minister for International Development Cooperation in Politico, June 5, 2022.

It's time to take on the responsibility of leadership for a shared green future. But taking responsibility doesn't only mean doing more — it means doing better.

Following two U.N. General Assembly resolutions, and after months of work, the world descended on Sweden's capital last week for Stockholm +50 to discuss the acceleration of efforts to create a healthy planet for the prosperity of all.

Hosted by Sweden and Kenya, the U.N. meeting was more than just a commemoration of the landmark 1972 Stockholm conference — the first world gathering to make the environment a central issue. New complexities in the areas of environment and energy, security and development, and climate and equity mean that isolated responses are simply not good enough. And now is the time for stronger global action that demonstrates the potency of multilateralism.

Along with hundreds of U.N. officials, heads of state, ministers and other government representatives, Stockholm +50 was a gathering that involved civil society – including activists, businesses and scientists – in ways that set new standards for multilateral meetings. And ahead of the meeting in Stockholm, over 50,000 people from all over the world — men and women, young and old, from all walks of life — provided their insights and recommendations.

From this clamor of voices, one message arose loud and clear: the need to

speed up green and fair transitions. If 1972 was the starting point for global efforts to address environmental challenges, Stockholm+50 was about shifting to a faster gear.

The urgency isn't surprising. These are difficult times.

A triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution is already impacting people all over the world. The COVID-19 pandemic is far from over; inequalities and hunger are increasing rather than receding; and through its invasion of Ukraine, Russia's challenging the rules-based global order, causing a humanitarian crisis reaching far beyond Ukraine's borders, deepening the global hunger crisis.

All of this demonstrates the connectedness of our challenges. Human wellbeing and human security depend on a healthy biosphere, requiring broad engagement by responsible governments and vibrant civil society, as well as a functioning international system characterized by adherence to agreed principles, multilateralism and cooperation.

So how do we bring this to life?

Before all else, we must work together. If our aim is human security for all, we'll need integrated analysis and action, and with the Stockholm Hub on Environment, Climate and Security, Sweden's offering a resource for the global community to navigate a complex landscape and make sounder decisions for a safer and more sustainable future. Sweden's newly named ambassador for climate and security will also play a key role as our government moves this agenda forward. We hope that others will follow.

Time is also of the essence. We only have eight years to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, and even less time to change the course on climate and the environment. There is no time to lose, and we all need to do more and do better.

International development aid can play a catalyzing role here, increasing both public and private financial flows into building resilient societies that are net-zero, nature friendly and zero-pollution. Climate adaptation is a global priority, and scaling up support for the least developed countries so they can adapt to a warming climate is a question of justice and solidarity.

The good news, however, is that the acceleration has already begun, and the transition is full of opportunities for people and our planet.

Visualizing our destination means imagining a world that's safer, healthier and more stable than the one we live in today — but transitions underway are already improving lives, while providing ecological and climate benefits.

In Sweden, for example, a green industrial revolution is emerging with flagships, such as the HYBRIT partnership for fossil-free steel, bringing new jobs and development to its neighborhood. Sweden's also one of the few countries allocating 1 percent of its gross national income to international development aid — with the intention of doubling its climate aid in the years to come as well.

But as Stockholm+50 demonstrated, it's not just Sweden — there's a wealth of such examples from all over the world. And these positive stories must feed the engine of transformation.

Today, on World Environment Day — one of the legacies of 1972 — the outcome of last week's conference brings momentum to our efforts for the months and years to come.

Together, we can change the story of the future.

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Government Offices of Sweden

Champions Group on Adaptation Finance welcome a new member and drive forward political ambition on adaptation finance on the road to COP27

Convening ahead of the Stockholm+50 conference this week, Sweden's Minister for International Development Cooperation Matilda Ernkrans and members of the Champions Group on Adaptation Finance reiterated their commitments to raise the political ambition for adaptation finance and address the barriers to increasing flows, quality, effectiveness and accessibility of adaptation finance.

The Champions Group welcomed Canada as a new member, bringing membership to 14. They discussed proposals with Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) concerning their ongoing engagement and joint advocacy. The Group also invited LDCs and SIDS to consider a series of ongoing engagements to share advocacy plans.

The meeting followed the Group's previous engagement in April 2022, when Group members met with LDCs, SIDS and other adaptation finance actors at the Lahti Adaptation Finance Ministerial in Finland to put climate adaptation finance at the forefront of climate discussions in 2022. At this meeting, the Champions Group identified shared priorities to work on together ahead of COP27, as outlined in the [Chair's Summary](#) and [statement of commitment](#) presented by the Group.

Eight weeks on, the Group used the Stockholm+50 conference as an

opportunity to discuss progress and how to jointly take these efforts forward.

The Group now have their sights on COP27 and are committed to working closely with LDCs and SIDS to galvanise stronger political action for their shared adaptation finance priorities.

Sweden’s Minister for International Development Cooperation Matilda Ernkrans:

“Stockholm+50 is a platform for those who want to do more, who want to accelerate the ongoing work on climate, nature and development. This is what the Champions Group for Adaptation Finance is all about – walking the talk and pushing others to do the same. We also know we need to work more and better – together – so we look forward to the Champions Group working closely with Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States to encourage others to take the action needed.”

Canada’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Steven Guilbeault:

“Canada is immensely proud to join the Champions Group on Adaptation Finance and the member countries leading the charge to double adaptation finance. This Group is urging international partners to do more to support the developing world to prepare and adapt to the impacts of climate change. As countries rally around the call for USD 100 billion in climate finance, adaptation must be front and center. That’s why Canada has recently more than doubled our investment in adaptation under our USD 5.3 billion in climate finance to 40 per cent.”

Finland’s Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade Ville Skinnari:

“Extremely happy to see concrete action taking place after the Lahti Ministerial. Champions Group is welcoming an important new member, Canada. Finland will continue to drive progress on adaptation finance with a special focus on bridging climate and finance portfolios.”



Sweden re-launches research partnership for increased support to the environment, climate and security

A research partnership was re-launched 18 May for the environment, climate and security. Called the Stockholm Hub on Environment, Climate and Security, it combines the strengths of four world-leading Swedish research institutes in the environment, climate and security area. The hub will receive more funding for its continuing work to promote knowledge development and policy dialogue.

The effects of climate change, in combination with environmental damage and declining biodiversity, have major implications for the planet's natural resources and the human environment. More and more people will have to share fewer and fewer resources. Extreme weather events are putting people's livelihoods at risk. Consequently, the risk of conflicts is increasing, and preventive efforts are becoming more important.

“For years, Sweden has prioritised highlighting the links between the climate and security, and we have contributed to important steps being taken in the UN, OSCE and EU. We need to continue to improve our understanding of the links between these issues to prevent geopolitical competition for natural resources and avoid new conflicts,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde.

“The countries that are most vulnerable and exposed to climate change and environmental damage are often developing countries, even if we are all affected. This research partnership is one step in providing the best support to the most vulnerable countries through evidence-based analysis and

dialogue,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Matilda Ernkrans.

“Stockholm has become a hub for research on the challenges facing peace and security in the wake of the environmental and climate crisis. This research partnership is aimed at inspiring and supporting Sweden in our leading role in multilateral efforts to find and win support for sustainable solutions together with our partners,” says Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Chair Jan Eliasson.

The Stockholm Hub on Environment, Climate and Security is a partnership between the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and the Stockholm Resilience Centre (SRC). Taking part in the re-launch of the partnership were Ms Linde, Ms Ernkrans, Mr Eliasson, the heads of the four institutes, and the heads and high-level representatives of a number of other Swedish ministries, government agencies and institutes, including Sida and the Folke Bernadotte Academy. Ongoing funding will be provided by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

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Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden and Poland mobilised humanitarian support for Ukraine

On 5 May more than SEK 60 billion in support was announced at a donor conference for Ukraine in Warsaw co-organised by Sweden and Poland together with the EU.

To meet the increasing humanitarian needs and support Ukrainian society, Sweden is allocating an additional SEK 230 million. Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson and Prime Minister of Poland Mateusz Morawiecki co-hosted the donor conference.

“In total, we raised SEK 60 billion, which shows that the rest of the world’s great support for Ukraine remains strong and sustainable,” said Ms Andersson.

In connection with the conference, Minister for International Development Cooperation Matilda Ernkrans led a roundtable discussion on the economic impact of the war.

Following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, humanitarian needs in the country are immense and expected to increase further. Approximately 16 million people are in need of help. Roughly eight million people are internally displaced within Ukraine, while over five million people are estimated to have fled the country. The UN’s humanitarian appeal to provide people in Ukraine with life-saving support and protection will amount to USD 2.5 billion by the end of August. To meet the increasing humanitarian needs and to support the Ukrainian people, Sweden has announced an additional SEK 230 million for humanitarian efforts in Ukraine.

“The war is ongoing and humanitarian needs are increasing. Sweden will therefore contribute an additional SEK 230 million. The Ukrainian people need our support and since the war started, we have contributed SEK 775 million to humanitarian efforts in Ukraine and its neighbourhood,” said Ms

Andersson.

In connection with the donor conference, Sweden and Poland also arranged a roundtable discussion on the economic impact of the war. Sweden was represented by Minister for International Development Cooperation Matilda Ernkrans.

“While we focus on the acute humanitarian efforts in Ukraine, we also need to manage the long-term economic impact of the war. The rest of the world must support early recovery and, in the long-term, reconstruction,” said Ms Ernkrans.

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Humanitarian assistance fully safeguarded as refugee costs increase in 2022

As Sweden assumes responsibility for the many people – primarily women and children – fleeing Ukraine, the increased associated costs can be counted as Official Development Assistance (ODA) in line with OECD DAC guidelines. This is due to Ukraine's classification as an ODA recipient. Like most other countries that provide development assistance, Sweden deducts asylum costs from development assistance. The Government has prioritised fully safeguarding humanitarian assistance and particularly ODA to the poorest countries. Even after deductions for refugee costs, Sweden remains one of the world's largest donor countries.

To ensure that we have coverage for asylum deductions, the Government is now setting a limit on how much of this year's aid funding can be disbursed. This ceiling is approximately SEK 9.2 billion.

The Swedish Migration Agency has presented a number of scenarios in relation to asylum seekers and people in need of temporary protection. According to the main scenario, some 76 000 people from Ukraine may seek asylum in Sweden.

Costs for reception of asylum seekers and people in need of protection from low- and middle-income countries can be counted as ODA on humanitarian grounds during the first year in the host country. This practice has been applied since 1991. The costs deducted from ODA to finance the reception of people from Ukraine would increase by just over SEK 9 billion in 2022.

If the Migration Agency's main scenario is accurate, Sweden will deduct a total of approximately SEK 10.3 billion in 2022. This is equivalent to 18 per cent of the development assistance framework and is lower, for example, than the deductions in 2015, which were equivalent to 22 per cent of the development assistance framework.

The Government remains committed to its target of allocating one per cent of gross national income (GNI) to ODA. Sweden's GNI has grown in recent years and in 2022 amounts to approximately SEK 57 billion. This means that Sweden's development assistance framework is larger than ever before. Therefore, Sweden remains a major aid donor and one of the few countries that surpasses the UN recommendation to allocate at least 0.7 per cent of GNI to ODA.

Due to the decision on deductions against the development assistance budget, the Government is setting a limit on disbursements in the development assistance budget. As a result, some disbursements will be deferred or suspended, some planned disbursements will be reduced, and reprioritisations will take place.

The Government has prioritised fully safeguarding humanitarian assistance and particularly assistance to the poorest countries. Support will go to those hit hard by the pandemic and the accelerating food crisis resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The Government continues to prioritise climate aid and maintains its target of doubling climate aid.

The announced deductions are based on the Migration Agency's main scenario for the number of people needing to seek protection in the country. The number may be lower if fewer than expected arrive in Sweden. If, however, costs for refugee reception increase beyond those anticipated in the Migration Agency's main scenario, it is not certain that those costs can be counted as ODA. In that case, the Government will consider new alternatives for broader funding.

This sudden and extensive humanitarian crisis is an exceptional situation, and many refugees in Europe need to seek protection in Sweden. Sweden's solidarity with the Ukrainian people is immense, and we will help both those who remain in the country and those who have had to flee to other countries. Even after deductions for refugee costs, Sweden remains one of the world's largest donor countries.



Increased humanitarian support to Ukraine

On Tuesday 1 March, Minister for International Development Cooperation Matilda Ernkrans held a press briefing on the humanitarian situation caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Also present at the press briefing were Director-General of Sida Carin Jämtin and UNHCR Representative in Ukraine Karolina Lindholm Billing. Ms Billing took part via a video link from Kyiv.

At the press briefing, Ms Ernkrans spoke about Sweden's humanitarian support to Ukraine. The Government had previously announced that it would increase its humanitarian support by SEK 100 million. On 28 February, the Government decided to further increase its humanitarian support to Ukraine by SEK 500 million. This support will be channelled through humanitarian organisations working to alleviate the situation for people in Ukraine and those in the region who have been forced to flee.

“Sweden's solidarity with the Ukrainian people is immense. Engagement among people in Sweden and around the world is strong and growing every day. We should be proud of this engagement, which the Swedish Government shares. In the last few days, the Government has more than doubled its humanitarian support to Ukraine to further help alleviate the humanitarian crisis,” said Ms Ernkrans.

Karolina Lindholm Billing, UNHCR's representative in Ukraine, provided an overview of the situation in Ukraine, humanitarian needs and how Swedish aid would be used.

The Government has asked Sida to work practically with its humanitarian support to Ukraine. Director-General Carin Jämtin also discussed how Sida works.

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Sweden planning additional support to Ukraine through World Bank

Minister for Finance Mikael Damberg has informed the World Bank that Sweden plans to issue a guarantee of USD 50 million for the World Bank's loan to Ukraine. This will be added to the USD 350 million loan that the World Bank is already preparing.

– The Government's priorities are to keep pushing for sanctions against Russia, to support Ukraine and to strengthen Sweden. Ukraine is in a situation of acute crisis and its financial and economic stability is expected to weaken further as a result of Russia's aggression. By issuing this guarantee, Sweden is contributing approximately half a billion kronor in support to Ukraine, in addition to the loan that the World Bank is already preparing, says Minister for Finance Mikael Damberg.

Ukraine's economy was affected by the deteriorating security situation in the region even before Russia's aggression. An outflow of capital has drained the country's foreign currency reserves, the currency has weakened substantially and the country's Government has lost access to the international capital markets.

Due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the Swedish Government has increased its humanitarian aid by SEK 500 million to support Ukraine and respond to the growing humanitarian needs. Through a committee initiative in the Riksdag last Monday, the Riksdag decided that Sweden will make a financial contribution of SEK 500 million to the Ukrainian central bank's special fundraising account to support the country's armed forces, and provide defence materiel with a maximum total value of SEK 400 million.

The extraordinary situation requires substantial measures. This is why the Government intends to further increase its support to Ukraine by issuing a

guarantee of USD 50 million for the World Bank's loan to Ukraine. The World Bank is readying a USD 350 million loan to respond to Ukraine's acute liquidity crisis. As the planned loan is a follow-up to a loan and reform programme that Ukraine received in 2021, the World Bank can begin the disbursement without delay. If Ukraine is unable to repay back the loan, Sweden's guarantee will be financed through the aid budget.

– Apart from the immediate human suffering that the war is causing, Ukraine's economic development is being seriously harmed. By giving a guarantee to the World Bank, Sweden is helping to support Ukraine financially in this very difficult economic situation, says Minister for International Development Cooperation Matilda Ernkrans.

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Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden further increases humanitarian support to Ukraine

On Sunday 27 February, Minister for International Development Cooperation Matilda Ernkrans held a press briefing on Sweden's support to Ukraine together with Göran Holmqvist, Director of Humanitarian Support at Sida.

Sweden has long been one of the biggest donors of development assistance to Ukraine, comprising both reform-oriented development cooperation and humanitarian support. In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Government has decided to provide additional funds to alleviate the suffering of the Ukrainian people.

“In light of the horrendous developments in recent days, the Government has now decided to donate an additional SEK 20 million to support the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Ukraine. Sweden has thus increased its humanitarian response to Ukraine to SEK 55 million,” said Ms Ernkrans.

Each year, Sweden provides substantial development aid to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which is operating on the ground at the border between Ukraine and Moldova, where many Ukrainians are fleeing. The support can be used for swift action to help refugees, where the needs are greatest.

“In view of rapidly increasing refugee flows, the Government has also decided to bring forward a payment of SEK 50 million to UNHCR to address the humanitarian needs caused by the developments in Ukraine,” said Ms Ernkrans.

Ms Ernkrans presented disbursements and support measures worth a total of SEK 100 million. This consists of SEK 50 million to UNHCR, SEK 30 million to the UN's humanitarian country-level pooled fund and

SEK 20 million to the ICRC.

Sweden has thus contributed a total of SEK 391 million in humanitarian aid to Ukraine since 2014.

Sida's Director of Humanitarian Support Göran Holmqvist stressed the seriousness of the humanitarian situation and that the greatest needs will be among those who are unable to flee. Sida can quickly approve the transfer of resources to where they are most needed. Sida is currently awaiting needs analyses from UN bodies such as OCHA and UNHCR so as to be able to respond to the situation effectively.

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