



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at UN Climate Change Conference COP26

Published 01 November 2021

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

All of you are well aware of the urgency of climate change. We have all agreed to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

The science is clear.

All actors must raise their ambition. Now. And that also means finalising the Paris rulebook here in Glasgow.

In the EU, we will cut emissions by at least 55 per cent by 2030. Sweden committed in 2017 to become the first fossil-free welfare nation by 2045. We intend to keep that promise.

The countries that are able must pave the way.

In Sweden, we are presently undergoing a transition to net zero that goes hand in hand with growth, job creation and the rise of a stronger society where no one is left behind.

It takes political will to make it happen. It also takes a strong innovation climate and a work force secure enough to transition to new green jobs.

We have implemented stricter legislation to set out stable and predictable rules.

We have invested in education and reskilling.
We have enhanced partnerships across sectors,
And we are now seeing a massive transformation:

- Fossil-free steel production;
- The emergence of circular business models;
- An electrifying transport sector;
- And an energy system rapidly converting to renewable sources.

My message is this: The climate transition is not only possible, it also brings enormous opportunities with it. Opportunities to build better societies. But only so if we ensure that the creation of a sustainable world is a just process, benefitting everyone.

As we embrace the green transition, we must ensure that all countries can be part of it. We have a goal of 100 billion US Dollars in climate financing. I urge all countries to deliver their fair share.

Sweden recently announced a doubling of our climate finance to USD 1.75 billion in 2025.

We will continue to respond to developing countries' priorities, allocating roughly half of our bilateral climate finance to adaptation.

To further strengthen our multilateral actions on climate and the environment, the Stockholm+50 conference in June next year can serve as a follow-up to COP26. A chance to reinforce initiatives on the road to COP27 and beyond.

But first: let's make this conference a success.
Let's deliver on our commitments.
And let's help each other.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speeches by Stefan Löfven in connection with Malmö Forum

Published 18 October 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Address by PM Stefan Löfven at the 76th UN General Assembly

Published 24 September 2021

Speech, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, The General Debate of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, September 24

Excellencies,

This year marks 75 years since Sweden became a member of the United Nations.

Today's global challenges demonstrate the urgent need to strengthen international cooperation, with a modern UN at its core.

The devastating impact of the pandemic has tested the resilience of our societies and put pressure on the multilateral system.

More than half of the world's population have not yet been vaccinated against COVID-19. Making sure that vaccines are accessible equally to everyone must be our priority.

COVAX remains our best instrument. Sweden is its largest per capita contributor, and I am proud to announce that we intend to increase our support for global access to vaccines.

We look forward to cooperating with all Member States in identifying ways to improve health systems' prevention, preparedness and response capacities.

Excellencies,

The extreme weather events we have witnessed, with forest fires, flooding

and heat waves, underline the urgent need to act against climate change.

We must listen to the science and transform our societies. We must keep the 1.5 degree goal alive.

Lower emissions, adaptation and protection of biodiversity must be our priority. Recovering from the pandemic will provide an opportunity to build back greener.

This year, we need to stand up to the test as we gather at COP26 in Glasgow, COP15 in Kunming, and prepare to conclude a legal instrument to protect biodiversity in the high seas.

Next year marks 50 years since the world gathered in Stockholm for the first ever UN conference on the environment. In June, we will host Stockholm+50, which we expect will be a catalyst for necessary transformative actions for a systemic change as with regard to the environment and climate change agenda. Let's take this opportunity to help redefine humankind's relationship with nature.

Excellencies,

A renewed commitment to strengthening international cooperation must be based on our joint responsibility to uphold international law.

Human rights are universal and apply to all.

We reiterate our strong support for the Secretary-General's 'Call to Action for Human Rights' and advancing human rights across all of the work conducted by the UN.

We remain deeply concerned that respect for democracy continues to decrease globally. Sweden will continue our strong support to democratic institutions and processes, and to defenders of democracy.

Through Sweden's cross-regional 'Drive for Democracy' initiative, we aim to push back against authoritarianism and promote democracy worldwide.

Excellencies,

The pandemic has exacerbated critical gaps in equality, particularly gender equality. Women and girls have been disproportionately affected. Sustainable development, peace and security are not possible when women and girls are

left behind.

This is why my Government is a feminist government.

Sweden will always stand up for sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Excellencies,

International solidarity is part of the Swedish DNA. We remain firm in our global commitments, including to provide 1 per cent of GNI to overseas development assistance.

Free, fair and sustainable trade is key in order to create new jobs and increase prosperity. The World Trade Organization has an essential role in upholding a rules-based international trading system. We must ensure that we have the means to build back better and greener. As chair of the ILO Governing Body this year, we will promote labour rights.

Excellencies,

The pandemic has also increased the suffering of the most vulnerable. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance to survive has reached a new record level. Global hunger, driven by armed conflicts and climate change, is soaring.

We urge Member States to urgently step up funding to save lives and alleviate suffering. Sweden remains one of the largest humanitarian donors.

We need to find new ways to support the Afghan people to sustain the achievements made in the last 20 years. The increasingly acute humanitarian crisis and the protection and promotion of human rights – in particular regarding people belonging to minorities, women and girls – must be addressed. In this, the UN plays a critical role. Sweden's longstanding engagement and our support to the Afghan people remain steadfast.

Excellencies,

Sweden continues to be a champion for long-term peacebuilding and we are a substantial contributor of personnel to UN peace operations.

In Yemen, relentless fighting has worsened the humanitarian catastrophe. Sweden remains deeply engaged. We urge the parties to agree on a ceasefire and take part in political talks under UN auspices. The implementation of the

Stockholm and Riyadh agreements remains a key step. Sweden is committed to leading international efforts to mobilise additional funding for the world's largest humanitarian operation.

In Ethiopia, the Tigray conflict's expansion is causing immense human suffering. We urgently call on all parties to ensure full and sustained humanitarian access, agree to a ceasefire and work for a political solution.

Excellencies,

One year ago, peaceful protests in Belarus were followed by ruthless repression. Sweden and the EU demand respect for human rights. We support the Belarusian people's right to democracy, freedom of expression and the rule of law.

Sweden remains a steadfast supporter of Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence. We continue to unequivocally denounce Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol.

This year, Sweden is chairing the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Our guiding principle is to return to the basics by defending the European security order based on respect for international law and the UN charter.

Strengthening the OSCE's cooperation with the UN is a priority, not least on the ground in conflict situations.

Excellencies,

The nuclear threat is as present as ever. To reverse this negative trend, we welcome recent steps such as the extension of the New START Treaty, and the US and Russian joint statement reaffirming that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought".

The Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament aims to ensure that concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament are taken, not least in view of the upcoming Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Some progress has been made, but much more remains to be done. We call on all States, in particular nuclear weapon states, to do their part.

We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to adhere to its international obligations and take steps towards denuclearisation.

Excellencies,

This will be my last address as Prime Minister of Sweden to the General Assembly. As I look back at my seven years in office, I can only conclude that global challenges are becoming ever more pressing. But together, we have also made important progress.

Sweden remains an active champion of finding common solutions to the challenges we jointly face. Our roadmap is global implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Gender equality is the unfinished human rights struggle of this century. Gender equality has always been a key priority in decision-making and resource allocation in my government – and I have promoted gender equality globally.

Climate change is the defining issue of our time. In 2017, the Swedish Parliament adopted the most ambitious climate reform in Sweden's history, aiming at net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2045. Together with India, I am proud to have launched the Leadership Group for Industry Transition.

Inequality has further accelerated. Together with the ILO and the OECD, I launched the Global Deal partnership for decent work and inclusive growth in 2016. The objective is to improve the global labour market and enable people to benefit from globalisation.

In October, I will host the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism – Remember ReAct. The rise of racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and antisemitism must be rigorously countered. The Forum aims to take concrete steps in the work for Holocaust remembrance and the fight against antisemitism.

Excellencies,

Last year's adoption of the UN75 Declaration, co-facilitated by Sweden and Qatar, was a re-commitment to strengthening international cooperation, with a modern, innovative and inclusive United Nations at its core.

Together with the Prime Minister of Spain, I have launched a network of leaders to support the Secretary-General in taking the Common Agenda forward. Future generations should be at the centre of these efforts. We look forward to contributing to the preparations of a 'Summit of the Future' in

2023.

Sweden joined the United Nations 75 years ago. Rest assured that we will continue working with all of you all towards a peaceful, green, more equal and healthier planet.

We will remain as committed to international cooperation in the future as we have been over these last 75 years.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Statement of Government Policy, 14 September 2021

Published 14 September 2021

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, the Riksdag, 14
September 2021.

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members
of the Riksdag,

Swedish democracy is just one hundred years old.

In the late 1910s, poverty was severe and inequality glaring. But despite the troubled times, 1918 has become known as the year when “Sweden became Sweden”.

Political parties that had previously struggled to cooperate pulled together, putting their differences aside. In the years that followed, universal and equal suffrage was granted. ‘Poor auctions’ were replaced with social responsibility for vulnerable people. The eight-hour working day was introduced. The seeds of the welfare society were planted.

Thanks to cooperation, Sweden was able to move forward in spite of the turmoil that rocked Europe. But it was never self-evident that this would be the case.

Let this serve as a reminder that democracy cannot be taken for granted. It begins and ends with us citizens. The work of building a society is never done or immune to those who want to destroy it and assign differential value to people according to their sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, skin colour, religion or class.

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Mr Speaker,

In a book called Historien om Bodri [‘The Story of Bodri’], a little girl describes her best friend: “Marika and I were almost the same height and we were just as good as each other at whistling. [...] We both had grazed knees and new front teeth. The only difference was that the prayers we said were different.”

The little girl’s name is Hédi Fried. She’s afraid, but most of all she doesn’t understand. Why isn’t she allowed to play with her friend anymore? Why do people hate her when she hasn’t done anything? Dressed in prisoners clothes and hard shoes, she longs for her mum and dad, and for her dog Bodri.

In one month’s time, I will host REMEMBER – REACT, the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism. The Forum will gather leaders and researchers. Concrete pledges to promote Holocaust remembrance and combat antisemitism and racism in our societies will be made by the political leaders attending the Forum.

In March, Sweden will assume the Presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Sweden’s Holocaust museum will welcome its first visitors in July next year.

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There is no place for racism in Sweden. We will intensify our efforts to combat antisemitism, Islamophobia, Afrophobia, antigypsyism and racism against the Sami. Our efforts will be based on the national plan against racism.

The culture and language rights of the indigenous Sami and other national minorities will be strengthened. The Government wants a stricter Discrimination Act that provides for more comprehensive protection against discrimination. Before the end of this electoral period, it should be possible for the Riksdag to adopt new modern legislation concerning gender recognition.

On 1 January, an institute tasked with promoting human rights in Sweden will be established in Lund.

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Mr Speaker,

EU cooperation makes Sweden stronger and more secure. Threats such as the climate crisis, pandemics, terrorism and organised crime cannot be tackled by one country alone. Together we will strengthen our crisis management and preparedness. The EU will continue to take the lead in the climate transition and in pushing for strengthened competitiveness and a faster digital transformation. Migration also needs to be managed jointly in the EU.

The Government is working to bring about a more equal Europe, with better working conditions and greater gender equality. The EU must be open to the world and protect human rights. The trends we see of academic, media and civil society freedoms being curtailed and judicial independence being questioned must be countered.

Effective European cooperation is based on a clear division of responsibilities between the EU and its Member States. This division remains unchanged. Sweden will continue to make its own tax decisions. The social partners are responsible for agreements on pay and conditions. Forestry will not be subject to exhaustive rules from Brussels.

In an era of rising protectionism, Sweden is a driving force for free, sustainable and fair international trade and a strong single market. The Government promotes new free trade agreements and stands up for the environment and human rights in these contexts. This means that trade can contribute to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

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Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves our country well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. Sweden will not take a passive stance if another Nordic country or EU Member State suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected.

We are living in a time when geographic, economic and technological power is shifting. Current global developments underscore the EU's position as Sweden's most important foreign and security policy arena. Through EU membership, we can contribute to a secure, democratic and prosperous

Europe, at the same time as our values and foreign policy positions have a greater impact. The transatlantic relationship is essential to the security and prosperity of Sweden and Europe.

Our ongoing term as Chair of the OSCE gives Sweden further opportunity to defend the European security order based on international law and the United Nations Charter. Security can only be guaranteed in cooperation with others and with respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Swedish migration policy must be legally certain, effective and humane. New legislation that upholds the right of asylum and establishes a balance between rights and obligations has entered into force.

The possibility of establishing State-run reception centres where asylum seekers will live and take part in an introduction to Swedish society during their initial period in Sweden will be investigated.

Labour migration to Sweden is important to many growing and developing businesses. Expulsions of skilled people will stop, and a specific visa for highly qualified workers will be introduced. It is equally important to address the problem of exploitation of foreign workers. The legitimacy of labour migration can only be maintained by preventing fraud and injustice.

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Mr Speaker,

The security situation in our neighbourhood and in Europe has deteriorated over time. The threat to Sweden has broadened and become more complex. For this reason, a new, updated national security strategy is being developed.

Sweden's foreign, security and development policies are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Around the world, armed conflicts are increasing in number and becoming more protracted, and are having increasingly severe humanitarian consequences. The number of refugees is at an all-time high.

Swedish and EU development cooperation create conditions to improve the lives of people living in poverty and oppression. The commitment to allocating the equivalent of one per cent of Sweden's gross national income to official development assistance remains unchanged.

The need for common security has never been greater. Strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation, for example in the UN, benefits

international peace and security.

Sweden is deepening its defence cooperation with Finland, with other Nordic neighbours, in the EU, through the transatlantic link and with NATO. The Government will continue to develop defence partnerships that strengthen Sweden's security.

A strong national military defence is being built up again. The re-establishment of five regiments and an air force wing will begin in late 2021, and these units will be fully operational in 2026. They are the Dalarna Regiment in Falun, the Västernorrland Regiment in Sollefteå with a training detachment in Östersund, the Norrland Dragoon Regiment in Arvidsjaur, the Bergslagen Artillery Regiment in Kristinehamn, the Älvsborg Amphibious Regiment in Gothenburg and the Uppland Air Force Wing in Uppsala.

Sweden also needs a strong civil defence. Society's capacity to manage a heightened state of alert, and ultimately war, will also be increased. This will also improve its crisis preparedness in peacetime.

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Intractable conflicts with far-reaching humanitarian consequences are playing out in Afghanistan, Yemen and Mali. Lasting peace between Israel and Palestine requires a two-state solution. Sweden and the EU condemn Russia's military aggression towards Ukraine and its illegal annexation of Crimea. The increasing repression in Belarus is alarming. Sweden is deeply engaged in all of these issues.

The evacuation from Afghanistan is a reminder of the extraordinary efforts Swedish staff are making in the wider world, often under difficult conditions. Staff at our missions abroad, the Swedish Armed Forces, Sida and other government agencies, civil society representatives, journalists and many others are making invaluable contributions to peace, security, democracy and development. My heartfelt thanks to you all.

The threat of nuclear weapons is a critical global issue. The Stockholm Initiative offers a political agenda for nuclear disarmament. The Government is working for clear progress in the UN's non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament efforts.

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Mr Speaker,

The Government has four overall priorities: jobs, the climate, welfare and security.

Jobs are the foundation of our country's prosperity. Jobs build individual freedom and younger generations' hopes of a better future. Jobs will take Sweden forward after the pandemic.

The greatest freedom and security reform in the Swedish labour market in decades is currently under way. The new career transition assistance scheme will offer support for further education and training to tens of thousands of working adults so they can be better positioned in the future labour market without suffering heavy financial losses while studying.

The Adult Education Initiative provides more education and training places throughout our country. Mälardalen University will receive official university status. Regional dimensioning of upper secondary education that better reflects labour market demands is being introduced.

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Long-term unemployment afflicts families and local communities where it has become entrenched. It must be combated through active labour market policies. More extra jobs and introductory jobs, reinforced new start jobs and more opportunities for work placement schemes are important measures, particularly for older people and foreign-born women. The Government is working to introduce labour market entry agreements in accordance with the social partners' proposal.

The quality of Swedish for Immigrants education will be improved through more stringent scrutiny and the opportunity for more adults to combine Swedish language courses with vocational education and training.

Arbetsförmedlingen (the Swedish Public Employment Service) is being reinforced and the agency's reforms continue. The number of matching services is being substantially expanded so that more people can be supported into employment or education, wherever they live in the country. Arbetsförmedlingen will ensure a local presence throughout the country. Good collaboration with municipalities, the social partners and other actors is necessary to meet the recruitment needs of employers and create more pathways to jobs.

Swedish wages and conditions must apply to everyone who works in

Sweden. More controls and a more effective exchange of information by public authorities are needed to stop rogue businesses that exploit people. The Government will introduce a new national delegation to fight work-related crime.

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It must be worthwhile to work in Sweden – and it must be worthwhile to have worked. The pension supplement is now being paid out to pensioners who have had a long working life with low pay. Additional steps must be taken, however. The Government therefore proposes an increased housing supplement and the introduction of a security pension so that people over the age of 60 who are physically worn out will not have to take out their old-age pension prematurely. The Government considers that payments into the pension system must increase. The issue will be laid before the Working Group on Pensions.

In Sweden, illness must never equate to poverty. For this reason, the Government proposes a comprehensive investment to increase both financial security in case of illness, and rehabilitation time so that people can return to work.

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Mr Speaker,

The climate crisis is the defining issue of our time. The effects of a warmer climate – fires, drought, floods and rising sea levels – continue to impact people. Sweden will drive down climate emissions and become the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. Our future hinges on our ability to do what is necessary now.

The green industrial revolution has only just begun. The Government's proposed green credit guarantees will help reduce risks and lower thresholds for major new industrial initiatives. A regional export advisory initiative is under way to help businesses throughout the country reach international markets.

Twenty per cent of Sweden's emissions derive from the construction sector. The introduction of climate declarations will strengthen the possibility of demanding emissions reductions from the construction sector. The Government wants to accelerate the transition to more sustainable

construction and more resource-efficient use of building materials.

Based on the Forests Inquiry, the Government will propose measures to strengthen ownership rights, simplify regulations and increase sustainable production in our forests.

In this transition, it is crucial that all stakeholders take responsibility and that central government sets an example. The possibility to impose climate criteria in public procurement will be improved.

In the wake of the pandemic, more and more Swedes have been exploring our natural environments. On mountain hiking trails and in nature reserves, visitor numbers are at an all-time high. This trend will be encouraged. The tourism and hospitality industry will be strengthened.

A green reindustrialisation will be enabled by increasing the electrification of our society. A national electrification strategy is being drafted to propose how electricity production can increase, paving the way for industrial transition and an electric vehicle fleet.

The Government's climate policy benefits Swedish businesses and Sweden's competitiveness, and creates new jobs in Sweden.

The European Commission has presented a comprehensive legislative package to achieve the EU climate targets. Sweden will push for the bar to be set high as this work continues.

In June next year we will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the UN's first conference on the environment, which was held in Stockholm in 1972. Sweden will host Stockholm+50, a UN conference that aims to help accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Together we must transition our society – for the sake of the climate, for the sake of Sweden.

Mr Speaker,

For it to be possible to work throughout the country, it must be possible to live throughout the country.

Housing construction is now growing at a greater rate than the population. The rate of construction will remain high and investment support will continue to be developed. Attractive living spaces will be created in the municipalities that are now growing thanks to new jobs.

It will be easier to build close to shorelines in rural areas, local influence over shore protection areas will increase and shore protection measures will be strengthened in heavily exploited areas.

The Government is now making the biggest rail investment of modern times – in both new tracks and upgrades. New main lines for high-speed trains will be constructed. The North Botnia Line will be completed. Record investments are being made to ensure that it is safe to travel on our roads, and further investments will help improve order on the roads. Work is under way to produce a new national plan for investments in roads and railways for 2022–2033. The aim is to adopt the plan next year.

Good access to commercial and government services is necessary throughout the country. The special operational subsidies for grocery shops in vulnerable areas and remote locations will be made permanent, and support will be offered for necessary investments in filling stations in sparsely served areas. The substantial expansion of government service offices will be completed.

The Government continues to strengthen culture and support recovery in the cultural sector throughout the country. Culture will flourish after the pandemic.

Sweden needs diverse independent media throughout the country and strong public service broadcasting. Newspaper distribution will be strengthened so that everyone can have a newspaper delivered to their door every day. The media subsidy system will be modernised to better fit the modern media landscape.

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Mr Speaker,

The Government will continue to prioritise resources to the welfare system.

Health care, schools and social services rest on the shoulders of those working in them. They need more colleagues, the right training and better working environments. It will therefore be possible for anyone working in care for older people to study on paid work time to become an assistant nurse. The right of all home-help service users to a dedicated contact person will be established in law. The Government continues to work on drafting new legislation on care for older people to boost the quality of care services and make them more equitable across the country.

Health care services will be strengthened. Access will be improved and primary care will be expanded. Continuity of care in general practice will be ensured for more people. The new National Health Competence Council will help ensure that staff with the right skills are available.

Investments in cancer care, maternity care and women's health, psychiatric care and emergency service care continue. Contingency planning in health care will be strengthened in the long term. The pandemic has shown that this is necessary.

The Government will continue to strengthen the right to personal assistance. This year, the Government will propose support for self-care measures, reduced parental requirements and enhanced support for supervision.

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Mr Speaker,

Swedish schools must return to world-class learning outcomes. But for outcomes to continue to rise, schools must be more equitable. Preschools and out-of-school centres will be improved, an initiative to reinforce school libraries will be launched and more resources will be directed to the schools with the greatest needs.

Pupils should be able to choose their school, but schools should not be able to choose their pupils. A common admissions system and fairer selection rules are therefore necessary. Municipal schools have greater responsibilities than independent schools; this must be mirrored in their funding.

Central government needs to take greater responsibility through a regional presence and the introduction of a national professional programme for head teachers, teachers and preschool teachers.

The focus on knowledge and on order in schools continues. It should be

easier to close down schools that are not up to standard. A moratorium on new confessional independent schools will be introduced, and existing ones will be monitored better. The national plan for safe and conducive study environments contains proposals to ban mobile phones and introduce clearer powers for school staff to intervene when the situation demands it.

The pandemic has taken a serious toll on our society and pupils have certainly been affected. For this reason, schools will be given extra resources for catch-up school and homework support.

Every pupil must realise that it is not past dips in form, but present willingness to work hard to learn more that is crucial. Subject grades will therefore be introduced instead of course grades in upper secondary school.

The conditions for values-based actors in the welfare sector will be improved. The activities of non-profit organisations that benefit from government grants must respect democratic principles.

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Mr Speaker,

In the book *Tills alla dör* [‘Until they’re all dead’], a woman from Rinkeby in Stockholm utters these heart-rending words: “It is our children who are dying. We need help.”

Gang crime must be crushed with the full force of society. The investment in ten thousand additional police employees by 2024 continues and is enabling a stronger police presence throughout the country.

Anyone who commits multiple offences should be punished more severely. Reduced sentences for young adult offenders will be abolished for serious offences. The Youth Care Act will also be reviewed to ensure that sentences reflect the severity of the serious offences we are now seeing committed at ever younger ages.

Without witnesses, the work of police officers and prosecutors is very difficult and, ultimately, the rule of law is jeopardised. There will be tougher penalties for obstructing the course of justice and for perjury, sentence mitigation will be introduced for those who assist in the investigation of another person’s offences, and better support will be offered to witnesses.

Crime prevention must be intensified. For this reason, social interventions

must be possible even without parental consent. The municipalities will be given statutory responsibility for crime prevention activities.

Exclusion orders will be investigated with a view to protecting children from destructive areas and environments. More secure places are being created at National Board of Institutional Care facilities. Safety, security and staff training will be increased.

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Earlier this year, five women were murdered by their husbands in the space of just three weeks. Children lost their mothers and families were left shocked and grieving. Men's violence against women must be combated vigorously and decisively.

A new ground for more severe penalties for offences motivated by hate against women will be examined and criminal law protection against psychological violence will be considered. Access to high-quality sheltered accommodation throughout the country will be ensured.

Children must also be protected from violence. An inquiry is reviewing protection for children with regard to contact with a parent who has used violence or is guilty of some other serious violation. Criminal law protection of children against sexual abuse will be strengthened. A comprehensive national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children is now being developed. Next year a Little Sweetheart's law will be adopted, strengthening protection for children and young people in care.

No child or young person should be forced to live under oppression. The Government's efforts to end honour-based crimes continue. A national centre of expertise on honour-based violence is being established and a specific criminal classification for honour-based offences will be introduced.

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Mr Speaker,

More than twenty months have now passed since the Government decided to classify COVID-19 as a dangerous threat to public health. People who have not yet been vaccinated have an important duty to do so – a duty to themselves, to others, and to ease the burden on the health care system.

So far, more than 70 per cent of all adults in Sweden have received two

doses of the vaccine. This is a great success for research, for health care and for European cooperation. Thanks to increasing vaccination rates, Sweden is in a new and better position. We are all looking forward to the day when all the restrictions can be lifted. But we are not there yet.

The Government has appointed an inquiry to apply the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance society's ability to manage future pandemics and epidemics.

The pandemic is still very much around, everywhere in the world. This is why the Government is taking active steps to ensure equitable global access to vaccines. No one is safe until everyone is safe.

Thanks to responsible fiscal policy, Sweden entered the pandemic with strong public finances. The Government has pursued aggressive crisis-response policies to save jobs and businesses, ensure that welfare services can cope and reduce the economic impacts of the pandemic. Sweden's economy is now making a strong recovery.

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The COVID-19 pandemic is slowly loosening its grip. The pandemic is a new chapter in our country's long history.

An unwritten future lies ahead. We have reason to feel confident. Our democracy is strong. We live in peace in one of the most gender-equal countries in the world. Trust between people and a desire to contribute to our world are hallmarks of our country. We have societal challenges but we also have the tools to solve them.

We will meet our challenges together. And we will do so in the conviction that the society we bequeath to our children must be stronger and more sustainable than the society bequeathed to us.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Address by PM Stefan Löfven at the Climate Ambition Summit 2020

Published 12 December 2020

Stockholm, 12 December 2020. Check against delivery.

Your excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Paris Agreement was a triumph for multilateral cooperation. It gave us hope that we could curb climate change and rising temperatures.

During these five years, we have seen progress.

But science never lies. Current measures under the Paris Agreement are not enough.

The clock is ticking. We need to step up the pace.

Sweden will do its part:

- internationally, providing finance and innovative technology; and
- nationally, by increasing measures to become the world's first fossil-free welfare state.

Last week, we presented our national Long-Term Strategy.

By 2045, Sweden is to have zero net emissions of greenhouse gases, and thereafter achieve negative emissions.

This autumn, our first global pilot plant for fossil-free steel production was launched, Hybrit. This is one of the biggest technological shifts in steel

manufacturing in a thousand years.

In addition, a Swedish mining company, LKAB will invest a further 40 billion EUR to lower its emission, which could help their customers worldwide reduce their emissions by 35 million tonnes per year. It is equivalent to two thirds of Swedish national emissions.

The Government's Budget Bill for 2021 includes up to 1.5 billion euros in green credit guarantees.

On export finance – in addition to the existing ban on financing exports to coal power plants – by the end of 2020, no more export credit guarantees will be given for deals linked to the exploration, extraction and transportation of coal.

By 2022, we will end Swedish export credits for investments for fossil-fuel prospecting and extraction.

Last week, we hosted the second summit of the Leadership Group for Industry Transition, which we launched together with India last year. I am happy to announce that Sweden will provide a multiannual contribution over three years to the Climate Investment Fund amounting to 30 million euros.

We are the first country to provide multiannual financial contributions to the Adaptation Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund, amounting to 100 million euro for the period 2019-2022.

We need to step up our ambition and action. It is a responsibility for all countries.

Let's walk the talk!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven's address to the nation Sunday 22 November

Published 25 November 2020

Check against delivery.

Tonight I would like to say a few words that I'd like you to bear in mind now as winter darkness settles over us.

This year, the world has changed before our very eyes.

Early this spring, we were faced with a huge challenge in the form of a pandemic.

The COVID-19 virus forced us all to make major sacrifices.

We have had to refrain from so much of what we hold dear.

We have had to cancel or avoid so many of our normal activities.

And tonight, in late November 2020, it is clear that it will be some time before we can return to what we consider 'normal'.

For this reason, I will once again ask you for something that is very difficult but completely necessary.

The short respite we experienced during the summer and autumn is truly over.

Then, neighbours and friends could get together outdoors for a cup of coffee.

We were able to meet our frail relatives out in the fresh air.

Life did not return to normal – but there were moments during those lovely summer days when it almost felt as if it had.

This spring, many people said that at least COVID-19 had struck during the bright days of March rather than the dark days of November.

Now it is November.

People's health and lives are still at risk.

And the danger is increasing.

More and more people are being infected.

More and more ICU places are being used for treating seriously ill COVID-19 patients. More and more people are dying.

Let us remember that more than 6 000 people in Sweden have already died from COVID-19.

Let us remember that for every person who has died, there are people who have lost a beloved parent, a beloved child or a beloved friend.

Let us remember how overworked health and social care staff were.

And let us remember that they are still hard at work, day and night, to save lives.

What we as a country do wrong now, we will suffer for later. What we get right now, we will benefit from later.

What we do now will affect how we celebrate Lucia Day.

How we celebrate Christmas.

Who is still with us at Christmas time.

It may sound harsh. It may sound brutal.

But this is exactly how harsh and brutal reality is.

We know what we have to do to flatten the curve of transmission.

We've done it before. We did it last spring.

Then, when COVID-19 arrived in our country, we all agreed to take

responsibility.

We took responsibility for Sweden. We protected ourselves, our loved ones and people we don't even know.

We took responsibility and we gave health and social care staff a chance to cope with the acute crisis.

We did it together. This is our strength, Sweden's strength.

This autumn, too many of us have neglected to follow the advice and recommendations.

But now we see that people are starting to take responsibility again. That fewer people are travelling, and more are working from home.

Continue to do so – and stay strong.

But we all must to do more.

It depends on you and me.

So:

Stay updated as to the advice and recommendations that apply where you are.

Only get together with those you live with.

If you live alone, choose no more than one or two friends to socialise with.

But continue to keep your distance.

Stay at home if you have the slightest symptoms.

Wash your hands often and carefully.

And employers: if possible, arrange for your employees to work from home.

Regarding all the things you'd like to do but that are not necessary:

Cancel them. Re-book them. Postpone them.

It will be some time before this is over. And until then, this is the new 'normal' for all of society, for all of Sweden.

To those who feel that everything is dark now, let me say: the situation is not hopeless.

Sweden is being tested. But Sweden will pull through.
Our health and social care are functioning, despite everything.
Buildings and roads are being built, despite everything.
Our children are getting an education and are eager to learn, despite everything.

We must take this situation very seriously, but we will do so with discipline, determination and courage.

To those who may feel that this doesn't concern them, let me say:

Even if you only become mildly ill, you can still infect others. In restaurants, at work, during meals at home, on buses or in shops.

A stranger you infect may become very ill.
A friend you infect may need hospital care.
A grandparent you infect may die.

These are the people for whom you should make sacrifices. These are the people for whom you must show determination, self-discipline and a sense of responsibility.

When this crisis is over, we must all be able to remember how we helped one another.

Remember the solidarity. Remember the feeling of community and the feeling of doing the right thing. Remember how we pushed back the spread of infection and lifted our country.

But this means that here and now, we must show our solidarity and our sense of responsibility.

And that these are stronger than the virus we are going to defeat.

So now let's get on with this.

Together.

For Sweden.



Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at the High-level meeting on Beijing+25

Published 01 October 2020

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Gender equality is a concern for us all: women, men, girls and boys.

Not only is it a moral or legal obligation to promote equality and rights for women and girls, it is also a question of common sense – and smart economics.

No society will fully prosper if half of its population is denied access to education, to the possibility of working and to supporting a family.

The spring of 2020 was supposed to be a celebration of gender equality. A year to salute the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the 20th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325, and the fifth anniversary of the 2030 Agenda.

Instead, the COVID-19 pandemic has on a global level exposed inequality and increased the gap between women and men:

Men's violence against women, including honour-related violence, has increased during the pandemic.

More girls have been taken out of education to be married off.

Sexual abuse cases against women and girls have increased.

It is happening in my country and across the world. It is appalling and must never be accepted. We need to show courage and the leadership to take action.

At the same time, women have often been at the forefront of the pandemic. As doctors, nurses and caretakers in intensive care units, emergency rooms and elderly care homes.

I lead the world's first feminist government. A gender equality perspective is central to all government ministries and to all our priorities, in decision-making and when allocating resources.

Sweden will remain a progressive country for women's rights and gender equality. It is our experience that having an income of their own is decisive for women's empowerment and economic independence. This is a conviction we bring with us to the table as co-leader of the Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights in the framework of the Generation Equality campaign.

Now, is the time to start building back better – human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality must be at the heart of our efforts, leaving no one behind.

Now, is the time when we, as leaders and decision-makers, must take joint steps to speed up implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Sweden is ready to do its part.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Statement of Government Policy

Published 08 September 2020

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, the Riksdag, 08 September 2020.

Your Majesties,
Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of the Riksdag,

Sweden is a country to be proud of.

We are leading the world in the climate transition.
Our country's natural beauty is extraordinary, our popular movements dynamic and our parental insurance system outstanding.

The generations that came before us built a country where everyone is expected to take their share of responsibility for Sweden, but where everyone also has every opportunity to achieve their full potential.

We have safety nets and support for people who become unemployed or sick; we have free education and innovative businesses.

This is our Sweden, and we should be proud of it.
This is our country, and we will make it even better. That is our common task.

Mr Speaker,

The COVID-19 crisis is testing our country.

I would like to thank all the parties and members of the Riksdag for their cooperation in these difficult times for Sweden.

You have given every person in Sweden reason to be proud of our

democracy.

COVID-19 will shape our country for a long time to come, and society is equipped to deal with new outbreaks.

The Government has decided to take part in the EU's joint procurement of vaccines.

Large-scale testing, physical distancing and contact tracing will continue. A commission is currently evaluating our society's overall response to the COVID-19 crisis. The commission's first report is due by the end of the year and the final report will be submitted in February 2022.

This year, we have spoken much more than usual about responsibility and solidarity.

Every individual has had to take significant responsibility to help Sweden cope with the COVID-19 crisis – and we will need every person to help build a stronger Sweden.

The Sweden that was hit by COVID-19 was not perfect, with deficiencies in care for older people, ongoing climate change that impacts our children's future, and cracks in the welfare system that is meant to guarantee people's security.

That's why we will not go back to how Sweden was before the crisis. We will build back even better.

We now have the opportunity to simultaneously create jobs and address societal challenges.

We will do this by investing in health care, care of older people and the climate transition.

The basis of the Government's policy is the January Agreement, the broad political cooperation agreement that provides stability, protects our open and democratic society, and offers concrete solutions to Sweden's societal challenges.

The solidarity that has characterised our country during the crisis will also be needed in the future. The task of strengthening Sweden is a joint one, involving the social partners, civil society and the engagement of individuals.

Together we will manage COVID-19.

Together we will work Sweden out of the economic crisis.

And together we will build our country back stronger than before.

Mr Speaker,

The COVID-19 virus has severely impacted people's lives and health, but the economy has also been hit. Many entrepreneurs and employees have had a very difficult year.

When COVID-19 hit, Sweden had its lowest national debt since 1977. Our economic strength enabled measures such as short-term lay-offs and reorientation support, which have saved jobs and businesses.

We are now moving forward. We need to continue to keep transmission rates low, but the transition from crisis-response policies to long-term investments is now beginning. This involves a historic budget bill containing new proposals worth more than SEK 100 billion.

Our entire society needs to be on board to work Sweden out of this crisis. Through investments in health care, care of older people and the climate transition we will strengthen Sweden while giving people jobs here and now. Entrepreneurs must be able to hire, and it has to be easier for young people to get their first job and home of their own.

A high employment rate is crucial to Sweden's prosperity. But jobs are also crucial for the individual, for everyone who gets up when the alarm goes off, has a cup of strong coffee with their breakfast and then goes to work. Jobs provide a means of support but also a sense of belonging, the possibility to build our own lives – and contribute to our country. To better enable needs to be met, the reform of Arbetsförmedlingen (the Swedish Public Employment Service) will continue.

People need to be equipped to take the jobs that are available. For this reason, the Adult Education Initiative will continue to be expanded throughout the country. Particular focus will be placed on training programmes for shortage occupations.

Research and innovation are required to create jobs and strengthen Sweden's competitiveness. A research and innovation bill will be presented in the autumn.

Labour law will be modernised and adapted to today's labour market, while maintaining the balance between the social partners. If the social partners reach an agreement on how to reform the Employment Protection Act, the Government will put forward corresponding proposals.

During the COVID-19 crisis, many people who are able to work from home have been doing so. Remote working, digital coffee breaks with colleagues and digital meetings have become the norm. Expansion of digital infrastructure throughout the country will continue.

It should be possible to live and work anywhere in the country. Opportunities for running a business in rural areas will continue to be improved. Investing in housing and infrastructure is an effective way of both stimulating the economy and creating job opportunities throughout Sweden.

We have a historic opportunity to implement measures that provide jobs here and now – but that also strengthen Sweden. We will seize this opportunity. Together we will work Sweden out of the crisis and build a more sustainable society.

Mr Speaker,

Global warming is the defining issue of our time. The effects of a warmer climate – fires, drought, rising sea levels – continue to impact people. The world's poorest are the least to blame for the climate emergency but they are the hardest hit.

Sweden's goal is to be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. We will continue to be a world leader in fighting global warming and implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Sweden's world-leading position on climate transition and electrification benefits our companies, our exports, our workers, our welfare and our country.

A green tax shift will be implemented, which means that taxes on environmentally damaging activities will be increased and taxes on labour and enterprise will be lowered.

Sweden's first climate action plan is being implemented.

The Government is currently making the biggest rail investment of modern

times. Next year, the Government intends to present an infrastructure bill to the Riksdag containing proposals for the long-term development of our infrastructure.

The solidarity and determination that society is demonstrating during the COVID-19 crisis are needed to ensure a just climate transition. Together we must transition our society – for the sake of the climate, for the sake of Sweden.

During this unusual summer, more Swedes than ever have explored our fantastic country. Many have taken advantage of the right of common access, which is enshrined in the Constitution, to roam in our beautiful mountains and deep forests.

Listened to the silence, breathed the fresh air, discovered how delicious a chocolate bar tastes after a long hike.

Sustainable tourism is important to Sweden, and the Government will therefore improve the conditions for the recovery of the tourism and hospitality industry.

We are taught that when we are out in nature, we must not leave any litter behind – a principle that applies in other situations, too.

We need to make the transition away from our current unsustainable use of resources.

The Government is currently drafting the first Swedish action plan on realising a circular economy. New rules on single-use plastics will be introduced.

Sweden's coasts will be places to be proud of. Our seas will be full of life. The Government is continuing to work to reduce the effects of eutrophication, achieve sustainable fisheries and ensure that no plastics end up in the sea.

Sweden's natural environments, with their great biodiversity, well-managed forests and nature reserves, must be preserved so that future generations can enjoy them as well.

Mr Speaker,

We can all take pride in Sweden's welfare system.

We have large hospitals and small village schools. We have preschools and home-help services; we have safety nets and springboards.

A welfare system built on the idea that nobody should be left behind or held back.

Even before this crisis, the Government had begun to boost Swedish schools, care for older people and health care. Since 2014, we have invested heavily in welfare services, which now employ 100 000 more people. We need to do more; we will do more.

The COVID-19 crisis has clearly exposed cracks in our society – cracks that can only be mended through substantial investments and hard political effort.

Older people, who have helped build Sweden, are entitled to a good life in their old age and a good pension. I can now announce that pensioners' finances will continue to be reinforced.

Next year, a special pension supplement of up to SEK 600 per month will be introduced for those who worked hard their entire lives in low-paid jobs. This money will make a difference. Pensions and earned income will no longer be taxed differently.

At the same time, the Government will take the next step towards raising pensions in the long term through in-depth discussions in the Working Group on Pensions. In the Government's view, payments into the pension system need to increase.

Anyone working in care for older people has an important job involving great responsibility. This needs to be clear. In her novella *De levande* ('The Living'), Catrin Jansson, a licensed practical nurse working in the home-help service, wrote:

"The evenings are the worst; so many people, so little time. It is hard to be human. The needs are so great, the assistance so little.

The worry comes in the evenings, the fatigue, the thoughts, the constant alarms; there is no time for the unexpected. But the impossible becomes possible."

Working in care for older people must be attractive, and care staff must

receive clear recognition.

To increase skill levels, the Government is implementing a care for older people initiative.

This means that people will be able to train as nursing assistants or licensed practical nurses during paid working hours.

It is estimated that the care for older people initiative will lead to more than 10 000 new permanent jobs in the sector. 'Licensed practical nurse' will become a protected professional title.

There are calls that everyone fears when the telephone rings, and that many have received this year: the call to inform them that a family member has been admitted to hospital, or that their condition has sadly deteriorated.

At that moment, life stops; the day-to-day problems that previously seemed so huge suddenly become trivial.

Sweden must have equitable, world-class health care that is accessible to all.

The COVID-19 crisis has placed the greatest strain on our health services in modern times.

Health and care staff have demonstrated great skill in very challenging conditions. You have impressed an entire nation. You have earned the gratitude of an entire nation.

To ensure the availability of emergency care, many patients' appointments and operations have been postponed. The health care system must have resources to handle the backlog of care needs and care related to COVID-19. The needs in our country are great. The reinforcement of the general grants to local authorities will continue.

Primary care will be reformed. The Government wants to make it easier to get appointments at health centres throughout the country, strengthen care services for older people and others, and improve the conditions for preventive interventions. Continuity of care is crucial.

Crisis preparedness in health services is being strengthened. Both public and private actors' responsibility for ensuring provision of pharmaceuticals is being investigated, along with the possible introduction of contingency pharmacies with this specific responsibility.

Compulsory schools in Sweden remained open throughout the spring term.

This is a sentence that has almost certainly never been uttered in any previous Statement of Government Policy. In these new conditions, teachers and other school staff have done a fantastic job.

There must be order in school classrooms – and order in school governance. A national plan for conducive learning environments and security in schools is being developed. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate will be given a broader mandate to close independent and municipal schools with substantial and persistent failings.

Knowledge and learning are the guiding principles of the new revised course and subject syllabuses, and thus of the Swedish school system. Pupils' learning outcomes have improved in several international educational performance assessments, and preliminary statistics from the first half of this year show that the proportion of Year 9 pupils who are eligible for upper secondary school is increasing.

The Government's focus is on ensuring that knowledge attainment continues to increase. School resources will be allocated according to need, and schools will be more equitable. An inquiry on returning responsibility for the school system to central government will be appointed. The waiting lists for child and adolescent psychiatry will be reduced and school health and welfare services will be safeguarded.

Skilled preschool teachers, teachers and head teachers are the foundation of successful schools. A professional programme will be designed to enable preschool teachers, teachers and head teachers to grow within their profession, develop their teaching and contribute to research.

The Swedish welfare system will be strengthened – this year and in the years to come.

Mr Speaker,

The objective of Sweden's foreign policy is to create security in our country and around the world. The major challenges of our time are best tackled through multilateral cooperation – in the UN, in the EU and in our neighbourhood.

We build our common security together.

The EU is our most important foreign and security policy arena. No other

cooperation is as crucial to Sweden's security and peace.

The EU is also central to Sweden's economy, welfare and climate action. Its crisis preparedness must be strengthened, and the single market must be developed to withstand stronger competition in the global economy. Sweden will participate fully in and shape EU cooperation in a way that safeguards both Sweden's and Europe's interests.

The EU is built on our common values. Sweden will continue to push for all countries to respect principles such as judicial independence and media freedom. Countries that do not respect the rule of law should not be entitled as before to EU grants.

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves our country well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. Sweden will not take a passive stance if another Nordic country or EU Member State suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected.

Sweden stands up for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We condemn Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its illegal annexation of Crimea. We support the EU sanctions against Russia. At the same time, we will have contact and seek dialogue with Russia and Russian society.

We support the Belarusian people's quest for democracy. The developments in Belarus affect security in Sweden's neighbourhood.

The security situation in Sweden's neighbourhood and in Europe has deteriorated over time. For this reason, the Government considers that total defence capabilities need to continue to be strengthened and increase significantly. Considerable additional resources are being allocated to military defence. Sweden should continue to deepen its bilateral and multilateral defence and security cooperation.

Civil defence is being vigorously strengthened after many years of dismantlement. Preparations to set up an agency for psychological defence will continue. A national cyber security centre will be set up this year.

A bank tax will be introduced to fund defence investments.

Europe must take greater responsibility for its own security. The European security order must continue to be defended, including every country's right to choose its own security path. In 2021, Sweden will chair the Organization

for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). This is a considerable responsibility in these uncertain times.

We welcome the Riksdag's consensus on the written communication on Sweden's policy on China. Sweden and the EU will pursue an active policy in relation to China, based on our values and interests. We support the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle to preserve Hong Kong's autonomy.

The transatlantic relationship is essential to the security and prosperity of Sweden and Europe.

Nordic cooperation is unique. Our countries must learn from how the COVID-19 crisis was managed and stand united in the future.

Sweden will continue to be the leading force in the world for feminist foreign policy. The COVID-19 crisis has brought the need for equality and health care into sharp relief all over the world. The focus of development cooperation on democracy will continue. Sweden will push for effective and responsible development assistance globally.

Multilateralism is the watchword as the United Nations celebrates its 75th anniversary. Sweden will continue to do its part to promote peace, freedom and cooperation.

Mr Speaker,

On 15 June, 61 new police constables began working in Police District Stockholm Syd. Police District Nordvästra Skåne has 22 new police constables, while Police District Västerbotten has 11.

Sweden now has almost 21 000 police officers, the highest number ever. We are halfway to meeting our target of 10 000 more police employees by 2024.

Reinforcement of the Swedish Police will continue.

When gangs spread fear and violence, those affected are often hard-working people living in vulnerable areas.

It is society's responsibility to push back against organised crime. Our laws apply in every city, every neighbourhood and every square. No criminal individual, gang or family should believe that they are stronger than society.

The penalties for gang-related crime will be more severe, and public authorities will be given new tools to work together to tackle gangs.

Measures will be implemented to break the culture of silence and strengthen the legal process. The penalties for recruiting young people into crime and for offences linked to disputes between criminals will be more severe.

The Government proposes abolishing reduced sentences for young adults involved in serious crime. The expansion of National Board of Institutional Care facilities and Swedish Prison and Probation Service correctional institutions and remand centres will continue.

It is entirely possible to push back against serious crime. All the increasingly severe penalties, additional police officers and increased resources to law enforcement authorities are important.

But to succeed, it is vital that we stop recruitment into crime. No teenager should ever see a life of crime as their future. The engagement of all members of society is essential to achieve this.

In her book *Osebol*, about the northern Swedish village where she grew up, Marit Kapla interviews villager Lars Jörlén. He describes how he and his school colleagues drove around, picking up pupils whose parents did not get them off to school in the morning.

“It wasn’t our responsibility but people helped out.

We took the approach – or at least tried to – that every child was everyone’s child.

Even though a child has parents, they’re still a child of the community.”

Social workers, teachers, football coaches, school staff and neighbours – everyone can do their part to support and guide teenagers who might be heading down the wrong path.

Municipalities will be given a statutory responsibility to prevent crime. The Government is prioritising prevention. Our entire society needs to pull in the same direction.

We must push back against criminal gangs.

We must ensure that today’s young people do not become tomorrow’s criminals.

We need a whole, strong society to succeed.

Mr Speaker,

Sweden must continue to protect gender equality, equality and democracy – in our country and around the world.

Despite the fact that racism and Nazism should have been relegated to the scrapheap of history long, long ago, they are flourishing today. This year, African Swedes, for example, have raised their voices against the racism they have been subjected to. All members of society must be involved in stopping racism in all its forms and expressions.

The Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism has been postponed due to COVID-19 but will take place in October 2021.

Swedish migration policy must ensure legal certainty and be effective and humane. The right to asylum must be protected. Sweden has shouldered a great deal of responsibility for providing a safe haven for people who have left their country to seek protection. More EU Member States must take their share of responsibility. The Cross-party Committee of Inquiry on Migration will soon present its final report. Work on a sustainable regulatory framework for future migration policy will then continue.

Anyone coming to Sweden who is not entitled to stay must return. But every person who flees to Sweden and is entitled to stay must receive all the help they need to become part of this society.

Every person in Sweden must take part in our society and know their rights. The Government intends to set up an independent, national human rights institute in 2021. Ahead of this, broad parliamentary support will be sought.

Sweden will continue to strengthen the free formation of public opinion, protect freedom of expression and support media freedom throughout the country. Information about Swedish society provided to asylum seekers will be expanded and become a mandatory part of the asylum process.

No child should ever have to worry about violence or being forced into marriage. This is why we are now drawing up a national strategy to combat all forms of violence against children, including honour-based oppression. In

addition, a specific criminal classification for honour-based offences will be introduced.

Everyone in Sweden must have the same opportunities to achieve their full potential. Greater economic equality is needed for this to become reality. And no child's future should be decided by their parents' income – or lack of income. The Equality Commission has presented important proposals for increasing economic equality.

Reforms to strengthen and promote the rights of LGBTI individuals will continue. Parental legislation is being reviewed to determine how it can be made more gender-neutral.

Sweden will be a cultural nation to be reckoned with. Culture unites us, broadens our horizons and inspires new ideas. The cultural sector has been hit hard by COVID-19. It has impacted the finances of every cultural creator – as well as Sweden as a country. Daily life loses its vibrancy when cinemas, concert halls and theatres are closed.

For people to be moved by a powerful poem, enjoy a concert or find a new favourite song, there must be people creating them. Financial security for cultural creators will be safeguarded. A written communication on arts policy will be presented. Culture aimed at children and young people will be strengthened.

Sport brings people together and promotes health. The Swedish sports movement will be given the conditions it needs to weather the current crisis and reach all children and young people who want to take part in sport.

Sweden will continue to be a country where gender equality, equality and democracy are a given in every part of our society.

Mr Speaker,

COVID-19 is putting Sweden to the test. But we, our country, will pass this test too. We are in this crisis together, as a country where we all take responsibility.

The strengths highlighted by the crisis are strengths we must carry forth as we build our country stronger than it was before. Responsibility. Solidarity. It has become so clear – we are all dependent on each other.

We have a new political landscape.

The Government I lead will do what it takes to mend the cracks in our society.

But to succeed, we need to face the future as we have faced the crisis.

As one country, where we continue to take responsibility for each other,
for Sweden,
for our society,
where we continue to face hard times and good times together.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at inauguration of new HYBRIT pilot plant

Published 31 August 2020

On Monday 31 August 2020, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, together with Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin, inaugurated the new HYBRIT pilot plant for the production of fossil-free sponge iron in Luleå. Check against delivery.

Thank you for having me here today.

Steel: it is in the cars in the carpark, in the cutlery in the kitchen, in jewellery, hip replacements and scalpels. Steel: it reinforces our apartment blocks. Forms our bridges, roofs and trains.

Steel is jobs.

Steel has built Sweden, and steel has built our welfare system.

But steel – or rather the manufacture of steel – also threatens our way of life.

The steel industry is one of the sectors that emits the most carbon dioxide in the world. For every tonne of iron that pours from a blast furnace, more than a tonne of carbon dioxide is also produced. This is the fault of coking coal. And this is what you have decided to remedy.

We are embarking on the biggest technological shift in steel manufacturing in a thousand years.

Today, you are laying the foundations that will enable the Swedish steel

industry to be entirely fossil – and carbon dioxide – free in 20 years.

This is ambitious. But it is necessary.

Friends,

That we are standing here today – in the midst of a pandemic that has brought society's problems into immediate focus and slammed the brakes on the economy – feels significant.

I believe it is clear that the society the pandemic affected was not perfect.

We must not return to how everything was before, how things were done before.

We must build something better.

And this is what you are doing here.

We all realise that the pandemic will affect Sweden for a long time to come. The Government is now shifting from temporary crisis-response policies to investments to get the wheels of the economy turning and create new jobs. At this time we need hope in the future, and the steelworkers here in Luleå are showing what the path ahead may look like.

Right now we have a historic opportunity to do things that provide jobs here and now – but also hasten the climate transition that everyone realises is necessary. And lay the foundations for new Swedish export successes and jobs in the long run.

Global warming continues regardless of the pandemic.

Climate change remains the most momentous issue for our planet.

Climate change means that we must transition.

Things will change in towns and cities and societies, for businesses and people.

Climate transition must therefore concern social security, the distribution of resources and jobs.

Precisely the things that Sweden has been uniquely good at doing.

And I hope that the HYBRIT Project will show that if – in collaboration and agreement – we make the right investments in the labour market, in education and infrastructure, we can succeed. Politics, academia and the business sector. Together.

From unemployment and climate threats, green jobs with zero emissions can soon grow. Here there is an opportunity to not only export steel without coking coal , but also technology that is globally unique.

In Luleå, you are building something new, something better.

And together we can rebuild Sweden as the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. Together we can build Sweden out of the crisis.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister's address to the nation, 22 March 2020

Published 23 March 2020

Check against delivery.

This evening, I would like to speak directly to you, the Swedish people.

The COVID-19 virus is testing our country, our society and all of us as fellow human beings.

Every person now needs to mentally prepare for what is coming.

In Sweden, the COVID-19 virus is now spreading in the community.

Lives, health and jobs are at risk.

More people will get the disease, more people will have to say a final farewell to a loved one.

The only way to manage this crisis is to face it as a society, with everyone taking responsibility for themselves, for each other and for our country.

I know that many of you are worried.

Worried about how our society will manage this crisis.

Worried about yourself, about someone you love who is in an at-risk group, or that your job will disappear.

I understand this. The coming months will be trying. But our society is strong.

Our government agencies are working hard day and night. Our health care and education professionals and many, many other people in critical jobs are keeping our country going.

I, as Prime Minister, and the Government I lead, will take every decision that

is necessary to protect the lives, health and jobs of as many people as we possibly can.

In Sweden, public gatherings of more than 500 people have been banned, and upper secondary school and university education is now conducted online.

I want you to be prepared for the possibility of further far-reaching decisions, sometimes at short notice, sometimes disrupting our everyday lives even more.

The aim of the Government's work is to limit the spread of infection, to prevent too many people becoming seriously ill at the same time. But also to secure health care resources, and at this difficult time lessen the impact for those of you who work and for businesses.

Be prepared for this to continue for a long time.
Be ready for the situation to change rapidly.

But you should also know that we as a society are tackling this crisis with our collective strength.

Now we all have a great personal responsibility.

There are a few critical times in life when you must make sacrifices, not just for your own sake, but also for those around you, for your fellow human beings, and for our country.

That time is now. That day has come. And the duty is everyone's.

Each and every one of us has a responsibility to prevent the spread of infection, to protect older people and those in other vulnerable groups.

None of us should risk it. None of us should go to work with symptoms of illness.

Young, old, rich, poor – it doesn't matter, everyone must play their part.

This also applies to those of you who are 70 or older, or who belong to other at-risk groups.

I understand that it is frustrating to have to restrict your life, your social interactions, but right now it is necessary. For the sake of your own health of

course, but also to protect other people and give the health care system a chance to manage the situation.

And the adults among us must now behave like adults. Not spread panic or rumours.

No one is facing this crisis alone, but everyone bears a huge responsibility. Each and every one of us.

I know that the demands are huge. But this is the only way we can hold back the spread of infection.

I know that some restrictions are trying. But this is how we can make sure that the health care system can manage the crisis.

I know that the situation feels tough. But following the advice of the authorities is every person's duty. Yours – and mine.

Many of you are taking your responsibility as fellow human beings.

You are helping your neighbours with their shopping, you are supporting your local restaurant by buying a takeaway lunch, you are not visiting your grandmother – but you are ringing her every day for a chat instead.

This is solidarity in practice.

I am proud to be Sweden's Prime Minister when I see what so many people are doing for their fellow human beings.

You are showing that when things are at their toughest, our solidarity is strongest.

I am sure that every one of you in Sweden will take your personal responsibility and do your utmost to safeguard other people's health and help each other. And that you will be able to look back on this crisis and be proud of your role, your contributions for your fellow human beings, for our society and for Sweden.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Statement of Government EU Policy

Published 13 November 2019

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, the Riksdag, 13 November 2019.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Last Saturday, it was exactly thirty years since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The Iron Curtain and the Cold War gave way and instead increased cooperation flourished in Europe.

Historic cooperation.

And today, twenty-five years ago, Swedes went to polling stations throughout the country in a referendum on EU membership.

Ahead of that referendum, Sweden was alive with debate. Stickers on coat lapels and car bumpers declared either

“Yes to Europe” or “No to the EU”.

Our identity as Europeans was not always self-evident to everyone.

Sweden had managed to stay out of the wars that had plagued the rest of Europe.

Perhaps we saw ourselves more as Skåningar, Stockholmers or Swedes, than as continental Europeans.

At the same time,
the EU was a unique peace project that made countries stronger through
exchange and trade.

And Mr/Madam Speaker,
twenty-five years ago today, a majority voted for Sweden to join the
European Union.

It is therefore particularly appropriate today – for the first time – to have the
opportunity
to present the Statement of Government EU Policy.

I want to present the Government's views on the European Union
and present the five most important priorities for the coming years.

The political debate about the EU is no longer about yes or no, for or against.

Now we are discussing the substantive issues,
societal problems and Sweden's role in the Union.

And even if we hold different views about these things,
one thing is clear:

- A cohesive EU is our best asset in an uncertain world.
- An open EU is Sweden's best tool for more jobs and economic growth.
- And a united EU is the best guarantor for peace.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Membership of the European Union is a cornerstone for Sweden.

It is crucial to our economy, our security and our voice in the world.

Sweden is an export country,
and more than 70 per cent of all the goods we export – paper, cars,
electronics – go to other countries in Europe.

Today, Sweden has strong influence in the EU, our voice is heard and our
actions have significance.

But sometimes it has also seemed that Sweden has been in two minds about

EU cooperation.

That it has not always served our interests.

Our ability to influence the EU's decisions, direction and development is of fundamental importance to protecting our national interests.

Sweden's point of departure must be that we participate fully in EU cooperation and are active in shaping all of its parts in a way that protects Swedish interests.

Sweden must be proactive on the issues we prioritise.

What does this mean?

It means that other countries in the EU must know that they can count on Sweden.

We can choose to opt out of some things, such as the euro. That decision remains in place.

But as a general rule, Sweden will use our opportunities to influence the EU, quite simply because it is a fundamental national interest.

We take every opportunity to improve the Union.

This is why the Government wants Sweden to:

- Join the European Public Prosecutor's Office.
- Continue to engage in the enhanced defence cooperation.
- Do more in the EU to fight crime, and why we will consider membership of the banking union.

We in Sweden always try to gain traction for our ideas and create new alliances, but at the same time we know that cooperation requires compromise.

Because the alternative to cooperation is introversion and nationalism, the ultimate consequences of which we can see in Europe's graveyards.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

To improve cooperation,

the Government considers that the five most important issues for the EU in coming years are:

- Democracy and the rule of law.
- The climate.
- Jobs.
- Migration.
- Security.

I would like to begin with the very basis of all our work in the Union.

All Member States have agreed on a few fundamental values, including: equality, democracy, the rule of law.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe was a continent of optimism. There was a feeling that freedom and democracy could not be stopped.

Today, the situation is different.

In some Member States, the independence of the judicial system, the media and universities is under threat.

This harms the entire Union.

Even if countries can hold different views on issues and need to compromise, we must all respect the fundamental values that EU cooperation is built on.

Because the history of our continent shows what can happen when we turn a blind eye to violations of democratic rights and freedoms.

But also because the entire EU project would otherwise become watered down.

Trust between countries would be undermined, investments would be lost, trade would fall and jobs put at risk.

Sweden will never compromise on equality, democracy and the rule of law.

It is the EU's responsibility to ensure that the rest of Europe is not tempted to do so either.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Leading the climate transition is an enormous opportunity for Europe.

No person, company or country can manage the transition by themselves. It is as simple as that.

Here we need the EU's forte: cooperation.

The EU must lead the transition.

Not only because it is our duty to our children, but also to strengthen our countries.

When our Member States lead the transition, with innovation and research, our companies have the climate-smart solutions that the whole world is looking for.

- This improves the exporting countries' economies,
- creates environmental benefits in the importing countries,
- means more jobs in Europe,
- more money for welfare systems,
- and strengthens the EU's position when we show that a just climate transition is possible.

Herein lies the opportunity.

A climate transition now will contribute to more jobs and stronger welfare today and in the future.

- Sweden will therefore push for a climate act at EU level. We will also work for a sharpening of the other climate legislation and for a larger share of the EU budget to go to the climate transition.
- The EU's goals for reduced emissions by 2030 must be sharpened so that ambitions are in line with the Paris Agreement's 1.5-degree target.
- And the EU must achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

The EU must take the opportunity to lead the transition, for the simple reason that we the people, our companies and the climate benefit from it.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Men's and women's lives and working conditions must be improved through the EU.

One way is by helping to create more jobs.

To make this possible

in a time of increasingly tough global competition,
the EU needs a modern and sustainable industrial policy that
is based on trade and the single market, rather than protectionism.

But the EU should not only have more jobs, we must also have decent jobs.

If you are working in Sweden, Swedish rules must be followed.

It is as simple as that.

Wage dumping and unfair competition must end.

I am proud of the success Sweden has achieved for decent jobs.

And now we are continuing.

- The principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights must be upheld, and Sweden will continue to lead the work for a more secure labour market.
- The Government will work for zero tolerance in the EU of fatal accidents at work.
We want to see legislation banning carcinogenic substances in working life.
- Our Nordic labour market model must be protected.
It is the best in the world.
So now that an initiative on minimum wages is under discussion at EU level, the Nordic model must be respected.

With a modern industrial sector, more jobs with decent conditions and a strong Nordic model, we will have an EU that really does improve people's everyday lives.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

During the refugee crisis in 2015, one thing became clear:
migration must become a shared responsibility of EU Member States.

The EU has not managed this.

There have been several attempts to reach a deal on refugee policy, but little significant progress has been made.

This is deeply unsatisfactory.

In the end, everyone will have to compromise, but we must work broadly:

- Beyond the EU's borders, by contributing to peace and development so that fewer people are forced to try to come to Europe via dangerous routes.
- At the EU's borders, to smash the ruthless smuggling of human beings, save lives and have control at the borders.
- And within the EU's borders, to achieve a more even distribution of those people who under the right of asylum have grounds to stay. If any Member State refuses to take their responsibility, it must come at a price.

Only through shared responsibility can the EU find a way forward.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

In Sweden, criminality is fought with the full force of society. But today's organised crime knows no boundaries.

According to the assessment of the Swedish Police, international burglary rings account for more than half of all domestic burglaries.

And weapons that are smuggled into the Union are used in shootings in Swedish cities.

The Government will therefore take new steps to enhance EU cooperation against international crime and terrorism. We will participate where we can.

- The Government wants to strengthen the European police and judicial cooperation: Europol och Eurojust.
We must improve cooperation on police intelligence, evidence collection and preliminary investigations.
- EU legislation on explosives needs to be sharpened.
- And security at the EU's external borders needs to be increased.
Biometric verification will allow us to know who is crossing.

This is how we will achieve a safer Union, a safer Sweden.

But,
the EU must also contribute to a safer world outside the Union.

When anti-democratic forces flex their muscles,

the EU is needed as a strong voice for peace, democracy and human rights.

There are some good examples, such as the sanctions against Russia, the Eastern Partnership and the measures against pirates around the Horn of Africa.

But all too often, the EU's voice is missing in world affairs.

We should be able to do better. The fact that cooperation on foreign affairs is based on consensus can be a strength, but in practice it can also be a hindrance. One example is that the EU sometimes fails to produce joint statements on human rights in global forums such as the UN because one or more countries choose to block them.

We should therefore look at the possibility of moving from requiring unanimity to taking qualified majority decisions in certain foreign policy areas – notwithstanding every country's right to decide its own security policy line – with the aim of strengthening the EU's voice in these areas. This concerns issues involving human rights and international conflicts.

The United Kingdom is now in the process of leaving the Union.

At the same time, other countries want to join.

There is concern that we are moving forward too fast, that the EU is not ready to accept more members.

A lot has happened since the last enlargement and we must take this into account.

At the same time, we have good reason to enhance cooperation with our neighbouring countries. If the EU does not have a presence, other powers will fill the void.

Here, the possibility of eventually becoming a member is important.

The Government supports the idea of a review of the entire enlargement process.

The process for membership negotiations must be strict.

All criteria that have been set must be fully met and continue to be followed once a country has been accepted as a member.

Everyone should be assured of this.

This is how we will build a stronger Union.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Many of us remember that November day twenty-five years ago,
when we said yes to European cooperation.

But there are also many who do not know Sweden as anything other than a
member of the EU.

Who learned about our referendum in their history lessons at school,
studied abroad thanks to the Erasmus scheme or have been seasonal workers
in another country
and perhaps see themselves as...well...Europeans.

Sweden said yes twenty-five years ago.
And we can see the power of EU cooperation today.

We have already gone from war and conflicts to peace and cohesion.

This is something to be proud of.

And the EU has improved people's lives.
Membership has strengthened our countries.

When the EU decides something, we set a standard for the rest of the world,
such as in the work against dangerous chemicals.

But we must now take the next step.
Lead the climate transition.
Continue the peace efforts.
Strengthen the cooperation.

And above all
Sweden must continue to cooperate in the EU
to improve the realities that people face,
people's lives,
both here at home
and in the rest of Europe.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Statement of Government Policy, 10 September 2019

Published 10 September 2019

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, the Riksdag, 10
September 2019.

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses,

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of the Swedish Riksdag,

Sweden is our place on Earth.

Generations before us have built one of richest and fairest countries in the world. Our task is to build a stronger nation – one that can make the transition to a new era. We must ensure that our children inherit a sustainable, safe and equal society.

Our country – characterised by natural beauty, openness and hardworking people – has enormous opportunities. Only by working together can we realise Sweden's potential.

We deal with the problems we face together, not each on our own. Global warming, health care waiting times, violent crime, inequality in education and a more divided society are shared problems. We can – and will – solve them together.

Around the world, political forces that promote intolerance, isolation and simple answers to complex social problems are on the rise. Sweden has chosen a different path. We stand up for values that have made Sweden strong: community, social equality, openness and equality between women and men.

* * *

In an uncertain world, our foreign policy must safeguard our country's security.

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. The stability and security of northern Europe is enhanced by our military non-alignment. Sweden contributes to common security through dialogue and cooperation – within the framework of the European Union, bilaterally and through international organisations.

Our country's defence capability continues to be strengthened. A defence policy bill based on the Defence Commission's reports will be presented in 2020. There is now broad support for its financing.

The transatlantic link is being safeguarded and our defence cooperation deepened, not least around the Baltic Sea. Providing and receiving operational support will be quicker within the context of Finnish-Swedish cooperation.

Security in Sweden's neighbourhood has deteriorated. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and intervention in Ukraine are clear violations of international law and the European security order. We support the EU sanctions while we also have contacts and dialogue with Russia and Russian society.

Sweden is facing new forms of threats and challenges. The implementation of the national security strategy continues. A national cyber security centre will be set up next year.

* * *

Membership of the European Union is a cornerstone for Sweden and a clear part of our national, European and global endeavours.

A new legislative period is now beginning in the EU. Sweden is working for a strong and effective Union: a citizen's EU that supports the creation of more jobs with fair conditions. An EU that contributes to security and is a leader in environment and climate action. We will work to uphold respect for the Union's values.

Increased risk of a full-scale trade war underscores the necessity of Sweden being a voice for free, sustainable and fair trade. Global trade must be based on order and rules – not on the right of might.

Sweden will continue to work to ensure that the UK's withdrawal from the EU takes place in an orderly manner. There is preparedness to handle a no-deal withdrawal. The UK's withdrawal heightens the need for active and offensive Swedish action in the EU.

* * *

The fight against terrorism is global. It must be fought at home and in close cooperation with other countries in Europe and the world. It must be fought within the framework of the rule of law.

A review is being conducted of the body of criminal law legislation to fight terrorism. Collaboration with a terrorist organisation will become a punishable offence. We are seeing that criminals and terrorists are trying to find new ways of channelling money to support their activities. This will be countered through the continued tightening of legislation.

* * *

In cooperation with other Member States, Sweden is working for a Common European Asylum System in which Member States share joint and fair responsibility for displaced people.

Swedish migration policy must be legally certain, effective and humane. The policy must have broad support. A cross-party committee of inquiry has been instructed by the Government to present proposals on a long-term sustainable migration policy. The right to asylum must be safeguarded.

Giving persons eligible for subsidiary protection and refugees the same right to be reunited with their children, partner or parents in Sweden is a humanitarian reform that also contributes to integration.

The Swedish Migration Agency should once again be able to rapidly handle asylum applications from people from 'safe countries of origin'. An independent review of medical age assessment methods will be conducted.

A successful fight against war, terrorism and global warming is necessary so that fewer people are displaced.

* * *

Our generation is the first that can end poverty around the world and the last that can end global warming. Sweden must be at the vanguard for the 2030

Agenda.

The democratic dimension of our development assistance will be strengthened.

Sweden promotes sexual and reproductive health and rights globally and thus access to safe abortions. This is an expression of our feminist foreign policy.

Sweden remains committed to its high ambitions for climate financing.

The Government's work on the Global Deal for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth will continue.

* * *

Mr Speaker,

As Mikael Wiehe sings:

Från Ales stenar	[From Ale's stones]
till norra Lappland	[to northern Lappland]
från Bohus klippor	[from Bohuslän's rocky shores]
till Gotlands raukar	[to Gotland's sea stacks]

Landet, det tillhör dig och mig [this land belongs to you and me]

We must hold our country together and we must ensure that the conditions for living a good life are available throughout Sweden.

A major redistribution based on the different conditions that exist in our country will be put in place before the end of the year. Regardless of whether you live in Vellinge or Vilhelmina, you should have the same right to home-help services – distances in your municipality should not determine this.

As a part of the green tax shift, 850 000 Swedish citizens, primarily in Norrland and north-western Svealand, will receive a tax reduction as compensation for the long distances and to make it easier to live in these parts of the country.

To continue to combat the closing of rural shops, the special operational

subsidy to grocery shops will be increased.

Service offices, where several government agencies offer services to citizens, are an effective way for central government to maintain a presence in more places. New service offices will therefore be opened. I can already announce that service offices will be placed in a number of towns, including: Storuman, Torsby, Vansbro and Åsele.

* * *

The Swedish business sector's ambitious climate commitments are impressive. Local engagement, innovative business operators and tough climate requirements produce results. New environmental technologies and innovations give us the possibility to export products and services that the world demands. This is how new jobs are created.

Food retail, mining and minerals, and cement are examples of industries that have produced roadmaps to become fossil-free. An exciting and globally unique development of carbon dioxide-free steel production is now under way in Luleå.

Sweden's raw material resources must be used more effectively and sustainably. Permit examination processes and regulatory frameworks need to be reviewed so that consideration is given to both social benefit and local environmental impacts when a project is examined.

The work with the National Innovation Council continues. The Government will launch four strategic partnership programmes for the electoral period and begin work on a new research bill.

Simpler rules will give more people around the country the chance to start a business. The amount of share capital required will be reduced.

* * *

Swedish nature, Swedish food and Swedish destinations are some of our country's greatest assets.

Times are good for Swedish tourism. Since the turn of the millennium, employment in the tourism and hospitality industry has increased by more than 40 000 people. A national strategy will strengthen the tourism and hospitality industry as an important job and growth engine for the entire country.

Swedish farmers produce world-class produce. The competitiveness of Swedish agriculture will be strengthened through continued investments in the food strategy and an effective farming package.

By pollinating plants, bees play an important role. This is now threatened. Measures are needed to improve the habitat of bees.

A sustainable and growing forestry sector contributes to jobs, growth and climate benefits. Sustainable forests and varied natural environments can increase biological diversity.

Work on the national forest programme continues and the Government is working to strengthen ownership rights and sustainability in Swedish forests. Forests owned by the state will be managed sustainably.

The conditions for the green industries are high on the Government's agenda.

* * *

A functioning housing market is a precondition for both people's security and for a dynamic labour market.

Last year, the greatest number of apartments was completed since 1973. At the same time, 240 municipalities report a shortage of housing. The Government intends to gather all actors in the housing market around the common interest of securing a continuing high rate of construction.

The investment subsidy is to be focused and made more effective, and be targeted at student housing and right of tenancy housing with reasonable rents throughout the country. We are simplifying building regulations and reviewing the rental system. Climate declaration requirements and the increased use of wood in construction can contribute to society's transition.

Shore protection regulations are to be fundamentally overhauled. Increased differentiation will take account of varying levels of access to lakes and shorelines around the country, as well as population density and development pressure.

* * *

The adopted national plans for infrastructure, including investments of SEK 700 billion in roads and railways throughout the entire country, will be

implemented in full.

The Government is improving road maintenance and will now make the biggest railway investment of modern times. New main lines for high-speed trains will be constructed.

It will become easier to book trips abroad by train and it will be possible to travel by night train to several European cities.

Emissions from aviation will be reduced.

* * *

Expanding digital infrastructure is an important part of the efforts to make the entire country grow and for public services to reach the entire population.

The energy agreement forms the basis for Sweden to continue to have a robust energy system and reasonably priced electricity in the future.

The capacity to transfer electricity will be improved to meet growing demand.

The significance of renewable energy sources is now growing rapidly. Wind power is contributing an increasing share of the energy supply. A solar energy revolution is taking place in Sweden. The solar panel subsidy has made it easier and cheaper for homeowners around the country to produce their own electricity.

More and more electric cars are driving on Sweden's roads. The charging infrastructure will be expanded to facilitate the electrification of the vehicle fleet.

* * *

Mr Speaker,

A person who has reached their 100th birthday has, during their lifetime in Sweden, seen democracy take root, industrialised society develop, gender equality improve conditions for women and the transition to a knowledge-based society change the country.

Now we once again face major transitions.

July this year was the warmest on record. Greta Thunberg has become the voice of a generation when she demands that we listen to the scientific advice and take action. Global warming threatens to fundamentally change the conditions for human life on earth. We need to adapt to the changes already taking place. In two weeks, these issues will be in focus at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York.

Meanwhile, Sweden must create and develop jobs and welfare in a time of tough global competition and rapid technological advancements. We must leave no one behind as we build our new society.

Our country will be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. This will have an impact on all parts of society and permeate policy. A climate action plan will be adopted.

A robust green tax shift has been initiated and will increase over the years ahead. A Swedish state green bond will now also be introduced.

Sweden will have achieved net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. This will require major technical advancements. The Green Industry Leap provides support to companies all the way from research and innovation projects to demonstration facilities and full-scale production.

We will cope with the transition and we will do so in the same way as before: together.

* * *

Our children should grow up in an environment free from toxic substances. The Government is pushing for a global agreement on chemicals, stricter rules in the EU and necessary regulations at home.

The Government will take further action to reduce the use of plastics. The spread of microplastics must be controlled. The use of single-use plastics will be further reduced.

This year saw the first ever emergency ban on large parts of cod fishing in the Baltic Sea. The Government is listening to scientific advice and will work to ensure the recovery of cod stocks. The oceans we leave to our children must have growing fish stocks. Seabeds must be protected and eutrophication must end.

* * *

Mr Speaker,

The international economy is now slowing down, which is having an impact on the economy here at home. In the labour market, we continue to see a high level of employment, but also a recruitment problem, not least in the welfare sector.

Central government debt as a percentage of GDP is at the same level as in 1977. A low level of debt gives us strength should the economy slow down even further – strength that many countries lack.

The Government wants to use the scope for reform to get more people into work, increase the number of police officers, strengthen our welfare system, improve pensioners' finances and stimulate a robust climate transition.

The austerity tax will be abolished as of 1 January 2020.

A bank tax will be introduced to fund investment in defence.

Efforts to combat tax evasion and tax avoidance continue unceasingly. When tax avoidance is transnational, efforts to combat it must also be transnational.

On average, pensioners have received SEK 1 600 more to spend every month compared to 2014. We will now continue to strengthen the financial situation of pensioners. Next year, the guarantee pension and the ceiling of the housing supplement for pensioners will be raised. The unfair tax on pensions will continue to be phased out.

* * *

Mr Speaker,

Equipping people with knowledge is crucial to coping with the transition of society.

Sweden had one of the highest-performing and most equitable school systems in the world. We will reach that level again. Today, 31 000 more people work in the school system than 5 years ago, preschool groups are the smallest they have been since 1992 and teachers' salaries have increased. We have laid the foundations for better learning outcomes.

There are no shortcuts to raising the level of knowledge in the Swedish

school system. The focus must be on knowledge and an environment conducive to learning. Opportunities to receive support in smaller study groups will be reviewed, and high-performing pupils will be given better opportunities to go further in their learning. School outcomes for boys require special attention.

A national plan for security and a conducive study environment in school will be drafted, and a ban on mobile phones during lessons will be introduced. For those schools that wish, an opportunity to set grades from year four will be introduced.

Schools must be a meeting place for pupils from different backgrounds. The Government is taking the first steps towards a moratorium on the establishment of independent compulsory and upper secondary schools with a denominational focus.

The key to a strong knowledge-based school system is an increased number of knowledgeable and competent teachers and more staff who can assist teachers. Initiatives to counter the shortage of teachers are needed. Opportunities to study to become a teacher alongside work in school will be expanded. More people with higher education should be able to change careers and become teachers. Central government support to employ teacher's assistants will be increased.

The Government will improve teacher education, and the attractiveness of the teaching profession will be increased. Proposals from the Schools Commission will be implemented. The Government is initiating the establishment of a professional programme for teachers and school heads. To increase equivalence, central government support to schools where the conditions are most challenging will be enhanced.

Continued measures are needed to improve the ability of schools to accept pupils with neuropsychiatric disorders.

* * *

While there are more than 100 000 job vacancies in Sweden, 350 000 people are unemployed. To deal with the skills deficit, education must be better designed to meet the needs of society.

The Adult Education Initiative will continue, and in 2020 is expected to cover 93 000 government funded places throughout the country. Municipal

adult education will be developed into a base for national and regional skills supply.

The Government is investing in continuing professional development and further training for people midway through their careers.

Higher vocational education will be expanded and steps will be taken to facilitate mobility between higher vocational education and higher education institutions. Skills development by means of short higher vocational education courses will be facilitated. Initiatives will be introduced to strengthen and develop distance learning.

Strengthening access to training places around the country makes it easier to continue studying and to live anywhere in our country.

* * *

For companies to be able to recruit, there must be an effective labour market. Efficient job recruitment benefits both those seeking employment and employers who need staff. To better contribute to this, Arbetsförmedlingen (the Swedish Public Employment Service) will be fundamentally reformed. As an important complement, a new system will be developed in which independent actors match and equip jobseekers for the available jobs.

Regardless of where they live, assistance must be available to jobseekers who need help finding a job. Arbetsförmedlingen must be able to provide service while the reform is being implemented.

There is great potential for effective efforts at local and regional level. Cooperation between Arbetsförmedlingen, municipalities and employers already produces local job tracks in various parts of Sweden.

To avoid unnecessary layoffs when companies are hit by temporary difficulties, central government support for short-time work will be strengthened.

* * *

It is taking less time for people who are new in Sweden to find a job. An intensive year with a language focus and vocational initiatives will be introduced for new arrivals who are thought to have the potential of finding work within one year.

Civic orientation for new arrivals will be enhanced and more focus will be placed on issues such as gender equality and human rights.

Changes will be made to the support available to asylum seekers who choose their own accommodation to reduce problems in areas with socioeconomic challenges.

The emergence of a parallel society will be counteracted through an efficient collaboration between public authorities, police controls and measures against human smuggling.

Working life should not lead to women and men being excluded prematurely due to stress, bullying or tasks that damage or wear out their bodies. A vision zero will apply to deaths at work. The Swedish Work Environment Authority will propose measures to achieve this. More work environment inspectors will be employed.

The social partners have considerable responsibility to reduce work-related ill-health. The Government will closely follow the work the parties have undertaken for healthier workplaces.

* * *

Joakim Berg's text from the Kent song 'Elite' captures a feeling many people identify with:

Min släkt är full av hjältar [My family is full of heroes]

Decennier av slit [Decades of toil]

Brustna hjärtan, trötta leder [Broken hearts, tired joints]

Deras stolthet bar mig hit [Their pride led me here]

Women and men have built a strong Sweden through decades of toil. Sweden is full of heroes. People who contribute every day to a stronger society through parenting, studies, paid work, entrepreneurship and volunteering.

Mr Speaker,

A general welfare system with high quality schools, health and social care services for all is the most important force for redistribution in our society.

The Government is appointing a welfare commission in which the central government, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and the employee organisations will together tackle the problems we see in Swedish welfare. The increasing proportion of elderly people poses new challenges for welfare.

Providing health and social care is one of society's most important tasks. A fixed contact in care of the elderly increases continuity and security. Employees in the welfare sector need to have a better working environment and their status needs to be raised. Assistant nurses will have a protected professional title and better working conditions.

The number of people involuntarily working part-time in welfare will be reduced. Efforts will continue to ensure that full-time work will be a right. Welfare technology will improve the working environment and increase quality, not cause more stress.

Disability policy and the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments will be enhanced. Personal assistance will be characterised by high quality and legal certainty. The right to assistance for breathing and tube-feeding will be safeguarded. Everyone who has the right to this should receive it.

Sweden will have sickness insurance that is secure, legally certain and comprehensible with a high level of trust among the population. The collaboration between public authorities must improve and the regulatory frameworks must be designed to ensure that everyone receives the support and the compensation they are entitled to.

* * *

Sweden must have world-class health and medical care that is available to all. The Government is therefore making vigorous efforts to ensure more secure, accessible and equitable health and medical care.

We should be proud of the high quality of Swedish medical care. Every day, medical personnel save the lives of acutely injured and seriously ill patients. At the same time, primary care in particular needs to be developed further. It has unique possibilities to meet the entire health and medical care needs and promote good health. The Government will boost local health and medical care.

To improve continuity in health care, the right to the same doctor will be safeguarded. Patient contracts will give both the patient and health and medical care staff an overview of all of the planned care appointments.

Mental ill-health is one of the major problems of our times. Early measures are important to reduce suffering and prevent minor problems becoming serious. To make it easier to get help, a new care form is being prepared for mild mental health issues. The queues for child and adolescent psychiatry will be reduced and school health and welfare services will be safeguarded.

* * *

Mr Speaker,

The police received the call at 09.58 on a Monday morning. The woman in Ribersborg was 31 years old. She was shot dead in broad daylight when she was out with her little child. This unfathomable tragedy leaves no one in Sweden unmoved.

Violent crime causes immense suffering in our society. Boys are lured into a criminal career that ends either in death or long prison sentences. Relatives of crime victims are severely affected.

The violence perpetrated by criminal gangs is a threat to people's safety, to the sense of security in society, and ultimately to the rule of law and democracy. The ruthlessness towards victims is abhorrent. Combating this threat is one of the state's core tasks.

The fight against serious crime is long-term and will entail both successes and setbacks. Our goal is crystal clear: we will put an end to the violence.

The state can remove hardened criminals from the streets, but stopping the influx of young men to criminal gangs requires efforts by society as a whole. This is emphasised not least by the police. Schools, social services, local businesses and our civic organisations have important roles to play.

Municipalities are pivotal to crime prevention. Work has begun to give municipalities a statutory responsibility for this.

The Government will facilitate decisions regarding surveillance cameras and police access to digital evidence and encrypted communications to identify and track criminal activities.

The pilot project involving faster legal proceedings for certain petty offences will be extended and expanded to more parts of the country.

To combat cross-border crime, the Swedish Police needs to be given greater scope to operate in border areas. Camera surveillance using automatic vehicle and number-plate recognition will be considered.

* * *

The Swedish Police will be tasked with strengthening their efforts to fight the illicit drug trafficking that finances much of the gang violence. The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention will be tasked with examining the drugs market in Sweden to update the current state of knowledge.

Everyone who buys drugs must understand that their drug money supports criminal gangs and contributes to criminal activities.

Violence by right-wing and other ideologically motivated perpetrators must be taken very seriously.

Rape and other sexual offences must be combatted. The Government will propose continued tighter laws in this area.

The broad political consensus we have to continue reinforcing the rule of law is a strength. The Government is now taking the lead in gathering political decision-makers and other stakeholders to continue strengthening society in the fight against serious crime.

* * *

Mr Speaker,

During this electoral period, Sweden will celebrate its 100th birthday as a democracy. The democracy we inherited from earlier generations must be even stronger when we pass it on.

Strong public service broadcasting combined with commercial media provide a diversity of independent media throughout the country.

Elected representatives and journalists must be given stronger protection under criminal law against threats and hate speech to enable them to fulfil their vital role in a democracy.

An independent institution for the protection of human rights will be established.

* * *

Every child has the right to grow in curiosity and creativity. Music and arts schools must exist throughout the country. People who contribute time and effort to the sports movement and civil society organisations are key to enabling young people's involvement.

In 112 days' time, the Convention on the Rights of the Child will become Swedish law. Every child must be able to express their views and exercise their rights.

Legislation concerning parenthood will be revised to make it gender-neutral. This is part of the Government's efforts to strengthen the rights of LGBTI people.

* * *

Racism has no place in Sweden; work under the national plan to combat racism continues. Sweden's national minorities and indigenous Sami people must be protected.

Hatred of Jews can be found in our history, in extreme right-wing groups, in certain left-wing groups and Islamist environments. We see antisemitism among adults and children who fled to Sweden from countries where hatred of Jews is fed by schools and state propaganda.

Combating antisemitism and remembrance of the Holocaust are the theme of the international conference the Government will host in Malmö next year.

* * *

Sweden does not accept child marriage or oppression. 'Honour' crimes will receive harsher sentences, and a specific offence concerning child marriage will be introduced. Work to introduce a specific offence of 'honour crime' will continue.

Children and young people will have greater access to support and help from social services, without the consent or knowledge of a parent or guardian.

* * *

Mr Speaker,

Just over six months ago, the Government took office after a policy agreement on the budget and several policy areas was reached between the Social Democratic Party, the Green Party, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party. Together, we are taking responsibility for harnessing our country's opportunities and solving the social challenges of our time.

Swedish politics is in a time of intensive reform.

A time to build a stronger Sweden – together.

* * *



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at Centenary Session of the International Labour Conference

Published 12 June 2019

Geneva, 10 June 2019. Check against delivery.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Excellencies, Friends,

It is a great honour to hold this speech today on the occasion of the ILO centenary.

“The sated day is never first.
The best day is a day of thirst.
Yes, there is goal and meaning in our path –
but it’s the way that is the labour’s worth.
The best goal is a night-long rest,
fire lit, and bread broken in haste.
In places where one sleeps but once, sleep is secure, dreams full of songs.”

This was written by the Swedish poet Karin Boye in the 1920s, when the ILO was taking its first tentative steps.
I have chosen to start with these words because what we are celebrating today is really not an organisation, a convention or a date, but a movement.

A movement forwards, upwards, from the misery
- of First World War trenches,
- of factories and fields,
- of hunger and squalor.

A movement that has encountered setbacks, new wars and catastrophes, but has never stopped, has always found new energy, new solutions.

It is a movement, that is summed up and symbolised by the three letters I-L-O, it is a movement that now marches towards the future.

Because we know: “The sated day is never first. The best day is a day of thirst.”

* * *

And we gather here today, with stories from our different countries about what has been achieved and what is still to be done.

I would like to mention two Swedish women: Kerstin and Ingegerd. Kerstin Hesselgren was born into a wealthy family in the second half of the 19th century.

Her father was a doctor, she was educated by a governess at home and then at a school here in Switzerland.

Ingegerd Friberg on the other hand was born into harsher conditions. Her parents struggled. They couldn't afford to buy the farm they leased, and considered emigrating for a better life.

These two women did not know each other. They probably never met. But Kerstin used her privilege and her education to work towards improving the conditions of thousands of workers in Sweden.

She became Sweden's first female factory inspector in 1912, and she came to the first International labour conference in 1919 to change the course of the world, together with representatives from many of your countries.

Now as for Ingegerd, she started working at sixteen, helping out at a hospital – and continued on as a maid, a night watch, a newspaper carrier, and a factory worker.

And when she was almost 90 years old, she was interviewed by her daughter and spoke about the changes she had seen over her lifetime.

- About the more dignified life she was able to lead.
- About the decent pension she could now live on.
- About her four children, and how they could now live the kind of lives that would never have seemed impossible to her as a child, and how that was the

greatest joy in her life.

Just think, she could also dream, as Karin Boye wrote, “dreams full of songs.”

* * *

And what Ingegerd’s and Kerstin’s fates symbolise is the co-operation that I believe lies at the heart of this movement.

We all come from different backgrounds, different walks of life. We have different values and different opinions – but if we come together if we make an effort we can find shared goals – and shared dreams.

* * *

I so strongly believe in this. Because it played out in my own life. I was not born into wealth; I grew up as a foster child in a working class family, and began working as a welder.

When I later became a trade union leader, the people across the negotiating table were people with a different education, different values, different lives.

Yet still – when we sat down, when we talked with an honest and respectful desire to agree, we could, despite our different starting points, find a shared goal, shared meaning.

* * *

This is why I started the Global Deal in cooperation with the ILO and in cooperation with the OECD, to promote social dialogue globally – an initiative I urge all of you to join if you have not already done so.

I have seen what social dialogue between workers, employers and governments can achieve.

Both in relatively small things that could be improved for me and my co-workers, for the company we worked for and the society we lived in. But also in a bigger perspective: How it could transform the country I represent here today – from a poor country at outskirts of Europe, to a rich country at the cutting edge of the global economy.

Social dialogue and tripartite collaboration are something so rare as a solution where everyone wins.

Workers by gaining influence, improved working conditions, higher wages and better opportunities for education and social welfare.

Companies win from a constructive working atmosphere, an openness to change, respect for their right to lead the company, increased productivity and stronger consumers.

Society wins from inclusive growth and social stability.

It's a win-win-win situation. It is "the way that is the labour's worth..."

* * *

And it is a fantastic force. A force that has driven the ILO's work for a century.

Now where should we target this force today? What direction should our movement take?

For my part, I have returned to a Swedish economist, a professor, a contemporary of Ingegerd Friberg, and also to the birth of the ILO.

This man's name was Gösta Rehn, and just like Ingegerd he came from a small village in Sweden, but had the opportunity to work at the OECD in Paris and the University of California at Berkeley.

He saw the difference between on the one hand the "safety of the shell", which shields from external dangers, and on the other hand the "safety of wings", which helps to reach a better and safer place.

And he pointed out that true safety didn't come from futile attempts to protect old jobs in a new economy, but by making sure workers could reach new and better heights.

He understood the importance of being able to move towards something better. "In places where one sleeps but once, sleep is secure..."

* * *

In recent times, I have had the great privilege South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and I have had the great privilege of gathering a group of global labour market experts on behalf of this organisation to analyse the "future of work".

Our goal was to discuss how we could best shape the future labour market in light of the major upheavals the world is facing.

And when we saw the analysis of these experts, of the latest research findings and reports, I felt how Gösta Rehn must have smiled up in his heaven.

For the final report that was written, contained nothing more and nothing less, than a version of the “safety of wings” for the twenty-first century.

* * *

You are of course all aware of the upheavals that are defining our time: climate change , AI revolution.

What do they have in common?

Well, they will both require our societies to react with strength.

- By quickly re-training entire professional areas, when key work assignments can be automated, for almost everyone - from our lorry drivers to salary administrators.

- And quickly making entire sectors of the economy sustainable, as we in Sweden are now doing with our steel industry, where we aim to be able to produce steel without using coal.

And this must be done in a way that does not hamper the economy or put large groups of people out of work.

If we don't succeed, we'll never manage to hold our societies together, we will not manage to have economies that are strong enough to meet the third major challenge: an ageing population.

There will be very little time for this change, it will require trust and close co-operation between workers, business owners and society.

And it will require everyone to dare to try again, to try something new.

To perhaps find new abilities they didn't know they had.

To feel a “day of thirst” for something new, something novel.

* * *

So what we propose is an agenda - that focuses on the development of

women and men, and their ability to acquire new skills, to reskill to upskill,
- that creates institutions to help people with more job changes in their lifetime,
- that supports investment in decent jobs, developing the rural economy in ways that foster prosperity, sustainability and equality,
- an agenda that creates social safety nets, based on solidarity and sharing risks, and launches a Universal Labour Guarantee, giving fundamental rights to all workers, all over the world, regardless of their contractual arrangements or employment status. Because it is only when we feel secure that we dare to spread our wings.

And let me also mention something in particular.

Kerstin Hesselgren's story did not end at the first International labour conference. When she returned to Sweden, she was elected as the first woman ever to the First Chamber of the Swedish Parliament in 1921.

The Speaker at the time he had a hard time adjusting to her presence, and for several years continued to address the Chamber by saying "Gentlemen".

And at a service to mark the opening of the parliamentary session, Kerstin was stopped outside the church by a police officer, who said: "No, no... no women here."

This seems comical now. But at how many workplaces, in how many leadership positions, do women still hear: "No, no... no women here"?

How many times in their working lives, do they have poorer working conditions than men, lower wages, and are looked over and ignored, just like Kerstin was – when the Speaker said "Gentlemen"?

And therefore our agenda is one that also clearly empowers women,
- promotes the sharing of unpaid care work at home,
- eliminates violence and harassment at work and all other places,
- ensures equal pay and equal opportunities,
- and strengthens women's voices and leadership.

Because Friends, when we talk about the safety of wings, we mean the safety of wings for everyone.

* * *

So lastly – what force will implement this agenda? How will it be possible?

You know the answer. It's through the force that has formed the basis of my own life, my country's success, and the ILO's hundred years of progress.

It is nothing more, it is nothing less, than the close co-operation of workers, employers and governments.

Co-operation between the social partners is like a bottle of fine wine.

You pick it up, think it looks old and mouldy, but on closer inspection you will find that it is better than ever!

* * *

So friends, let's now look ahead to a new century!

We must continue to seek energy from pioneers like Kerstin, from workers, like Ingegerd, who want a better life, whether they are from the forests of Sweden,

- the textile mills of Bangladesh,
- the farms of Mozambique,
- or the bauxite mines of Surinam.

Together, we need to give each other the safety of wings in a time of upheaval. It is an enormous task.

Therefore, I give to you the closing lines of Karin Boye's poem.

“Strike camp, strike camp! The new day shows its light. Our great adventure has no end in sight.”



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Lofven in European Parliament 3 april 2019

Published 03 April 2019

Brussels, 3 April 2019 Check against delivery.

The defence of democracy – and our young people's dreams

President of the European Parliament.
[Vice-]president of the Commission.
Distinguished Leaders of the Political Groups.
Members of Parliament.
My fellow Europeans.

Firstly, I would like to show my appreciation for your work during this electoral period,
and the progress you have achieved for Europe.

But my focus today,
will not be on our past,
but on our future.

I believe that we must step up,
to defend our fundamental values in the European Union.

And the most strategic way to fight the forces that challenge those values,
is to deliver results in the areas of employment, security, migration and
climate change,
and thus: to create hope for the future.

That should be our core mission:
the defence of our democratic values
– and our young people’s dreams.

* * *

Some people say that idealism is the preserve of the young.

And when we enter the world of adults,
we learn that nothing is black and white,
and realise that self-interest and cynical trade-offs rule the world.

I believe this narrative is wrong.
My parents took me in as a foster child,
and taught me about shared responsibility,
about respect for every human being,
about solidarity.

During my political career,
I have had to compromise and make tough decisions,
in difficult situations,
such as economic downturns and terrorist attacks.

But it has not made me forget my values.

It has only deepened my belief in the importance of having a moral compass,
to guide you through the tough times.

Because if we didn’t let our values steer our decisions,
if we didn’t feel our choices were leading us towards the kind of society we
believe in,
what would be the point in making any decisions at all?

* * *

The same applies to the EU.
Our union is based on values.
The whole idea of creating a common market,
and joint responsibility for coal and steel production, was to tie our countries
and our peoples closer together.

We wanted to fulfil Friedrich Schiller’s sentiments in Ode to Joy
that Alle Menschen werden Brüder

with equal value and equal rights,
which – put to the music of Beethoven
– became our common anthem.

* * *

And now that our union has grown and grown older,
we, just like every individual, need to
remember our most fundamental values.

For what would be the ultimate point of our work,
the ultimate point of our union,
if it did not promote the values we believe in?

It may also be the greatest thing we could do for the world.

We are living in a time when the multilateral system is being shaken to its
core.

The United Kingdom wants to leave our union,
and the transatlantic link is being questioned.

Meanwhile, China is on the rise – and several economies in Southeast Asia
and Africa are ready to follow in its footsteps,
and redraw the entire global economic map.

At the same time, Russia is acting in a revanchist manner, in flagrant
contempt of international law.

Now more than ever it's time
to stand up for common, principle-based solutions, and a world order where
might does not come before right.

But the EU can only be a strong voice for democracy in the world if all of us
Member States stand up for the principles of democracy at home.

We can only be a credible actor in the Middle East,
if we fight anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in our home countries.

We can only be a force for free media and the rule of law in our
neighbourhood, if we have free media and independent courts in our union.

For every democratic principle that is weakened in the EU, the EU's voice in

the world is equally weakened.

Therefore, the EU must stand up for our fundamental values. Both externally, in our world
– and internally, in our union.

* * *

And this is not just about our place in the world
– but the whole future of our cooperation.

If the principles contained in our most fundamental contracts are not adhered to,
how are we then to trust the other agreements?

On the single market.
On free movement.
Everything that does so much for our prosperity.

If our promises to each other are to be trusted,
if our cooperation and our economy are to continue to grow,
then pacta sunt servanda must apply
to the most fundamental contracts of all.

* * *

Therefore, Sweden will work to defend the EU:s core values - in the budget negotiations and in our support of the Commission's work.

My government will propose to the Swedish Parliament that Sweden will join the European public prosecutor's office, to contribute in the fight against corruption and the embezzlement of EU funds.

We support the Belgian proposal to establish an EU mechanism for the peer review of adherence to the rule of law.

And I will devote my efforts in Europe to defending the values I have borne since my childhood,
of the equal value of all people, and of solidarity.

I will give my all,
side by side with so many of you,
to refute and fight the extremist forces,
who deny these values

– and are doing everything they can to tear apart the union that defends them.

Of course the EU is a compromise,

– probably one of the most successful compromises in world history.

But there can be no compromising on human dignity.

– No reasonable level of anti-Semitism.

– No acceptable level of racism.

– No tolerable level of misogyny or homophobia.

Never will we compromise on these values!

* * *

But, and this is very important:

The defence of democracy is also the defence of young people's dreams.

Is there anything more dangerous to society than its young people ceasing to dream?

It is in societies that have lost hope that both political and religious extremism can grow the strongest.

And this is not only crucial in the fight against extremism, but also in the work to uphold broad, popular support for our union.

I believe it is crucial for all of us in the current Brexit negotiations, that the UK and the EU have the ability to move on as friends - and create a close, strong and long-term relationship.

But the only way for the EU to avoid similar exit ordeals in the future is to constantly prove its worth to people's everyday lives – and to their dreams for the future.

That is why the EU should not only benefit the market – but also benefit the people.

It is also why the work for a larger market can also be the work for a stronger democracy, if that market can create jobs – and hope – for our young people.

Over the past two years, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and I

have co-chaired a Global Commission on the Future of Work for the International Labour Organisation.

And there is no doubt that in the future work will be more advanced, more automated and more digitised – and that demand for skilled workers will soar.

This is good news for the EU.

We benefit from global competition that is based on knowledge – rather than lower wages.

But – we cannot rest on our laurels.

Everyone wants to be in the same position.

China has long been training more engineers than the United States, Germany and Japan – put together.

In this respect, our European cooperation will have an incredibly important role to play in the creation and sharing of world-leading knowledge and innovation.

And there are always many competing interests in budget negotiations.

But my country has learned the very hard way that it is only with strict priorities and a budget that is under control that democracy can deliver, in the long-term and with stability.

That is why, given all the competing interests, we do not propose a larger budget, but rather the stronger prioritisation of innovation and new jobs, and the digital, educational and physical infrastructure required to make them possible.

It is our responsibility, for our young people's dreams, to take advantage of this opportunity.

Our solution can never be to lower wages, or raise protectionist walls.

We should not shut ourselves off from world – we should lead it.

* * *

Therefore I'm proud that young people in Tallinn or Bratislava, can listen to

hip hop from Paris,
or fado from Lisbon - on Spotify from Stockholm.

But I also know how hard Spotify had to work
to get launched in Europe. A start-up company in Silicon Valley can launch
a product on the US market and reach over 320 million people immediately.

Our only chance of competing with this
is to make it just as easy to reach all the citizens of the EU at the same time.

Believe me, anyone who has lived through a dark, Nordic winter, knows that
we can't compete with California when it comes to the weather!

For generations, people from our continent have travelled across the
Atlantic, in search of a better life.

But the young IT geniuses of today and the future,
should not have to go west, or east,
to realise their dreams.

They should be able to do so here, in Europe,
in a digital single market, open to everyone.

* * *

And it is now almost a treat to visit the European Commission website, and
see that one priority policy area is: the European Pillar of Social Rights.

And, of course, my pride is not diminished
when it also says that we launched this work
in the Swedish city of Gothenburg.

I am grateful to President Juncker and the Commission,
to the European Parliament and to the Member States in the Council
for all of our work
to create a social pillar,
and establish 20 key principles that strengthen the social rights of all the
citizens of Europe.

But no worker will or should thank us,
until these 20 principles are a reality, across the EU.
- Until we stand up for collective agreements and fair wages.
- Until we put a stop to rule breaking and tax fraud.

- Until we secure gender equality,
and women's right to a full wage,
a career without glass ceilings,
and the freedom to decide over their own lives.

For the same reasons, Sweden will actively promote all new free trade agreements,
because we know how many jobs they can create.

But all these agreements should be favourable to people as well as to the market, and respect our environment, our health and the rights of workers.

And there is enormous potential for the European services market – if it is opened up – and shaped with concern for social rights.

But the EU labour market must be defined by all of the positive freedoms:
The freedom to study abroad, learn languages, work throughout Europe.
Never the freedom to set worker against worker!

Our common labour market should not crush workers' dreams, it should fulfil them!

* * *

And I know, that if you are to have hope in the future,
you must also feel safe, in the here and now.

IS and terrorism are dreadful security threats
that must be dealt with together,
– but, unfortunately, they are not our only ones.

I recently met the leadership of Europol at their headquarters in The Hague,
and their Virtual Command Post.

Europol has done an amazing job breaking up and arresting paedophile networks.

It is a type of crime where every nation's police service can see their part,
but where we can only see the whole - and crush it - in cooperation with each other.

A single nation would not – even if it really wanted to,
even if it poured in resources – be able to solve it alone.

Europe is borderless for criminals, too.
They read up on European laws,
looking for the weakest national legislation,
and for new national markets to enter.

That's why Sweden wants to deepen European efforts to fight organised crime and cyber threats.

We want to strengthen our cooperation on security and defence,
increase our ability to implement joint civilian and military crisis management operations,
and have a European Union that cooperates with strategic partners and builds security – together.

* * *

I also know that there is broad agreement,
in this parliament and on this continent,
that the EU must never again lose control
in the way it did during the refugee crisis.

Chaotic migration affects the confidence of the whole of society in the reception of refugees – but it affects the refugees themselves worst of all.

The only ones who benefit are right-wing extremists,
who are able to use the situation to inflame hatred of migrants.

The EU's free movement of people requires shared external borders,
and a shared responsibility for orderly and regulated migration,
built on three pillars:

- Firstly: strong co-operation with countries outside the EU so that fewer people are displaced, and more people can have better living conditions, so that new migration crises can be reduced or prevented entirely.
- Secondly: the control of all external borders, which is now taking place through the strengthening of Frontex, creating greater security and saving lives.
- Thirdly: the fair distribution of those who arrive and whose grounds for asylum are to be examined,
with that work carried out as a shared responsibility by all Member States.

It should not be possible to benefit from all of the advantages of Schengen cooperation,
and then refuse to share in the responsibility for its maintenance.

We have a huge task ahead of us.
Sweden will do its best to support the completion of that task.
And I am under no illusions that it will be simple.

But if we fail to deliver,
the Schengen Agreement will be weakened,
and – in the long run – so will the entire EU.

So, it is time to step up, for orderly and regulated migration in Europe – it is the best interests of us all.

* * *

And friends,
as Swedes we're often asked:
Do you know ABBA? Do you know Zlatan Ibrahimović?

But now we have to get ready for another question:
Do you know Greta Thunberg?

We are proud of the demonstrations she has inspired,
which gathered over a million young people all over the world.

But one thing we must never forget in their message:
It is not up to their generation to solve the climate crisis.
It is up to us. All generations. Here and now.

Sweden is ready to be in the lead, and show what is possible.

We have a climate framework for our society,
which will lead our efforts to cut emissions quickly and powerfully,
and achieve net-zero emissions by 2045.

But we, together, must implement the Paris Agreement
without any 'ifs' or 'buts' or 'maybes',
to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees.

And, as part of this work, the EU needs to adopt a goal of net-zero emissions
by 2050 at the very latest.

It is also a great opportunity for European industry,
as the whole world is crying out for new solutions.

So, it is not only the right thing to do morally,
it is also the right thing to do economically,
and is crucial to our survival.

* * *

To conclude,
This is what I want to say to you today.

Idealism is not only the preserve of the young.
Our common values have been the basis of the EU's fantastic history,
and they must guide us, so that we can have an even better future.

And in these times when people say that the EU must prove its worth,
there is no better task for our union
than defending our democratic values,
and – by delivering on jobs, security, migration and climate change –
defending the dreams of our young people.

An EU that can deliver this not only gains greater legitimacy – but also a
stronger voice in the world.

It is a difficult task.
But that's why it's so alluring,
that's why it's so perfect for us.



Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Remarks by Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Stefan Löfven at the First LAS-EU Summit

Published 25 February 2019

Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 24 February 2019 Check against delivery.

Your majesties, excellencies, ministers, colleagues, neighbours,

Our regions are intertwined, through geographical proximity, economy and family ties. We share challenges, be it climate change, peace and security, economic development, terrorism or irregular migration.

And we share a duty – to address these challenges through cooperation, as good neighbours should do.

Therefore, I warmly welcome this first Summit between the League of Arab States and the European Union, and I thank Egypt and President el Sisi for hosting us here.

* * *

Globalisation is a powerful force.

It has the potential to serve as a catalyst for us to achieve inclusive growth, meet the Sustainable Development Goals and create better societies for us all.

But it also has the potential to widen inequalities, creating uncertainty, unrest and a lack of security.

It is up to us to use the tools we have at hand – the greening and

diversification of our economies, promotion of private sector growth, social dialogue, anti-corruption measures and public sector reform – to create a globalisation process that suppresses no one, and benefits us all.

* * *

That goal can only be reached through working together. We must use multilateralism as a tool to build democracy, security and prosperity.

For Yemen, the Stockholm Agreement represents a much-needed turning point, provided it is implemented. It requires continued engagement by all.

On Syria, we call on the regime to engage constructively in the UN-led political process and take irreversible steps towards a political solution. Until then, there can be no normalised relations or reintegration of Syria into international bodies.

And as a friend of Palestine and of Israel, I say this:

We must spare no effort, 25 years after the Oslo Accords, to support the two-state solution, based on the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as the future capital of both Israel and Palestine.

It is our joint responsibility to work for an end to the occupation and for a two-state solution, in accordance with international law and previous agreements. The Arab Peace Initiative is key in this regard.

* * *

Excellencies, neighbours,

Democracy, security and economic development are interrelated.

Without progress in one, sustainable results in the other two cannot be expected.

This is the reason why Sweden constantly stresses the importance of establishing inclusive, accountable and transparent institutions.

Together we need to intensify efforts to protect and promote human rights, the rule of law, and space for civil society.

We need to realise women's full and meaningful participation in political, social and economic life, and the Tunis Forum on Gender Equality will be an

important stepping stone in that endeavour. Freeing the full power and potential of all adults in an economy is both ethically right and financially smart.

* * *

Yes, we share more than an intertwined part of the world.

We share a history – and we share a future.

We share the responsibility, as leaders of our communities, to offer the means and the possibilities for our citizens to fulfil their dreams and to live their lives in dignity, freedom, peace and security.

And we share the possibility to do this together, as neighbours – and as friends.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven's speech on International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2019

Published 28 January 2019

Stockholm, 27 January 2019. Check against delivery.

Survivors,
Your Royal Highness,
Excellencies,
Friends.

I would like to say a few words about emptiness.

A few years ago, the play *Our Class* was staged here in Stockholm. It deals with the annihilation of the Jewish population of the Polish village of Jedwabne in 1941.

There is an extremely painful moment in the story, where the young man Abram, who has emigrated to United States, reads a letter in which he asks about his mother and father.

His sisters and brothers.

His grandmothers and grandfathers.

His cousins, his aunts and uncles.

He asks, “Who has killed my entire family, taken our home, our belongings, everything, and now lives in our house?”

He tries to scream out his fury and despair.
That awful emptiness.

* * *

Today, a battle is being fought over values, a battle that has not been won yet, and which may never be won for good.

Threats and hatred towards Jews remain horribly widespread in Sweden. Anti-Semitism can be found in far-right and far-left groups, in conspiracy theories on the internet, in fundamentalist Islamic environments, but also among adults and children who have fled to Sweden, who have been exposed to anti-Semitic propaganda, often orchestrated or incited by the very same regimes that they have fled from.

Here, no emptiness, no moral vacuum, can be allowed to exist. Here, we must step in and, with unhesitating clarity, expose, confront and combat anti-Semitism, wherever it may appear and no matter who expresses it.

We have started the work of strengthening the law forbidding racist symbols, we have secured funding to enable more young people to travel to Holocaust memorials in Europe and we have made sure to increase resources to Jewish communities and other organisations needing support for their safety.

But if new education programmes are needed, we will create them.
If new safety measures are needed, we will take them.
If tougher police efforts are needed, we will implement them.

Jewish life is an incontrovertible part of Sweden and, wherever it is threatened or challenged, it will be defended. Let there be no doubt about this.

* * *

Another part of this defence is the preservation of memories.

Many of us have been moved by Jacob Mühlrad's work on portraying his grandfather's memories of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, which now live on and have been spread across the world in the composition Kaddish.

Achievements like this make Sweden proud.
But the task of keeping memories alive cannot just be shouldered by survivors and their descendants.
It must be borne by a whole society.

Last summer, Max Safir contacted me.
Since his liberation from the Ebensee concentration camp, he had kept his

memories alive.

He had worked, formed a family – and, at the same time, toiled and travelled to show new generations the tattoos on his skin and to tell the tale he carried inside him.

Now his strength is starting to fail, and he told me he thought that Sweden should found a museum to preserve his memories, and those of other survivors, for coming generations.

We are now establishing a museum for Holocaust survivors in Sweden. I mentioned this in my Statement of Government Policy in the Riksdag after I was elected Prime Minister.

Together with the international conference that we are arranging next year, this museum will lay the foundation for deepening and strengthening the work of remembrance in Sweden and across the world.

I want Max Safir, Hédi Fried, Livia Fränkel, Emerich Roth, and all of you who have devoted your lives to telling of the crimes committed against you and your loved ones to know this:

Your memories will not vanish into emptiness.
They will live on.

* * *

Finally, I would like to say this: Today, we have gathered to grieve, and to support all of you who still live with the emptiness left behind by your parents, family members, friends and loved ones.

But we are also doing it to honour and celebrate that which has lived on. Jewish life and the fantastic Jewish culture, which has survived millennia of persecution and oppression.

At the end of the play *Our Class*, an older Abram appears again. He grieves for the death of his wife, but, as he tells of those who attended her funeral in the United States, something else emerges. As he lists his children and their partners, in his pride over his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Abram describes the life, the love, the joy that is the opposite of emptiness.

So many of you live, even today, with sorrow and pain.

But so many also live in love, in community, in freedom.
And I promise you, as Prime Minister and fellow human, I will do everything
in my power to ensure this freedom is defended.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Statement of Government Policy, 21 January 2019

Published 21 January 2019

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, the Riksdag, 21 January 2019.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of the Swedish Riksdag,

All around Europe, extreme right-wing movements are spreading. In several countries, forces with an antidemocratic agenda have made it all the way to government. But in Sweden we stand up for the equal value of all people. We are choosing a different path.

We are now beginning a historic form of cooperation. Sweden will now have a Government made up of the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party that will cooperate on the budget and the direction of policy in several areas with the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Now we can finally make a fresh start. The problems in society cannot wait. Jobs must increase and climate emissions must be reduced. Welfare must improve and integration must become more efficient and effective. Security must increase and crime must be combated.

Sweden is in need of major reforms. We can now address these, together, across the old political blocs.

Mr Speaker,

This morning, hundreds of thousands of Swedes got out of bed, had a cup of coffee, made breakfast, reminded their children not to forget their gym bag.

There may have been a minor battle in the hallway about coats and gloves before everyone got out the door. Children off to preschool and school. Adults off to work. And most people are too busy to listen to today's Statement of Government Policy. It's the hard work of ordinary people that is building Sweden.

The Swedish economy is strong. The budget deficit has been turned into a surplus, employment levels are at their highest in more than 25 years, and the national debt is at its lowest since the 1970s.

We now have room for manoeuvre. We now have major opportunities. When things are going well for Sweden, this should benefit everyone.

In the last electoral period, historic investments were made in welfare. Over the next four years, these resources will be strengthened by an additional SEK 5 billion per year for welfare.

Pensions will increase for those who have worked their whole working life on low wages. They have fought hard for Sweden's welfare. Now they should get the respect they deserve.

Employers' social security contributions will be reduced. It will be cheaper for business owners to hire their first employee.

The first steps will be taken towards a family week. This country's parents should have more time with their children.

Future generations must have access to clean air, healthy oceans and thriving natural environments. The climate transition will permeate policy.

Our society must be strong – and our development sustainable.

* * *

Everyone who can work should work. Our economy must be kept in good order. The agreement on the fiscal policy framework remains in place. There must be full preparedness for a downturn in the economy.

A major new tax reform will be implemented. This is how we will promote jobs and competitiveness, reduce disparities and increase equality. This is

how we will secure welfare and contribute to achieving the climate and environmental targets.

The last vestiges of the tax on pensions will be abolished. The austerity tax and extra taxation on generation changes will be removed. Tax deductions for household work will be expanded. Swedish industry and Swedish businesses, both small and large, must have good conditions to grow and employ more people. The problem of skilled people being expelled from Sweden must be resolved.

Sweden is a leading research nation. We will defend this position. Independent research must be guaranteed, and at the same time research policy must respond to global and national challenges in society.

The work of the National Innovation Council will continue. An export initiative for more jobs throughout the country will be implemented. Green obligations will be trialled. Collaboration, innovation and the climate transition make Swedish companies world leaders.

Together we are equipping ourselves for the future.
Together we are building a strong Sweden.

* * *

The Government's objective is not only for the whole country to live. The whole country must thrive.

The national plan to invest SEK 700 billion in roads and railways will be completed.

New main lines for high-speed trains will be laid and the railways in northern Sweden will be expanded. More long-haul freight transport will shift from lorries to trains and ships.

A national ticketing system will be introduced for all public transport throughout Sweden. The travel deduction will be based on distance and will be neutral in terms of mode of transport. Foreign travel by train will be made easier – more people should be able to take the train down to the continent.

Trains must be more punctual. Investments in railway maintenance will increase. Commuting by bike will be made easier. Road maintenance will improve.

Broadband and mobile services will be expanded throughout the country and more service points will be opened.

It must be possible to live and work all over the country. Sweden must hold together.

* * *

Rarely do people feel as free as when they put the key in the door to their first apartment.

Housing construction must be faster, cheaper and more sustainable. Mobility on the housing market must increase. The renting model will be reformed by allowing rents to be set freely for new builds. The quality and location of an apartment will have a greater influence on how the rent is set.

Investment support for the construction of rented housing will be concentrated, streamlined and targeted at rented housing throughout the country. Interest on the amount deferred when moving house will be abolished. Penalties for selling black market contracts will be tougher, and the purchase of such contracts will be criminalised.

The housing shortage will disappear, reform by reform.

* * *

The Swedish forest industry must be sustainable and it must grow. Private forest ownership rights must be guaranteed. Landowners must receive fair financial compensation for restrictions to their right of ownership and right of use.

It should be a great deal easier to build close to shorelines in unexploited rural areas. At the same time, shore protection and the right of common access will be guaranteed in exploited areas.

An effective farming package will be put together to strengthen Swedish food production. Agriculture's dependence on fossil fuels must be reduced.

Consumer demand for organic food must be met and food waste must be tackled.

Mr Speaker,

Sweden will be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. There is no time for hesitation.

The transition required is considerable. A lot of work remains to be done. But we are at the forefront. With electric lorries and public transport. With increased construction using timber. With coal-free steel production and new textiles from recycled clothing.

The climate policy framework remains in place. All relevant legislation will be reviewed. The climate objectives must be achieved.

The energy agreement will be implemented. It should be easy and worthwhile to invest in your own production of renewable energy.

Sweden will push for a climate law at EU level. The reform efforts to implement the Paris Agreement will be intensified. The 1.5-degree target must be met.

A robust green tax shift will be implemented. Taxes will be raised on activities that are damaging to the environment and reduced for work and entrepreneurship.

The major climate impact of aviation must be reduced. Climate requirements for aviation will be tightened. It should be possible to charge and fuel fossil-free vehicles throughout the country. Climate bonuses and climate fees for cars will be strengthened and simplified. No new petrol- or diesel-driven cars will be sold after 2030. This is how we will reduce the major climate emissions from the transport sector.

Prospecting and new exploitation of coal, oil and fossil gas will be prohibited. A major drive will be initiated to sequester some previous emissions.

The climate investment programmes and the urban environment agreements promote local investments for global sustainability and they will be developed and made more efficient.

Children should be able to walk and cycle to school safely, and outdoor activities should be promoted.

Sweden must further develop a resource-efficient, circular and bio-based

economy. Swedish consumers should be able to make sustainable and toxin-free choices.

More steps will be taken to make it easier to recycle and re-use. A minimum service level for household waste will be introduced. Deposit requirements will be introduced for more products and the spread of microplastics will be combated.

Biological diversity must be protected. Ecosystem services must be safeguarded. The appropriations for the protection of valuable natural environments will be increased.

Marine environments must be improved. Eutrophication, use of environmental toxins and emissions of pharmaceutical waste must be minimised. Fisheries must be sustainable. Controls will be tightened to stop illegal fishing, and bottom-trawling will be prohibited in protected areas.

Groundwater levels will be secured and access to drinking water protected.

Twenty years ago, the Riksdag took a crucial decision: we will pass on to the next generation a society in which the major environmental problems have been solved. The environmental objectives system must now be developed and new interim targets set.

The magic of Sweden's old forests. The trilling of the lark. The buzzing of honey bees. It is our duty to preserve Sweden's natural environment for our children and grandchildren.

Mr Speaker,

Language and work are the way into society.

During the electoral period, comprehensive reforms for better integration will be implemented. The entry agreements negotiated by the social partners for newly arrived immigrants and long-term unemployed people will be launched. It should be possible for the model to be used by temporary work agencies and also companies without collective agreements. An entry deduction will be introduced whereby the employers' social security contribution for young people without an upper secondary education and newly arrived immigrants is removed for the first two years.

An integration year – the Swedish New Start – will be introduced with intensive vocationally oriented Swedish language instruction, work experience, vocational education and training, obligatory civic orientation and a one-year mentorship programme.

Women and men must have equal opportunities to support themselves and control their own lives. There will be a special focus on women's establishment in the labour market.

The provisions in the Reception of Asylum Seekers and Others Act on making one's own living arrangements will be limited to reduce segregation.

Passing an examination in Swedish and basic civic studies will be a requirement for receiving citizenship. We are raising ambitions and efforts to ensure that everyone learns Swedish, through a language obligation, enhanced Swedish for Immigrants, language preschool and language training for people on parental leave. More career posts for teachers will be introduced in areas of social exclusion.

Setting high standards for people and giving them a lot of opportunities helps them to grow.

* * *

We live in a modern knowledge society. Everyone must be able to build on their knowledge and reshape their skills.

The Swedish labour market must be characterised by security and flexibility. Employment law must be adapted to the labour market of today, while a fundamental balance between the social partners is maintained. Companies will be given greater opportunities to adapt, and individual workers will be protected against arbitrary termination of employment.

If the social partners do not reach an agreement, a legislative amendment will be implemented to clearly expand the exemptions from the rules on order of selection. At the same time, an enhanced right to skills development will be introduced, and a better balance will be created in employment protection for staff with different terms of employment.

Arbetsförmedlingen, Sweden's public employment service, will be fundamentally reformed. Independent actors will help to match people with employers and equip job seekers. Unemployment insurance will be developed so that more people qualify for compensation, and the incentives

to apply for new jobs and retrain will increase.

At the same time, the study support system will be made more generous for older people wanting to further educate themselves or retrain. State support for short-time work will be developed. Professional development time will be introduced to enable skills development and entrepreneurship.

The Adult Education Initiative will be expanded and access to higher education and distance learning will increase throughout the country.

This way, everyone can be equipped for a rapidly changing labour market.

* * *

Thanks to major efforts from headteachers, teachers and pupils, school performance in Sweden is improving.

In Södertälje, a quality drive across political blocs has helped improve school performance for the eighth year in a row. At Hovsjöskolan, the number of pupils achieving the grades they need to qualify for upper secondary school has doubled.

Nonetheless, a major reform effort is still needed to reinstate our country as a leading knowledge nation.

All pupils must be given a fair chance, regardless of their background or where they live. The focus on knowledge will be strengthened and quality requirements increased in all schools. The School Commission's proposals for increased equality in schools will be implemented. State support will be increased.

Material will be produced for a decision that will create the conditions for schools to be answerable to central government. There will be a moratorium on the establishment of independent compulsory and upper secondary schools with a confessional focus.

Teacher education will be reformed, standards will be raised and the admission requirements will be increased. It will be easier for academics to choose the teaching profession. Resources will be added to employ more teaching assistants.

Teachers must receive the support they need so that grading is fair and equitable throughout the country. Schools that want to should be able to

introduce grading from year four. Subject grades will be introduced in upper secondary school. Grade inflation must be combated.

A national plan for peaceful study environments and security in schools will be produced. Mobile phone bans will be introduced. Vigorous action will be taken to tackle bullying. It should be easier to exclude or move pupils who have threatened others or subjected them to violence.

No pupil should be left behind, and those who want to should be able to get ahead. The reading-writing-arithmetic guarantee will become a reality. A proposal will be drawn up to make a ten-year compulsory school possible. Preschool and after-school care groups will be made smaller. It should be easier to get special support in smaller teaching groups. Support for children with neuropsychiatric disabilities will increase. Resource schools will be developed and schools for pupils with learning disabilities will be strengthened.

A homework guarantee and a priority timetable will be introduced so that pupils at risk of not achieving the necessary grades to qualify for upper secondary school can receive more teaching in the subjects they need. An increased pace of study will be offered to pupils who can achieve the knowledge objectives more quickly. Pupils in the upper years of compulsory school should be able to study upper secondary courses, and upper secondary pupils should be able to study higher education courses.

Let there be no doubt about where we are heading. The Swedish school system must be the greatest pride of our society.

Mr Speaker,

When a new life is on the way. When something hurts, or doesn't feel right. When the pain is constant. It is then, at our most fragile moments in life, that Sweden's health care system should be there offering security.

No one should have to wait too long for treatment or an operation. A general plan for shorter queues will be drafted, along with an updated 'waiting list billion'. There will be a particular focus on ill health among women. There will be new investments in ambulance care, cancer care and maternity care. A broad primary care reform will be implemented. It must be more attractive for doctors to work in primary care, and easier to provide health care in rural

areas.

A person who is sick should be informed about their care plan and who they should call. The patient contract system will be developed. The right to continuity of care in general practice will be safeguarded. It should be possible to impose fines or sanctions on care providers that do not meet the care guarantee.

Sickness insurance should provide financial security in the event of illness. It should be easy to return to work upon recovery. Rehabilitation and occupational health services are crucial.

The conditions and working environment of those employed in health and social care must be improved, so that more young people choose to apply to the sector and remain in it – in the knowledge that their job is not only important, but also stimulating. The professional role of assistant nurses will be strengthened by means of a register or protected professional title. More people should be able to study on full pay to become specialist nurses.

Psychiatric care will be expanded. Mental health must be tackled. A new form of care for patients with minor mental health issues will be investigated. A zero-queue target will be introduced for child and adolescent psychiatric services.

Children living in sheltered accommodation need better support.

Elderly care should maintain a high standard. Continuity of care in home-help services will be introduced throughout the country. Home-help staff should receive work uniforms free of charge.

The prospects of a job, a good life and meaningful leisure time will be improved for everyone with any form of disability. The right to assistance for self-care, breathing and tube-feeding should be reintroduced. The definition of normal parental responsibility will be narrowed. The right to assistance due to a need for supervision will be strengthened. The question of who should have overall responsibility for personal assistance will be investigated.

Anyone who is entitled to personal assistance must receive it.

Mr Speaker,

A century ago, the Riksdag took the first of two decisions that gave women and men equal suffrage. The best way to honour those who showed the way in the fight for democracy is to continue their work in a new era.

Democracy in Sweden is strong, but we can never take it for granted. It must constantly be defended – generation after generation, electoral period after electoral period.

Democratic institutions must be protected. The independence of courts and public service media must be strengthened. The electoral system's resilience to manipulation will be improved. The media support system will create better conditions for independent journalism throughout the country.

We will preserve the reform ensuring free entry to state-owned museums. Culture schools will be developed, and all children should have the opportunity to benefit from them.

Astrid Lindgren once said that “children create miracles when they read”. She was right. For this reason, access to school libraries with trained librarians will increase. The Reading Delegation's proposals will be implemented. We want more miracles in Sweden!

The sports movement and civic organisations should be supported and encouraged. Financial security for artists and cultural creators should be improved.

We are a feminist government. The Swedish Gender Equality Agency will remain. The rights of LGBTQ people will be strengthened. The Discrimination Act will be made more stringent.

The self-determination and influence of the indigenous Sami people will be strengthened. An independent human rights institution will be established.

Work on the national plan to combat racism will continue. Xenophobic hate crimes against minorities will be vigorously combated.

Wherever anti-Semitism exists, and however it is expressed, it must be identified and fought. In 2020, Sweden will host a new international conference on remembrance of the Holocaust, and Swedish young people should be given the opportunity to visit memorials in Europe. A new museum will be established to preserve and pass on the memory of the Holocaust.

Never forget – this was the promise we made to each other. Sweden will never forget.

Mr Speaker,

Criminality must be fought with everything society has. Record numbers of women and men are now applying for police training programmes. They should be supported by substantial resources, coordinated agencies and more effective legislation.

Ten thousand more people should be employed in the Swedish Police Authority by 2024. Policing must be an attractive profession. There must be increased protection for police officers and other emergency services staff. The penalties for offences linked to disputes among criminals should be tougher. New legislation on data storage will be presented to the Riksdag shortly. Police will be given the right to take decisions on camera surveillance in public places.

The minimum penalty for obstructing the course of justice will be increased substantially. A crown witness system will be investigated. Unregistered pay-as-you-go mobile SIM cards will be banned. The penalties for those who transfer narcotics to others will be tightened.

Serious offences committed by young people under the age of 15 must always be investigated by the police. Actions to combat tax evasion and tax avoidance will be stepped up. Measures will be taken against the use of false identification documents, and against organised crime targeting our welfare systems.

People who are arrested and convicted must be handed effective sentences that can lead to life changes. The penalties should be tougher for those who recruit young people to criminal activities. Prisoners who do not cooperate in care and treatment should have their time in prison extended.

Crime prevention begins with the fight against poverty and segregation. A national exit programme will be introduced to allow more people to leave criminality behind them, and more community liaison workers and community police officers will be employed to ensure that fewer people are enticed into crime.

We are tough on both crime and its causes.

Society is always stronger than the gangs.

* * *

The new Consent Act enables more rape prosecutions. The work to realise a culture of consent will now continue.

More resources will be allocated to prevention efforts, and sex and relationship teaching in schools will be modernised. The minimum penalty for rape will be increased. A new offence classification of gross sexual molestation will be introduced. Statutory limitation periods will be extended, and removed entirely for sexual offences against children. More reception centres for victims of sexual offences will be established.

The Government will increase its initiatives against domestic violence. This applies to immediate support to victims and their children, preventive efforts, and initiatives to make those who perpetrate such violence change their behaviour.

* * *

Standing up for your life and your love, even when you know that your family refuses to accept it, takes great courage. And telling the world about it to bring about change for others takes even greater courage.

Fadime Sahindal had that courage. And because of this she was murdered, exactly 17 years ago today. This is how she concluded her speech to the Riksdag a few months before her murder:

“It should be a given that you can have both your family and the life you want for yourself. Unfortunately, it is not a given for many girls. I hope that you won’t turn your backs on them. That you won’t close your eyes to them.”

I wish I could say that honour culture has been suppressed. But this is not the case. It persists, and it still threatens people’s freedom and safety. Previous action has not been sufficient. We must do more. We will do more.

We must impose tougher penalties, increase awareness and strengthen efforts in schools and social services.

It should be easier to expel non-Swedish citizens who commit honour-related offences and hate crimes. At the same time, there should be greater

protection against expulsion for victims of honour-related crime.

It should be possible to offer young people a greater degree of intervention without their parents' consent where there is a suspicion of honour-related crime. Society must act immediately on any suspicion that someone is going to be subjected to female genital mutilation or be married off against their will.

Mr Speaker,

The fight against terrorism and violent extremism must be uncompromising. The legislation will be made tougher. Participation in a terrorist organisation will be criminalised. The Swedish Security Service will be given the possibility to read encrypted traffic. The internal border controls will remain in place as long as is necessary.

Terrorism and extremism are unfortunately just parts of the complex security threat targeting all open and democratic societies.

The work to create a modern total defence continues. The national security strategy must be implemented based on a broad security analysis. A national centre will be set up to increase information and cyber security. A new government agency will be established to strengthen our psychological defences against influence operations and similar. Our civil preparedness will be equipped to better handle climate-related crises such as health threats, fires, drought and flooding. Our vigilance against foreign attempts to acquire sensitive infrastructure will increase.

Sweden will maintain its security policy line. The defence appropriations will be gradually increased to strengthen Sweden's military capabilities and our cooperation with other countries and organisations will be deepened.

Our military non-alignment serves our country well. Sweden will not apply for membership of NATO. However, we will safeguard the transatlantic link, develop our defence cooperation, particularly with Finland, and deepen cooperation for increased security around the Baltic Sea.

If another Nordic or EU country suffers a disaster or an attack, Sweden will not remain passive. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is similarly affected.

* * *

Membership of the European Union is a foundation stone of Sweden's national, European and global action.

Sweden will work for an effective EU – an EU for the citizens, that creates jobs and increases the security of its people. An EU that tackles the threat of climate change and improves its competitiveness in the global economy.

Together with the rest of the EU, Sweden will continue to work to ensure that the planned withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU is accomplished in an orderly way. We are prepared to handle various scenarios.

Member States that break with the EU's values and the rule of law should face severe consequences. History teaches us what can happen if we close our eyes to abuses of democratic rights and freedoms.

* * *

Our term on the UN Security Council has now come to an end – but Sweden's international work for peace and democracy continues.

A number of serious challenges need to be dealt with:

The conflicts in Syria and Yemen pose serious security threats with catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and intervention in Ukraine are flagrant breaches of international law. The Rohingya in Myanmar are being subjected to crimes against humanity. The violence must cease, and those responsible must be brought to justice. The Korean Peninsula must be rid of nuclear weapons. A lasting peace between Israel and Palestine requires a two-state solution.

Sweden is working actively to promote necessary reforms of the UN. International law must be safeguarded. The role of women in peace processes must be strengthened. Peace and democracy must be promoted through efforts for non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, for easing of tensions and disarmament, for mediation and dialogue. Trust between people and countries is a powerful tool against war and conflicts.

That is how common security is created.

* * *

The right of asylum must be safeguarded in Sweden, in Europe and internationally. More countries must take greater responsibility. Sweden's reception of refugees must be sustainable in the long term. The Act Temporarily Restricting the Possibility to Obtain Residence Permits in Sweden will be extended for two years, while at the same time persons eligible for subsidiary protection will be given the same right to family reunification as refugees.

The Government will work to establish a common asylum system in the EU that distributes the reception of refugees fairly and proportionately. Asylum seekers should be offered a legally certain reception with short waiting times. Those with grounds for protection must rapidly become a part of society, and those without such grounds must return promptly.

The most important tool to stop refugee disasters is action for development and conflict resolution.

The feminist foreign policy will be developed. The rights of women and minorities around the world must be strengthened. Gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights are essential parts of global development policy.

In a time of trade wars, Sweden must defend free trade and stand up for fair conditions. Investments in Sweden and international trade agreements must safeguard the environment, human health and workers' rights.

The Swedish Global Deal initiative brings together almost 100 governments, enterprises and organisations. The OECD is now taking over as host organisation. Sweden will continue to promote social dialogue for better working conditions and increased productivity.

The Government will continue Sweden's extensive development cooperation and maintain development assistance equivalent to one per cent of GNI. Development assistance should focus even more on promoting democracy. We remain committed to high ambitions for climate financing. Our leadership for globally sustainable oceans will continue.

As other countries reduce efforts for global sustainability, Sweden will increase them. We must be at the vanguard for the 2030 Agenda.

* * *

Mr Speaker,

The electoral period began in the autumn. Winter has now arrived, but today, 21 January, a new Government will begin its work. We have less time than usual, but together, and in broad cooperation, we can and will achieve all the more.

This is a new era, a challenging and crucial era. The parliamentary cooperation that begins today is historic.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech

Speech by Prime Minister Löfven UNSC 9 July 2018

Published 09 July 2018

Check against delivery.

Members of the Security Council,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I want to thank Special Representative Gamba and Executive Director Fore for their important and, at times difficult to listen to, briefings to the Council. Let me also thank Yenny Londoño for sharing her inspirational story.

Excellencies,

Childhood is not just the start of our life; it is the foundation of it. It is the base from which we reach our full potential. The base for peaceful and prosperous societies.

Put simply: ensuring the care, safety and protection of children today, prevents conflicts tomorrow.

Yet, we are not doing nearly enough to protect our children. 350 million children are affected by armed conflict today. They are at risk of being killed or maimed. They risk being victims of sexual violence. They risk having no other school than that which war teaches them: Loss. Fear. Hatred. Revenge.

While the need to do more is clear, our concerted efforts are having an effect. In the last two decades, 130 000 children have been released from armed groups.

In the last two years, more than 12 000 children have received UN-assistance for reintegration.

Excellencies,

With today's unanimous adoption of resolution 2427 we not only strengthen the Children and Armed Conflict agenda more broadly, but we also further the prevention agenda.

Let me highlight a few ways in which this is done:

First, children's needs are often overlooked when peace is negotiated. Indeed, universal concern for children may sometimes open the door to find new solutions. This resolution emphasizes how the Children and Armed Conflict agenda is integral to conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

Second, it sets out a framework for the reintegration of children associated with armed forces or armed groups. Successful reintegration is in the best interest of the child, but also in the best interest of societies. It places children as part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Third, it recognizes that access for all girls and boys to education and health care, including mental health, in conflict is essential. It also, for the first time, distinguishes between girls and boys and makes the point that their needs and vulnerabilities are different.

Fourth, it links the Children and Armed Conflict Agenda to the Sustainable Development Goals. To achieve the 2030 Agenda, we can leave no child behind.

Fifth, it states, for the first time in a Council resolution, the central principle that children in armed conflict should be treated primarily as victims.

Sixth, the resolution stresses accountability for ALL violations and abuses against children – not just the gravest crimes – thereby setting a new standard for the prevention of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. There can be no exceptions to humanity, and there can be no exceptions to international humanitarian law.

Finally, the resolution addresses the need to also consider the views of children. We must listen to children, hear their perspectives, as well as their proposals for solutions.

In that vein, Sweden, with UNICEF and civil society partners, organized a

series of child consultations around the world focusing on children as refugees, children as agents for peace and on the reintegration of former child soldiers. We also organized consultations in Sweden.

All this resulted in these recommendations where the messages from children to us, as decision makers, are clear:

Provide security and safety. Put food on the table. Ensure education.

Provide care for sick or injured.

And, above all else: End war.

Excellencies,

We've agreed on today's resolution; now we must implement it.

Representative Gamba, with partners, is working to develop practical guidance and tools to integrate child protection issues in peace processes.

For us, in this council, our responsibility is to consider the effect of conflict on children, in all our work; in the renewal of mission mandates, by ensuring every mission has child protection advisors, and by including children's perspectives in our discussions.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I can think of no better way to address the root causes of conflict than to give children a loving and safe childhood and protect them from the scourge of war.

It is up to us to live up to our responsibilities and to deliver on the children's demands.

It is up to us to prevent the conflicts of tomorrow, by protecting children today.

Thank you.



Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven's speech on the anniversary of the terrorist attack on Drottninggatan

Published 07 April 2018

Stockholm, 7 April 2018. Check against delivery.

Your Royal Highnesses, friends,

First of all, I would like to directly address those of you who lost a loved one.

One year has passed. One year of shock. Of sadness. Of grief.

But amidst all of this unfathomable pain, I understand that you also carry happy memories. Of a conversation, a smile, a look, a hug.

All of the things that formed your love, and that now make you miss that person so much.

But that also, in all of the darkness, can help us to celebrate life, because it has given us such wonderful people to love.

As the author Thornton Wilder wrote:

'There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning.'

* * *

I hope that those of you who are grieving, those who were injured, those who bear the wounds of that day, feel the love, support and solidarity from an entire nation, and not least from all of us gathered here today.

We are here for you. You are not alone.

* * *

We are also here to pay tribute to all of those who responded when disaster called for you to act. All of you who gave up your free time, worked an extra shift and demonstrated love for your society.

You, the rescue workers, who put yourselves in harm's way to help as many people as possible, as quickly as possible.

You, the police officers, who worked tirelessly to protect people and catch the perpetrator, but who also took the time to comfort people and explain what was going on.

You, the medical staff, who worked long shifts, side by side, to provide the best care a modern society can offer.

You, the volunteers, who revealed the hero in you.

You have shown us the meaning of duty, sacrifice and courage.

I see you as fantastic role models for our young people, and as a reason to be proud of our country.

* * *

And one thing I remember clearly from that day is this:

Faced with this horrific, meaningless, fanatical hatred, there were so many people who chose to show such great empathy for each other.

Who held in their arms a despairing stranger.

Who offered to collect their neighbour's children.

Who said: We may not know each other, but I'm here if you need me.

Let us never forget this, when the history of our time is written.

When our society was at its most fragile, that's when our sense of community was at its strongest.

That is what survives.

That is what gives meaning.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

180307 Speech in Great Synagogue of Stockholm, Holocaust Remembrance Day 2018

Published 07 March 2018

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven in Great Synagogue of Stockholm on Holocaust Remembrance Day 2018, 27 January 2018. Check against delivery.

Survivors, Your Majesties, Excellencies, Friends.

First of all, let me thank you, Livia, for your speech.

When you showed me Auschwitz-Birkenau last summer, it was the first time I had been there. Over the years, I have visited Yad Vashem in Israel and many other Holocaust memorials. But to stand with you at the entrance to Auschwitz, to see where the selection process took place, where you and your sister were separated from your mother, to see the red cattle car that you travelled in – that made a deep impression on me, a very deep impression.

And even if we as individuals can only manage to comprehend the tiniest fraction of the fear, the horror, the despair that place embodies, it can be enough to crush you.

Our trip, Livia, has had the greatest impact on me as Prime Minister and as a human being. Thank you.

Holocaust Remembrance Day is a day of mourning. Mourning mothers and fathers, grandparents, friends and loved ones.

Mourning young people who never had the chance to grow up, mourning children who never had the chance to start school or take their first steps, mourning families, relatives, communities.

Mourning the wounds that many of you carry within you, and will do forever.

But unfortunately, today is also a day of anger.

Anger over the raw and despicable anti-Semitism that we still see around the world, in Europe and in Sweden.

We have seen it in attacks against synagogues, rabbis, adults and children, in fanatical slogans during demonstrations, in debate forums, in online comments, in propaganda films.

At times when I get the reports, it seems almost overwhelming, stifling. How can this happen? How can people not have learned?

When I think about it, I feel a sense of profound anger. I know that you feel it too. But there is also something I want each and every one of you to know.

Your security and your constitutional right to exercise your religion, to observe your culture, to be who you are, to be able to live openly, securely and freely with your children and those you love – this is my primary task and that of our country.

The streets you walk on are your streets. The cities you live in are your cities. Your history is Sweden's history – and our future is something we will share.

Sweden is your country, and the democracy we have built will work tirelessly to ensure that our children and grandchildren will not only be able to continue to live as we do today, but be able to strive for something even better.

That is why anti-Semitism must be confronted with the full might of Swedish society. Democracy must confront hate – before hate confronts democracy.

Today, and all other days, we must declare: never again.

In order to fight anti-Semitism in Sweden, we need to see its different roots.

It exists in right-wing extremist and neo-Nazi groups, and these groups must be identified and handled as the terrorists they are, or risk becoming. It exists in left-wing extremist groups, which lapse into anti-Semitic lines of reasoning and conspiracy theories in a way that can never be defended or glossed over. It exists in fundamentalist Islamic environments, inspired by terrorist sects and fanatics.

But besides this, we also see anti-Semitism among adults and children who have sought refuge in Sweden. People who are not necessarily particularly religious, but who have been exposed to anti-Semitic propaganda throughout their lives through stories, newspapers, TV – often orchestrated or supported by the oppressive regimes from which they fled.

I don't care what shape or form the hate takes.

Wherever anti-Semitism exists, it must be identified and fought.

The most fundamental element of all is to ensure that hate crime is highlighted and punished, and that physical security is improved, here and now.

The Swedish Defence Research Agency has been tasked with surveying extremist propaganda on the internet, and we will strengthen the ability of society as a whole to fight it.

The Swedish Security Service has received greater resources to prevent foreign and domestic terrorism, and a month ago we established the new Swedish Centre for Preventing Violent Extremism, which will have greater powers to lead the work throughout the country.

The Swedish Police have established democracy and hate crime groups in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö, and have created similar functions in all police regions in the country. They have also received increased resources to fight hate crime on the internet.

At the same time, we are doubling state support to strengthen security for the premises of religious communities. We are also broadening the support so that we can also support non-confessional Jewish associations, and we are making more tools available, including making it easier to use surveillance cameras.

And we will continue to do that which is necessary. I refuse to allow undemocratic forces to use democracy in order to destroy it.

The only way we will be able to cope with the considerable work ahead of us is to work together. That is why I want to take the opportunity to thank you, Aron, and all of you involved in the Jewish communities and organisations, for our direct and constructive dialogue. We cannot thank you enough for the work you do.

But all of us here know that the efforts of the armed forces, the police and guards can only alleviate the symptoms – they cannot cure the disease.

For anti-Semitism to be thoroughly defeated, it must be done in schools, in liberal adult education, in every person's heart.

I am afraid that, after a while, the work Göran Persson accomplished with the Living History Forum began to be taken for granted. This work must be revitalised in each new age and in each generation.

This is why we will continue to promote the work of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance for remembrance, research and education, and organise a new international Holocaust conference here in Stockholm in two years' time.

This is why we are now organising new training courses and conferences throughout the country, so that school employees learn to nip racism and anti-Semitism in the bud.

This is why we are equipping all pupils in Swedish schools with knowledge of source criticism and responsible use of digital media, so as to be able to confront anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.

And this is why we will also improve national educational materials for newly arrived immigrants, so that every member of Swedish society understands the rights and obligations of individuals, the fundamental role of freedom of religion – and not least, the misapprehensions and repugnance of anti-Semitism.

I also want many more children and young people – regardless of background – to be able to make the trip that I took with you, Livia, and be given state aid to visit Holocaust memorials, to be able to see with their own eyes, be able to feel, and try to understand.

It can arouse feelings that are overwhelming, but also build something stronger, something more decisive in a person's soul. And, my friends, this is a day of mourning, of anger – but also of determination. And we are

determined, to honour all the children, parents, loved ones, those we have lost, whom we mourn today. And in every age, in every generation, in every part of our community of humanity, we are determined to make one thing very clear:

Never again.

Never again.

Never again.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech on the 2030 Agenda for Children: End Violence Solutions Summit

Published 14 February 2018

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven on the 2030 Agenda for Children: End Violence Solutions Summit. Check against delivery.

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

this year marks one hundred years since Swedish society ended the practice of auctioning off poor and orphaned children to the person who asked for the least amount of money to care for the child.

Many of the children who were auctioned off were subjected to starvation, violence, neglect and abuse. The death rate was so high that some of the auction winners became known as "angel makers".

Step by step, over the century that has passed, respect for the fundamental rights of every child has increased in our society. We were the first country to ban corporal punishment, among the first to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and we are now in the process of incorporating it into Swedish law.

Over the years, we have failed many times, leaving children in abusive families or bad foster homes. But we have also succeeded in giving many children much better and brighter futures than they ever thought possible.

I know, because I was one of those children. When my mother couldn't take care of me, society stepped in, and I had the opportunity to move to a loving foster family, the opportunity to grow up safe and happy, the opportunity to

stand before you here today.

Now we are here to do what we can to ensure that every child, in every region of the world, is given the same opportunity: to grow up in a safe, secure and loving environment, free from violence.

Violence against children is a disgrace, a disgrace that must be confronted with the full force of the global community. And this is not just something we wish or hope for. This is a promise we have made.

Every country that has signed up to the 2030 Agenda has promised to achieve target 16.2: to end exploitation and all forms of violence against girls and boys. And it is our duty to keep that promise.

We need solutions. Concrete examples of legislation, collaboration and action plans that can be shared across the globe.

The purpose of this summit is to present and promote those solutions. But we also need leadership. Leadership in governments, in the United Nations and other governmental organisations, in civil society and in the private sector.

I offer my leadership, and Sweden's leadership – but we need your leadership too.

So – let us all step up!

Step up – to give every girl and boy the opportunity to grow up to be a strong and confident individual, the opportunity we were once given.

Step up – to ensure that the solutions presented at this summit will not end up as just high-sounding words or as broken dreams, but lead to permanent change.

Step up – to keep our promise – to end violence against children in our time.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at demonstration against anti-Semitism

Published 20 December 2017

Stockholm, 20 December 2017.

Check against delivery.

Friends,

In June this year I travelled to Auschwitz with Livia Fränkel, who has just turned 90.

It was her first trip back. She wanted to close the circle, say goodbye to her parents.

We stood at the entrance to the concentration camp, side by side, and her memories returned. They were lined up, grouped. Livia and her sister, Hédi, were sent to the right.

Their mother, Frida, to the left. They never saw each other again. As we are standing there, Livia talks about the horror, about her fear. She was sixteen.

I recall her words when the Nordic Resistance Movement march with placards bearing photos of Jewish survivors and call them traitors. When firebombs are hurled at the synagogue in Gothenburg. When demonstrators in Malmö make anti-Semitic death threats. It is a disgrace that those who survived have to experience this again.

In this age. In our nation.

The Holocaust is a part of our history, but Jews are still being persecuted here and now.

Once again, fear is spreading – that familiar feeling when doubts assail. Do I dare wear a kippa or Star of David? Should we take out the Hanukkah menorah? It shouldn't be like this anywhere. It shouldn't be like this in

Sweden.

Everyone should be able to feel proud of their origins, their religion, their identity.

Jewish culture is part of Swedish culture, Jewish history is our history and, in Sweden, everyone has the right to live in our society in security and freedom. We owe it to the people who survived. I owe it to Livia.

And those who try to legitimise violence and hatred to achieve their goals – whether they are Nazis, religious extremists or left-wing extremists – will be inexorably condemned.

We will never allow them to poison our society.

To this end, we are strengthening security around synagogues, schools and other premises. The police have received additional resources and been instructed that efforts to combat hate speech and incitement must be prioritised.

But this is not enough. In the long term, security is not built by guards but by values. It is built in a cohesive and trustful society, an open society that takes great pleasure in our individual similarities and differences.

This is why greater efforts are needed to combat intolerance, in schools and in society, and not least among immigrant groups from countries where anti-Semitism is strong.

We are reintroducing support to enable school pupils to make history and remembrance trips. In 2020 a new international conference on remembrance and education will be held in Sweden.

And we need more occasions like today, when we stand side by side, parties, religions and organisations. And show that what unites us is so much more important than what divides us. That light is stronger than darkness. Love so much greater than hate.

We will stand up for human dignity. We will do it together. It's in our hands!

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by the Prime Minister of Sweden at the AU-EU Summit

Published 01 December 2017

On 29-30 November 2017, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven participated in the Summit between the African union and the European Union, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Check against delivery.

President Ouattara, Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki, African and European Heads of State and Government, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Dear friends,

Africa and Europe share a past – and we share a future. Strengthening our partnership will help us to address mutual concerns and challenges.

Excellencies,

What does the future hold for young Europeans and young Africans today? What are their interests and aspirations? Having listened to some of the young voices here at this summit, it is striking how similar their hopes and concerns are: Freedom, a family of one's own, a job, a brighter future, safety and security.

I am also struck by the similarity to my own experiences as a young man. I got my first job in the early 1970s. I was in my teens. I cleared brushwood out of a ditch close to my home village. It was hard work, but I enjoyed it. Because I knew that a job is the foundation on which to build a life of your own. Your own money. Your own choices. Your own future.

Our future lies in these dreams of young people. Our most important duty is to ensure that we create the opportunities that give our young people hope for the future.

As was said by many in the Youth Pre-Summit, Africa is losing many of its youth. Some leave in search for a better life. Their dreams are often brutally exploited by smugglers, by human traffickers. Their lives are lost when they try to cross the Mediterranean in rickety boats. Promises are broken. The job does not exist when they arrive. Their work permit was fake. Instead, many are forced to stay illegally under very harsh conditions.

I was outraged and horrified by the recent footage of African migrants being sold as slaves. What this footage depicted must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. These reports must be thoroughly investigated without delay. We are encouraged by the action to be taken to free those now kept as slaves.

As a Member of the UN Security Council, Sweden adds its voice to the outright condemnation of the cruel and illegal practice of slavery. No young man or woman should be sold as a slave. Migration between countries should be safe, orderly and sustainable. This is our shared responsibility.

Good governance is about putting people first. Our obligation as leaders is to serve our people. Democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law are the foundations of all our societies. As is freedom of speech and freedom of the press because politics always benefits from intense scrutiny.

Providing space for civil society and strengthening the independence of civil society organisations are fundamental to building sustainable and democratic societies. Civil society is also the fabric that links people-to-people and will remain an indispensable stakeholder to build popular support for our continued partnership.

Good governance is inclusion. Commitment to gender equality, to reducing inequalities and to providing sexual and reproductive health and rights is essential for the empowerment of women and girls.

Excellencies,

Allow me to emphasise three points: Firstly, we have agreed on strong common goals. Now we have to deliver. The Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063, including the African Governance Architecture, must be implemented. Everyone has to do their part. We need enhanced dialogue in a number of areas, for example electoral processes and democracy.

Secondly, we must fight corruption. Tax money belongs to the people. We need to further strengthen initiatives to fight tax evasion, illicit financial flows and corruption, otherwise these will undermine our societies and our economies.

Thirdly, investing in education is an investment in the future. A capable and skilled workforce is every country's most important asset. Education, training and re-training is key to the diversification of economies as well as to maximizing investment. Let us aim for more cooperation on vocational training, in research, in science and in higher education.

What this is ultimately about, is turning the wealth of a country into prosperity and welfare for all of its people. There is no better policy against forced migration. There is no better cure for despair. This brings hope for the future. It makes young people stay. This is just good governance.

Finally, I would like to thank our hosts, the African Union Presidency and President Ouattara and the people of Côte d'Ivoire. Meetings such as this summit, and dialogue between our continents leave our two Unions better equipped to build a shared future that is peaceful and prosperous.

Let me conclude by quoting His Excellency Felix Houphouët-Boigny, the first President of Côte d'Ivoire:

“Dialogue is the weapon of the strong, not the weak”.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Closing address at Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth

Published 17 November 2017 Updated 17 November 2017

Closing address by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth, Gothenburg. Check against delivery.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Friends,

This Summit has been enriched by all the experience, expertise and engagement you have offered here today.

Thank you all for your insights and ideas on how we should move forward together.

Our discussions today have shown that there is a clear commitment to put the interest of our people at the heart of the EU agenda.

There is a willingness to act to create a more inclusive, fair and social Europe. And if we move from words to action, we can further strengthen Europe's already expanding economy.

The question at the end of this important day is: What's next?

First of all, President Juncker and I will summarise our discussions in a report to inspire our future work.

The report will also make a substantial contribution to the European Council in December, which will focus on the future of the social dimension.

So I believe it is fair to say that we have had a very productive Summit.

And in just a moment, we will have a signing ceremony for the European Pillar of Social Rights. But before that, I would like to thank all of you for taking part in this Summit.

Your contributions are important and will help us take the next steps we need to build a fairer Europe and strengthen its social dimension.

Together – and only together – can we build a better Europe for everyone.

Thank you all!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Opening address at Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth

Published 17 November 2017 Updated 17 November 2017

Opening address by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth, Gothenburg. Check against delivery.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Friends,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to Sweden and the beautiful city of Gothenburg. This is a city with a long history of trade and seafaring. The port where we are right now dates back to the 17th century. And this building used to be a mechanical workshop, when Gothenburg was known around the world for its fine shipbuilding.

The working men and women of the time fought for decent wages, acceptable working conditions, and the right to paid annual leave.

The old docks have been transformed into a campus and a science park, where thousands of people today work, live and study.

What takes place here nowadays has very little to do with building ships. And the people going about their activities are doing so in an environment that would have been unimaginable in the shipbuilding days.

Our economies and the world of work have changed so profoundly. This means that the challenges we face have also changed, and that we need new solutions to manage them. That is what this Summit is about.

If we look around Europe, we can see how timely this Summit is. Europe has

faced numerous challenges over the last decade. We have seen growing concerns among people and rising distrust in political solutions. It is time for us to put people first.

The European Union is nothing more and nothing less than our people. Addressing issues such as inequality, unemployment and unfair practices is not only morally right. It is also the smart thing to do. It will boost productivity and strengthen our economies. So let's focus on two things at the same time: fair jobs and growth.

Let's improve access to the labour market and get more people into work. Let's ensure decent working conditions and put an end to unfair practices. Let's better manage the forces of globalisation, so that change can be an opportunity, not a threat.

Most of the tools we need to achieve our goals are national. But support and coordination at European level can add tremendous value. That is why I am so very happy to welcome you all here today and to be co-hosting this Summit with President Jean-Claude Juncker. My friend Jean-Claude has made enormous efforts to put these issues higher on our agenda. But keeping fair jobs and growth at the top of the EU agenda must be the work of many.

And thankfully, as I look around this room, I see heads of state and government, social partners, civil society representatives, students, and other stakeholders.

As a former trade union leader, I am naturally guided in our common mission for fair jobs and growth by the popular motto: United we stand, divided we fall. If we do not work together, we will fail to meet tomorrow's challenges, and the competitiveness, prosperity and legitimacy of the EU will suffer.

But by working together, as leaders, unions and employers, we can improve both the lives of our people and the strength of our economies. So let's unite, and let's get to work!

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Our Europe – our shared responsibility

Published 26 October 2017

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at Uppsala University, 26 October 2017. Check against delivery.

Students,
ladies and gentlemen,

Today I want to talk about the future of Europe. And what more appropriate place to look at the bigger picture than at the oldest university in the Nordic countries. Since the 15th century, Uppsala University has looked outwards towards the world. This is a distinguished seat of learning in Europe, and one of the world's 100 best universities according to the most important rankings. This makes me proud.

The place is the Plenary Chamber of the European Parliament in the city of Strasbourg on the French-German border. The date is 1 July this year. Helmut Kohl's coffin is draped in the European flag. And in the front row, Bill Clinton stands up, walks past the coffin towards the podium. He sounds slightly hoarse, and begins by turning to Europe's leaders. Chancellor Merkel and President Macron are sitting in front of me, side by side. President Clinton asks us all to think about something that has just occurred to him – something that was not in his notes. Why have so many political leaders come to say farewell?

“Why?” he asks. “Because Helmut Kohl gave us the chance to be involved in something bigger than ourselves, bigger than our terms of office, bigger than our fleeting careers.” And he says, pointing to the former German Chancellor's coffin: “Because all of us, sooner or later, will be in a coffin like that. And the only gift we can leave behind, is a better future for our children...”

The project – that is bigger than ourselves, that can guarantee our children a life in peace and freedom, that gives us opportunities we often take for granted – is the European Union. Helmut Kohl helped unite East and West Germany. He was part of laying the foundations for the successful and peaceful post-Cold War era. He said that Germany is his home country, but that Europe is our common future.

Today I want to talk about the future of the European Union.

Europe is the second-smallest continent. It is far from the most populous. But we are rich in many other ways. We have a European culture, recognised for its world-renowned composers and musicians, authors and artists. We enjoy a high standard of living. We are the world's second-largest market.

But times are changing rapidly. The map of the world is being redrawn. China's economy is expected to be twice the size of the EU economy by 2050. But we don't need to look that far ahead to see global challenges. Some are confronting us here and now.

The United States is leaving the Paris agreement on climate change. Russia is breaching the European security order. North Korea is sending the most alarming signals. The number of displaced people in the world is the highest since the Second World War.

At the same time, we are grappling with internal difficulties. In some EU countries, developments are at odds with our fundamental values. We have Member States that are refusing to shoulder their share of our joint responsibility for migration policy. The after-effects of the financial crisis are still tangible. In recent years, we have seen growing distrust in the ability of politics to solve these difficulties. In the wake of all this, we have to tackle populism and xenophobia. And one Member State has chosen to leave the European Union.

So what are we to learn from this? Those of us with political responsibility for Europe must step up and respond more effectively to the challenges of today.

How do we do this? The first step is to remember why the EU was founded. The Treaty of Rome, signed in March 1957, set the course. Economic and social progress would be secured. The living and working conditions of citizens would be improved. Economic and social differences between

regions would be reduced, and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations would be followed.

From the outset, the EU has had the wellbeing of its people as a goal, a single market as a means, and the rest of the world as partners. Thus no new major projects are needed right now. Amending the EU treaties would not solve any problems. Rather, we must focus on the key issues where the EU brings added value. This makes us strong.

So let me address the most important issues: jobs and the economy, a fair labour market, environment and climate, peace and security, migration and our shared values.

The one thing that really changed our European continent was the creation of the single market. The EU is our home market. Almost 80 per cent of all foreign direct investment in Sweden comes from the EU. Of our exports, 71 per cent go to the EU single market. These figures speak for themselves.

Sweden must be a driving force behind continued efforts to tear down trade barriers so that we can all benefit from the free movement of goods and services. We will push to ensure that the EU is the world-leader in digital transformation. This is necessary to promote innovation – an area where Sweden is already world-class.

We will push to increase gender equality and the number of women in work. According to a recent report, we could increase EU GDP per capita by up to nine per cent. Increased gender equality would mean adding another Germany to the EU economy.

We will push to bring down unemployment, which is beginning to fall but is still far too high, especially among Europe's young people. An entire generation must regain hope and confidence in the future.

We will push to ensure that the EU secures more free trade agreements. Those with Canada and South Korea are very important. The agreement with Japan is almost finalised, and hopefully a number of countries in Latin America are next in line. I would like to see us resume talks with the United States on the trade and investment partnership where considerable progress had been made. And why shouldn't the EU be able to initiate negotiations about a comprehensive trade agreement with China in due course?

Europe's economic outlook is brighter, and it is time to raise our sights. Our

goal is this: that the EU will be the most dynamic market, where we compete with the sharpest skills, the best products, the smartest innovations, and the greenest technologies.

Sweden has not introduced the euro. This was a decision taken by the Swedish people, who are in control of the matter. Effective cooperation in the euro area, with growth and stability, is good for Sweden. How euro area countries develop their cooperation is important for the entire European Union. This is why cohesion among all EU Member States must be safeguarded, and Sweden should have influence over decisions that affect us.

The Government will carefully consider the question of whether to join the EU's banking union, which is now beginning to take shape. By November 2019, an inquiry will be ready regarding the potential benefits and disadvantages of Sweden's membership in such a union. For me it is natural to continuously evaluate how we can maximise Sweden's influence in the European Union.

The single market and free movement have been an engine for growth and development in Europe. Nonetheless, this must be complemented by strengthening the rights of citizens. We cannot have a Europe that exists merely to serve the market. Europe must be there for its citizens.

Equal pay for equal work must apply to everyone – both in Sweden and in the rest of the EU. People should be able to live on their wages. And we should work, not wear ourselves out, not jeopardise our health at work. This is why my Government has worked hard from day one to put these issues higher up on the EU agenda. This is not about the EU taking more decisions, or about making everyone do things in the same way. We would never, as some people claim, replace our Swedish model with anything else. Instead, we will draw on our combined knowledge and experience.

And now, finally, we are beginning to reap the benefits – on several fronts. On Monday, the EU's three legislative institutions – the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament – decided to endorse the European Pillar of Social Rights.

This Pillar consists of twenty principles that put citizens' interests first and that should be regularly monitored. It is through this kind of structured cooperation that we can bolster each other and together strengthen citizens' rights in Europe.

Earlier this week, we received another welcome piece of news. The European Council of Ministers has agreed on new rules for posted workers. This is about ensuring that it is not possible to dump wages or working conditions if you are temporarily working in another EU country. These new rules will now be negotiated with the European Parliament, and they mean that equal pay for equal work will apply regardless of whether you work in your home country, or temporarily in another country. After many years of unfair competition, we are on the verge of success on this issue.

So we are now seeing great advances for Sweden, and for EU workers. A great deal remains to be done, however. This is why President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and I have invited EU leaders, the social partners and other stakeholders to Gothenburg for the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth that will begin in three weeks.

This will be the first time that key stakeholders gather to jointly give their views on the way forward. We will then chart the path towards more jobs and better working conditions. I have worked in Swedish industry and gained my political education in the Swedish trade union movement. Throughout my working life I have called attention to the unique role of the social partners in the labour market. I have always recognised European cooperation and said that the EU is what we make of it. And today I can say to you: Soon, Europe's leaders will come to Gothenburg to put decent work even higher up on the EU agenda. This is proof that we in Sweden can play an important role in moving the European Union forward. The EU must demonstrate that good working conditions, greater equity and increased gender equality, are the path that will secure our leading position in the world.

Emissions from a factory follow the wind or a river – not a national border. Environmental and climate issues are among the areas in which the EU's added value is most apparent. Sweden's objective is self-evident: the EU must be a world leader in this area, which offers great opportunities for economic growth, new jobs and better living conditions. Important progress is now being made. The EU is negotiating binding climate and energy objectives. This is absolutely essential if we are to curb global warming. To do this, we must reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases. We will increase the share of renewable energy and reduce our energy consumption. In times when climate change needs leadership, the EU is sending a clear message to the world: we stand firm in our commitments under the Paris Agreement. We are taking responsibility for future generations. We will take the lead in this transition.

One issue, however, symbolises EU cooperation even more powerfully than our borderless environmental and climate efforts. We have enjoyed peace in our country for more than 200 years. We often take this peace for granted.

But anyone who has travelled in Europe has seen another story: military cemeteries in Normandy and Flanders Fields, Auschwitz, the Berlin Wall, and Picasso's Guernica in Madrid. The EU is a peace project, a way to guarantee that the wars and abuses that dominated a large part of the previous century cannot happen again.

Nothing is more important for a government than guaranteeing the safety of its citizens. The security situation in our part of the world has now deteriorated. In addition to purely military threats, Europe's nations must be able to combat and overcome terrorism, cyber threats, influence operations, violent extremism and organised crime – to list a few examples.

This is a tough challenge. Evil forces think nothing of turning a lorry into a lethal weapon on a crowded shopping street. In Sweden, we are now strengthening our defence capability, and we have adopted a national security strategy. In the new world situation, the EU is more important than ever for Sweden's security.

We want to help advance the Common Security and Defence Policy. This does not mean that we want to see a defence union. But our line is clear: the countries of Europe must take greater collective responsibility for European security. We must strengthen intergovernmental defence policy cooperation in the EU and continue to develop cooperation between the EU and NATO. And when we act together, the EU is a strong foreign policy actor that takes global responsibility, with a broad view of security.

The EU has condemned Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its illegal annexation of Crimea. We agree that sanctions against Russia must remain in place for as long as the reasons for their introduction remain. Stable, prosperous and democratic countries in our neighbourhood lead to a more secure Europe, and thereby a more secure Sweden.

Another challenge is migration. It is a yardstick of our ability to tackle difficult issues. Two years ago, we experienced the worst refugee crisis since the Second World War to directly affect us in Europe. Every week, overcrowded vessels sank and were lost. Children, women and men drowned at sea. For a few weeks that September, the train stations all over Sweden were packed with people who had come to our country, with just the clothes on

their backs or, at best, with a bag in their arms.

Many people made tremendous efforts to receive these newly arrived immigrants. But the situation was not tenable – not for anyone. Today, fewer people are coming here. But a lot of work still remains to be done before we have a sustainable and responsible migration policy.

The EU has an important role to play internationally. Because the solution is not that everyone should come to Europe. We are working together with the UN on poverty reduction, conflict resolution and development in the refugees' home countries. We are combating human smugglers, whose business concept is profiting from people's desperation. European vessels now patrol the Mediterranean and rescue people in distress. We are making tremendous contributions here. And they are having an impact. Fewer people are now making their way to Europe along dangerous routes, which is an achievement.

These efforts must be combined with shared responsibility by the EU to receive our fellow human beings who are forced to flee. And in this, we have not yet made sufficient progress. We have done what is required at national level to ensure a well-ordered reception system. We accomplished that. And we will keep it that way. Sweden cannot have an asylum policy that differs substantially from the rest of the EU, and we must put in place a new asylum system in which all Member States take their share of responsibility.

We are putting huge efforts into this. I am prepared to compromise in order to agree on a solution. However, if some Member States decline, then I am prepared to come to a decision without consensus. Countries that do not take their responsibility for refugee reception should not have access to economic support from the EU as they do today.

And as long as we do not have an efficient system in the EU, as long as order and security cannot be guaranteed, then it is likely that we will not see the end of border controls in Europe. This will have some ramifications for free movement in the EU for a while, but for the time being, this seems to be a necessary evil. The signal to other countries must be clear. Everyone must take their share of what is our joint responsibility.

What unites us as countries of Europe is more than just geography, history and economic cooperation. Our foundation is our common values, our way of life: freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. For countries aspiring to become members of our European

community, these are the values that matter. This is how we have laid the foundation for the democratisation of countries that have left decades of fascism or communism behind them. The pursuit of democracy and the aspiration to belong to the European Union have been intricately linked. But if we are to credibly place demands on others, we must also tackle problems among our own Member States. The EU is not a project where we can pick and choose among the rules and obligations that apply. Nor is the EU a cash dispenser doling out money with no strings attached. Each country in the EU must stand up for the decisions we have taken together. Each country also has an obligation to take care of its own citizens. Freedom of movement does not entitle some countries to shirk their responsibility for citizens who face discrimination or have no means of support. Throughout Europe today, we see a large number of beggars; this is completely unacceptable. I also find it deeply troubling that some Member States today no longer seem to share our fundamental values. There must be consequences for this. We need to find better ways to ensure that everyone respects democracy and human rights, and follows the rule of law. Belonging to a club and breaking its common rules must come at a price.

The most important thing for the EU is to resolve concrete and relevant issues. But let me say a few words about the forms of our continued European cooperation. One matter under discussion is whether all countries must keep pace and move forward in unison. Or can some countries take the lead and deepen their EU cooperation further?

Having different forms of cooperation on some issues is not so strange. Schengen and the euro are two examples of how this is already the case today. And will be so in the future as well.

But there is an apprehension that we are in the process of creating different types of membership: an 'A team' and a 'B team', if you will. This apprehension creates a fear of divisions in the EU. It is a concern that we must take seriously. Those of us who choose to remain outside areas of our cooperation must demonstrate that we are nonetheless constructive and engaged. Those participating in the areas of cooperation, such as the euro area, must show consideration for us all.

In recent weeks we have also heard suggestions for everything from a joint finance minister to combining the offices of European Commission President Juncker and European Council President Tusk. I think it would be unfortunate if we get bogged down in discussions about amending treaties or changing individual positions. This is not where the EU's problems lie.

Besides, we already have the world's best Minister for Finance: Magdalena Andersson from Uppsala. We don't need anyone else.

Discussions about our future EU have taken on even greater relevance now that one of our Member States has voted to leave. Good relations with the UK are an important component of a strong future EU. An orderly exit creates opportunities for close relations following the divorce, too. It is important for us to establish strong trade relations, favourable conditions for our citizens and continued cooperation wherever possible, such as in education, research and security. This is why it is imperative for an essentially negative event such as Brexit to end as constructively as possible.

The UK's exit will naturally mean a loss, financially, for the EU. This will have consequences as we revise the EU budget. The EU must cut its coat according to its cloth. Sweden, however, needs to also reflect further on how we can help to take on the role the British have played. The UK and Sweden have often pushed in the same direction – stood side by side in negotiations. We must now continue to build alliances and pull harder on our own as we move forward without the UK's efforts.

But every cloud has a silver lining. EU cohesion has improved. Perhaps the importance of European cooperation has once again become more apparent. Support for the EU is currently on the rise, both in Sweden and the rest of Europe. We Swedes should be proud of what we accomplish in the European Union. Aside from the six largest Member States, Sweden and the Netherlands – an EU founder – are said to have the greatest influence in the EU.

The work we do for our Europe can only grow in strength if support at home – in Sweden – remains strong. The Government also aims to strengthen participation, awareness and engagement with respect to EU issues in our country. Through the 'EU handshake', a number of different actors – from municipalities to the social partners and student organisations – have agreed to promote greater citizen participation. I hope we will also continue to have constructive cooperation on EU issues between the political parties in the Riksdag.

We have a shared responsibility for our Europe. This applies to you as well. You are our future, all you students who are at the beginning of your life journey. I hope that many of you will study in another European country, if you have not done so already. I hope that you find European friends and discover how similar our thoughts and dreams are.

I hope that some of you will apply for jobs in the various EU institutions, as these are important workplaces in need of even more competent Swedes. I hope that you learn more European languages, not just English. And I hope that you will think about the kind of Europe you want, and that you find contexts in which you can realise your ideas.

We find ourselves at a crossroads. Either our continent will cope with global competition by being united and focusing on the challenges that lie ahead of us, or our future will be marked by dissension, where we all lose out, where we fall behind countries in other parts of the world.

The path we must choose becomes clear if we think back to the words spoken at Helmut Kohl's memorial. European cooperation is something bigger than ourselves, our terms of office and our fleeting careers.

A successful Europe will improve the prospects of a successful Sweden. I am convinced that many of the challenges we face can only be resolved together. This is why my Government and I will continue to work for a better and stronger EU. An EU that is closer to its citizens, that gives priority to the major, significant issues in which the EU has clear added value.

The challenge lies in this very moment. The time is always now. Together – and only together – we can build a better Europe. This is our shared responsibility.

Thank you for your attention.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Statement of Government Policy, 12 September 2017

Published 12 September 2017

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, the Riksdag, 12
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Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members
of the Riksdag,

The challenges of our time are critical: the serious nuclear threat from North Korea, the humanitarian disaster in war-torn Syria, the climate change crisis, famine in East Africa and Yemen. Uncertainty and insecurity are taking a toll on people around the world. The need to work together to build sustainable peace and resilient societies is clearer than ever. This means that Sweden's efforts must increase too.

Sweden has a year and a half remaining on the UN Security Council. Respect for international law, democracy, human rights, conflict prevention and confidence-building measures are guiding our work.

Our security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves our country well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe.

More women are needed in UN peacekeeping operations and at the negotiating table when peace agreements are concluded. Sweden's efforts to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights continue. The world's first expressly feminist foreign policy will continue to deliver.

A strong European Union in which everyone takes their share of responsibility increases security and the ability to address major global challenges. Sweden is working to ensure that the United Kingdom's exit from

the European Union is orderly. We need an EU that remains strong and united. In November, the President of the European Commission and I will host a summit on fair jobs and growth. Workers must not be pitted against each other in Europe.

Strong Nordic cooperation is an integral part of our international engagement.

Sweden is pushing for the goals of the 2030 Agenda to be achieved. Over the next year, new milestone targets will be developed in the environmental objectives system. The goal of one per cent of GNI to aid will be achieved in 2018. Stronger action is needed to prevent armed conflicts and meet the pressing humanitarian needs around the world.

The countries of the world have a joint responsibility for displaced people. The EU needs to finalise a new common asylum policy that is humane and based on solidarity. The right to asylum must be safeguarded. Immigration in Sweden must be regulated. The Government's work to improve the return system continues. Processing times will be shortened. Those permitted to stay must be able to start working or studying much sooner.

The largest Swedish Armed Forces exercise in 20 years is currently under way, involving 20 000 Swedish soldiers and officers, some 40 government agencies and broad participation from several countries. Sweden's defence capabilities are being developed.

Our bilateral and multilateral defence and security cooperation is deepening. As national military service is reintroduced, 6 000 young men and women are now being called up for enrolment and others have voluntarily signed up to the Swedish Armed Forces. Early next year, the first recruits will begin their basic training. This makes me proud.

The security situation has deteriorated. The illegal annexation of Crimea and Russia's aggression against Ukraine violate international law and challenge the European security order. International terrorism and climate change pose threats to us all. We are more susceptible to disruptions in critical infrastructure.

Information security is a priority. The Swedish Armed Forces and the Swedish Security Service are being given tools to stop the outsourcing of

sensitive information. The new national security strategy will be implemented. Our country must be secure in a new era, too.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank the parties represented in the Riksdag that have contributed to broad agreements on stronger total defence, energy policy, a climate policy framework and measures to combat terrorism.

Security is something we build together – in Sweden and globally.

Rachel Carson, author of the ground-breaking book *Silent Spring* from 1962, once wrote:

Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth
find reserves of strength
that will endure as long as life lasts.
There is something infinitely healing
in the repeated refrains of nature –
the assurance that dawn comes after night,
and spring after winter.

Rachel Carson opened people's eyes, but she also gave people hope. We can cause problems, we humans. But, when we decide to, we can also put things right again. We can adapt.

Climate change is happening here and now. Water shortages in Sweden, the Lucifer heatwave in Europe, the drought in the Horn of Africa, Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma scare us. Extreme weather events follow in the wake of climate change. The climate cannot wait. Societal transformation must be accelerated to safeguard opportunities for future generations.

Sweden now has a new climate policy framework with a progressive Climate Act. It outlines the objectives and the direction for future governments and guarantees a continuing high level of ambition in addressing climate change. During this electoral period, the budget for environment and climate will more than double. The Climate Leap will be strengthened. Around the country, charging stations for electric cars are popping up in more and more places. Solar cells glisten on the roofs of many private houses, and there will be more.

Groundwater resources need to be surveyed and drinking water protected. Wetlands will be established and restored. A drive is now under way to protect the seas and oceans. Plastic, pharmaceuticals and nutrients must not destroy our oceans. Protection of marine areas will be expanded. The Baltic Sea and the North Sea must be clean and healthy.

Sweden is demonstrating leadership on action to implement the Paris Agreement. We are showing that it is possible to combine ecological sustainability with welfare, equity and development.

Mr Speaker,

Following the 2014 election, the Government inherited a deficit of SEK 60 billion. This has now been turned into a large surplus. Unemployment has been pushed back. An additional 200 000 people are in work. Employment is at its highest and dependence on compensation systems at its lowest since before the crisis of the 1990s.

The Swedish economy is in a completely new situation. We now have the means to both pay off national debt and invest in a stronger future for Sweden.

Together we will fight the climate change crisis and environmental threats.
Together we will fight insecurity and inequalities.
Together we will future-proof jobs and welfare.
Now it is time to build our future.

The gaps between urban and rural areas must be closed. It must be possible to work, run a business and benefit from public services whether you live in Visby, Vårby gård or Vittangi.

There must be opportunities throughout our country for cultural participation. Culture makes people grow and strengthens democracy. Reduced fees and lower thresholds for municipal art and music classes are giving more children the opportunity to express themselves through words, images, sounds and movement. The 'Unga Klara' theatre company will become a national theatre institute for children and young people. The Royal Opera, the Royal Dramatic Theatre and Riksteatern (the Swedish national touring theatre) will receive funds for more digital broadcasts of theatre and music performances. Conditions for artists will be improved. A new media policy will be presented for media pluralism and freedom throughout the country.

In Sweden, it must be possible to find housing when moving for work or study. Not since the days of the Million Homes Programme has there been as much construction taking place as there is today. The Government's investment support is now providing more rental housing with reasonable rents. The use of wood in housing construction will be increased. This will help mitigate the effects of climate change and create jobs throughout the country.

The trend towards centralisation will end. The largest relocation of government agencies in more than a decade is now under way. At least ten new local service centres will be opened to offer integrated services from several government agencies. In the coming year, a new rural development policy will be drawn up.

Our forests will be protected and also contribute to development. A national forest programme will be presented to enable our forests to contribute to the growth of the bio-based economy. More natural forests will be protected and greater consideration will be given to nature conservation in managed forests. Companies in the tourism and hospitality industry will be stimulated. Value added tax for nature guides will be reduced. Food production is growing and creating new jobs. Thirty per cent of Sweden's agricultural land will be organically managed by 2030.

Sustainable forests and diverse natural environments can improve biological diversity.

Infrastructure connects the different parts of the country. It must be possible to both travel sustainably and arrive on time. Record investments are being made in railways and road maintenance. A national transport infrastructure plan for the period up to 2029 will be adopted. New, modern main lines for high-speed rail links will be built. Travelling by train should be faster than driving and cheaper than flying. Broadband expansion will continue at a rapid pace.

Sweden's economic strength must benefit everyone, throughout the country.

Sweden must stand together. Crippling unemployment and hopelessness pave the way for criminality, polarisation and extremism. This must not be tolerated anywhere in our country. To people living in suburbs, industrial

towns or rural areas, I say this: we will change this trend together.

The manner in which newly arrived immigrants are integrated into the workforce and communities will mean the difference between poverty and confidence in the future for tens of thousands of people, and will affect all our futures.

The Delegation against Segregation is starting its work. Municipalities, county councils, regions, government agencies, organisations, researchers and those living and working in socially vulnerable areas will work together. Resources for the schools and pupils with the greatest needs are increasing considerably. The modernisation of the areas built during the Million Homes Programme will continue.

Where needs are greatest, support will be strongest.

Mr Speaker,

There is no place for organised crime in Sweden. Society must always be stronger than the gangs. Next year, this century's biggest investment in Swedish police gets under way. Sweden cannot afford to have police officers leaving the profession. The Swedish Police Authority has received a new assignment to improve career and development opportunities for police officers together with the trade unions.

This investment will make a difference, and the entire judicial chain must therefore also be involved. Today, I am able to inform the Riksdag that the Government's budget contains additional investments of almost SEK 750 million to strengthen SOS Alarm, Swedish Customs, the Swedish Security Service, the Swedish Prosecution Authority, the Swedish Economic Crime Authority and the Swedish Prison and Probation Service. More crimes must be solved. It will be more difficult to be a criminal in Sweden.

Sentences for gross firearms offences will be tougher. The number of places available in institutional youth care will increase. New penalties are being proposed for young criminals. Protection of emergency services and medical personnel will be strengthened. Our joint message is: don't touch our heroes!

Drottninggatan, Stockholm, 7 April, 14.53.

Most of us clearly remember what we were doing that afternoon. Society rallied behind those working to help the victims. People opened up their

homes. There were many of us who met and supported each other, sorrowful, yet resolute, who wanted to say: This is our city. Our country. No terrorist can take that away from us.

Let us remember the victims and honour their memory.

And let us fight terrorism with the full might of Swedish democracy. The Swedish Security Service must have access to signals intelligence in parallel with ongoing preliminary investigations. Participation in a terrorist organisation will be criminalised. A national centre to combat violent extremism will be established.

Sexual offences are an abomination. New legislation on sexual offences based on consent will be presented. Children are children. Sweden does not accept child marriage. Protection against child marriage will be strengthened. Travel abroad for the purpose of forced marriage will be stopped. So-called 'honour' crimes must lead to more severe penalties. Religious extremists must not gain ground in the public sphere, nor decide where women can go or what they wear.

Every woman in Sweden must be able to live as she pleases. Proud, upright, confident. Sweden must be safe for everyone.

Mr Speaker,
The Swedish labour market is strong.

Investments are increasing. Industrial manufacturing is returning home. Swedish exports are showing new record figures. Real wages are growing. Next year, unemployment is expected to fall below six per cent for the first time in almost ten years. The objective is to achieve the lowest unemployment rate in the EU by 2020.

In this situation, Sweden is facing two major challenges.

The first is that employers have difficulties finding people with the right skills.

There are more than 100 000 job vacancies and the list of shortage occupations is long. If unemployment is to fall further, even greater investments in education are required.

The Adult Education Initiative is being expanded to comprise almost 80 000 student places during the electoral period. Learning centres will be developed so that more students can undertake distance learning. Student grants are being raised. The possibility of obtaining CSN loans for driving lessons is being introduced.

This is how we equip Sweden for the global and digital economy. Sweden is competing for the jobs of the future on the basis of knowledge and skills – not low wages. It must be worthwhile to work and it must be possible to live on your wages. Conditions in the Swedish labour market must be fair and decent.

This is the Swedish model.

The second challenge is shortening the path to jobs for newly arrived immigrants.

Sweden's employers can do a lot in this regard. It has never been as simple as it is now. Employment support is being combined and simplified. The number of 'extra jobs' is being increased. Support to companies that employ their first worker is being expanded.

An education and training obligation is being introduced. Those who do not have adequate skills to obtain a job during their introduction period will be required to undertake education and training.

Foreign-born women are needed on the labour market. Special efforts are being made to enable more women to find jobs. Parental benefit has been changed so that the bulk must be taken during the child's first years. Outreach activities are being expanded, as is the opportunity to learn Swedish during parental leave.

Efforts to ensure healthy workplaces and speedy rehabilitation are yielding results. The soaring sick leave rates have been halted. An agency for work environment awareness is being established. More measures for better working conditions and work-life balance are being examined. Barriers to people with disabilities will be torn down and more job opportunities created.

Everyone who can work should work. Everyone is needed in building our future.

Swedish industry will lead the way when climate change, globalisation and the digital transformation demand rapid adaptation. The National Innovation Council's strategic partnership programmes are launching a number of initiatives so that Swedish businesses can develop the attractive products of tomorrow and attract foreign investment. Swedish testing and demonstration facilities are being developed. The Government's export strategy is helping Swedish companies to secure business throughout the world. Sweden will be a pioneer for free and fair trade.

Industrial emissions must be reduced. The process industry will be provided with new support for innovative projects and green tech advances – a Green Industry Leap. A strategy is being drawn up for the transition to a circular and bio-based economy. Renewable energy production is being expanded.

Considerable investment in electrification is being made in partnership with the Swedish automotive industry. The vehicle fleet needs to be modernised so that we can do away with petrol and diesel. An expanded bonus will make it cheaper to buy a low-emission car, and more costly to pollute. An electric vehicle premium will be introduced to encourage more people to use electric scooters or bicycles.

Climate adaptation forms the basis of tomorrow's jobs and prosperity. Sweden will be transformed into the world's first fossil-free welfare nation, and we are doing this with the help of our trusty old – yet ultramodern – industry.

Swedish industry has not invested this much since the financial crisis. At the same time, we know that booms and slumps come and go. Now is therefore the time to prepare and equip industry for future recessions. A competitive system for short-time work is being developed to secure industrial jobs. Security for small businesses and entrepreneurs is being reviewed and strengthened.

Investments in knowledge, from preschool through to vocational education and training to research, bode well for a competent Sweden when the competition stiffens.

Mr Speaker,

Now Sweden is growing. Many people have immigrated to our country. We are living longer, and more babies are being born. This is a sign of strength. The Swedish welfare state needs to be expanded.

Since the Government took office, 100 000 more people have been employed in welfare services. This makes Sweden more secure. By 2020, injections of additional resources to welfare will have increased by SEK 50 billion. Many more people can be employed in health, schools and social services.

For every new doctor, fewer seriously ill people will have to wait for an appointment. For every new assistant nurse, more elderly people will feel safe knowing that someone will come when they need them. For every new teacher, more children will be able to crack the code – understand the principle – to overcome a difficulty and feel that magical: 'Aha!' This makes a difference every day. this goes before tax cuts.

This is how we will build welfare together – and a sustainable society for a new era.

A few weeks ago I met class 3A from Nälstaskolan at Berättarministeriet (the Ministry of Tales) in Husby. Berättarministeriet works with children to provide them with what is most crucial for their learning, namely mastering language, writing and storytelling. I was there as a volunteer. My job: to enliven, inspire and take the children's imagination seriously. Thank you for all the inspiration I received in return.

Learning requires reading. A reading-writing-arithmetic guarantee for the early years will be laid down in law. More school libraries will be staffed. Greater emphasis will be placed on source criticism. Compulsory schooling in Sweden will begin at age six. Special needs education will be strengthened and more special needs teachers will be trained. Schools must provide a safe learning environment. All pupils must acquire more skills and knowledge.

Schools are no longer plagued by cutbacks. Despite the shortage of teachers and large year groups, the staff to pupil ratio is rising. The number of staff working in schools has increased by 20 000. Preschool groups are at their smallest for 25 years. Three out of four registered teachers in compulsory and upper secondary schools have received a substantial pay increase. More paths to becoming a registered teacher will be available. At last, more people are choosing to become teachers.

The Schools Commission has delivered the most thorough proposal for

improving schools in Sweden in decades. It lays the foundation for an equitable school system and high learning outcomes.

School segregation must end. Schools must be a meeting place for pupils from different backgrounds. Newly arrived pupils will be more evenly allocated, including to independent schools. Major investments will continue to be made to ensure that all schools are good schools.

More young people must complete their upper secondary school education. The introductory programmes will be strengthened so that more people qualify for the national programmes. All national programmes will include aesthetic subjects. Vocational packages will be developed so that more young people without an upper secondary school qualification can choose a shorter programme that leads to a job. Vocational programmes are being enhanced and basic eligibility for higher education will be reintroduced.

If you ask people what is really important to them, most will say: "Good health, and that my family is well and happy."

So when someone falls ill, there must be no doubt: care must be available when you need it. Waiting times are too long and must be shortened. More resources to health centres will enhance primary care. The patient contract will be further developed for patients with significant care needs. Hospitals will specialise to be able to provide high-quality, state-of-the-art care. Where you live must not determine your chances of regaining your health.

A major women's health initiative is under way. Parents-to-be must be secure in the knowledge that maternity services are effective. Mental ill health is being experienced at ever younger ages. Young people suffering mental ill health must receive help at an early stage.

Health care professions must be attractive. Working conditions are being improved. Additional training places are being created. The possible introduction of a professional status qualification for assistant nurses is being examined. Health care workers will be given the recognition they deserve.

Nothing represents the future better than our children. The autumn budget will prioritise the financial position of families with children.

To protect the child's right to their parents and to enhance gender equality,

parental insurance is being modernised. Parental insurance must also work for contemporary families and not present an obstacle for women in the labour market.

Work on making the Convention on the Rights of the Child part of Swedish law on 1 January 2020 continues. A three-year national initiative to enhance knowledge of children's rights will be implemented. Children also have a right to breathe clean air. To improve air quality in our cities, municipalities will be given new opportunities to introduce low emission zones.

Sweden is to be the best country in the world to grow up in.

No one deserves our gratitude more than our older people. Those who built this country before us deserve respect, and they also deserve financial security.

A great deal has already been done: an increased housing supplement, cheaper dental care for older people, free primary care for people over the age of 85. We are now taking further steps. A national dementia strategy is being developed. The financial position of the most disadvantaged pensioners will be improved. Taxes have already been reduced for six out of ten over-65s. The goal is to completely abolish the unfair tax on pensions. New steps will be taken in the autumn budget.

This is not an act of kindness – it is our moral responsibility.

Welfare should be financed collectively and in solidarity.

Everyone with an income must do the right thing and pay tax. If they don't, the social contract of a welfare nation cannot be upheld. Tax evasion and aggressive tax planning are being combated. Social security systems will be better protected against cheating and fraud.

Tax revenues for welfare must go to welfare – not turned into unreasonable profits or transferred out of the country. During the year, a proposal will be put forward to limit profits in education and social services.

Our welfare system must be in order.

Mr Speaker,

In the middle of the field at the Birkenau extermination camp there is a red

cattle truck. Livia Fränkel and her sister Hédi Fried arrived at Auschwitz in one of these on 17 May 1944. Packed together, without food and with very little water, they had travelled for three days and two nights.

In June this year, Livia and I were at Auschwitz-Birkenau together. That was the first time she had been back. "I want to close the circle," she said. "I want to say goodbye to my parents."

We have an obligation to remember, because if we do not remember the atrocities of history, violence and hatred can triumph again. And then another circle will close. On 1 May this year, approximately 500 neo-Nazis demonstrated in Falun. The Nordic Resistance Movement was present at Almedalen Week and it will soon gather in Gothenburg. This is frightening.

The Government is now concentrating efforts on a national action plan to combat racism and hate crimes. Support to enable school pupils to make history and remembrance trips will be reintroduced. In 2020 a new international conference on remembrance and education will be held.

There are groups in our country that are more afraid than ever. Security for minority groups and religious premises will be heightened. Work to strengthen the rights of transgender people will be intensified. Protection against hate and agitation crimes will be boosted.

The rights of the national minorities will be strengthened. A major investment will be made in the Sami Parliament. A new disability policy will point the way to a more equal society, where different backgrounds or circumstances do not determine people's ability to participate.

In country after country, polarisation is on the rise. Distrust of democratic institutions is growing, the media is being questioned, the rhetoric is harsher and facts are distorted. Our society's resilience to attacks from foreign powers and troll factories will increase. Exposure to threats and acts of hate directed at journalists, elected representatives, artists and opinion-formers is dangerous.

If there is one thing that each citizen should see as their duty, then it is this. Never accept the unacceptable. Speak out. Stand up for human dignity in public spaces and comment sections. Anti-democratic voices must never go unchallenged. Freedom of speech must be protected. Step up! We will do it together. It's in our hands!

Together we have built, and continue to build, Sweden as we want it to be.
By showing respect, compassion and warmth.

Human dignity is fundamental.

Mr Speaker,

Our Government has led Sweden in a new direction. Our goal is a sustainable society imbued with a sense of community, where we care about each other and thus believe in the future. We will not leave our children and grandchildren to pick up the bill. This is how we want to continue to govern.

We will continue building our society. The direction remains unchanged:
investments not tax cuts,
equality not inequality,
together – not each on our own.
This is how we are building a future for everyone.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Unveiling of the sculpture 'Two countries – one future'

Published 30 August 2017

Stockholm 25 August. Check against delivery.

Friends,

It is a great honour to receive Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipilä in Stockholm today. I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to our dear neighbour. Together, we celebrate our countries' shared history, as well as our shared future.

In Swedish Television's documentary 'Finland's centenary', a number of Finns were given the chance to describe their country. "We have become a competitive welfare society," says one man. "Finland has become a model for gender equality" says one woman. These are comments that could describe both of our countries, and the similarities can be explained by a long shared history.

As far back as the 1500s and 1600s, many people moved from Finnish to Swedish parts of what were then areas of the same country. At present, some 700 000 Sweden-Finns live here in Sweden. Everything from corporate mergers to cultural exchanges serve as present-day reminders that our countries will remain closely linked. But the similarities are also due to the fact that our societies rest on shared values. Many of these values are symbolised by the dates engraved in Marja Kanervo's lovely work of art here around us.

The world's oldest Freedom of the Press Act, which is the foundation of our open societies. The introduction of parliamentary democracy, which led to women's suffrage. Our countries accession to the EU, where we cooperate closely and frequently.

But Finland's history also includes events that we Swedes should know more

about. Healing the wounds after a civil war. Defending your independence with weapon in hand. Living with the long border with Russia. It is impossible not to feel deep respect for the 'land of a thousand lakes'.

Friends,

A section of Ms Kanervo's stone statue has been left blank. This refers to the future, and we know that the future comes quickly. And when the global winds of change are strong, we have seen that it is our Nordic model that can help people prosper and economies grow.

It is a model with broad support in our countries, and which attracts interest around the world. It is a model that builds on competitiveness, which is why we are developing Swedish-Finnish cooperation on everything from research and innovation, to forestry and culture. It is a model that is reinforced by welfare reforms, creates prosperity, security and freedom that we are always ready to defend. This is why we have deepened our defence cooperation, which creates trust and respect around the Baltic Sea.

But our cooperation is not limited to ensuring a secure region, it also includes a stronger Europe in a sustainable world. And in this we are guided by the principles of which the dates in the sculpture remind us. And is this not a beautiful vision for the next 100-years? Two sister countries in the north, part of a Nordic model that combines competitiveness and welfare, increasing people's freedom. Two sister countries in the north, whose close cooperation in the Nordic region and the EU is based on such clear values that they can be engraved in stone sculptures mined from the bedrock of Finland and Sweden.

Friends,

It is heartening that the friendship between our countries is so strong it can be written in stone. Thank you for your kind attention, and for the opportunity to take part in the ceremony here today.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Launch of High-Level Global Commission on the Future of Work

Published 21 August 2017

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven in Geneva 21 August 2017. Check against delivery.

Ms President, Director-General, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to this important event. It is a great honour to serve as co-chair of this Global Commission on the Future of Work. Access to decent work is fundamental for all women and men.

I got my first job in the early 1970s. I was in my teens, longing for adulthood, for freedom. I cleared brushwood in a ditch in northern Sweden. It was hard work, but I enjoyed it.

Because I knew: a job is the foundation of a life of your own. Your own money, your own choices, your own future.

Our jobs have a huge impact on our lives. How we feel, how we live – even how long we live.

We live in a changing world, with a dramatically changing labour market. In light of this, there are some questions we have to address:

First of all, how do we fight unemployment in a world that still has over 200 million unemployed, so that everyone can feel the freedom I felt clearing brushwood in that ditch? How do we create more decent jobs, so that leaving for work in the morning is for a greater purpose than just getting a pay check at the end of the month? How do we create the conditions, so that all enterprises, all workers and all people can reap the benefits of globalisation

and technological change?

In the international debate, it is becoming increasingly clear that one of the great challenges of our time will be to reduce inequalities.

Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, has said:

“You do not have to be an altruist to support policies that lift the incomes of the poor and the middle class. Everybody will benefit from these policies, because they are essential to generate higher, more inclusive and more sustainable growth.”

It is time to make globalisation work for everyone. And it is by addressing the problems in the global labour market that we can build social cohesion and confidence, and shape a globalisation that represses no one and benefits everyone.

Equality – between countries and within countries – is the defining issue of our time. It must be addressed. Otherwise we will feed a growing insecurity and people will turn to more extreme solutions, or to simpler, populist solutions.

Only people who feel secure will welcome change. Without security, change can bring fear. But with security, change brings hope. My point is – closing the inequality gap is key.

Let me return briefly to the 70s. Around the time I got my first job, IBM presented the floppy disc. Its capacity was 360 kilobytes. If you show one to a young person today, they won't know what to do with it. This gives us some idea of the change that working life has undergone since then.

Having said that, I believe the transition before us is even more fundamental.

Climate change is real; it is here. Men and women are living longer than ever before. Digitization, robotics and artificial intelligence are pushing areas of production to frontiers we never dreamed of before.

These changes alter the way we look at work, both domestically and globally. But just as throughout history we have undergone technological evolution and emerged better, we can face these challenges with the knowledge that we have today and we can emerge better this time as well.

We cannot stop development, nor should we. What we need to do is to come together: to harness innovation to improve the daily lives of millions, to use new technology to build cleaner and more sustainable societies, and at the same time create new jobs with better conditions for everyone. These objectives lie at the heart of this Commission.

When thinking about the future of work and how we should approach the ever-ongoing evolution of technology, I repeatedly come back to a quote from a friend of mine – a former governor of Gothenburg, Social Democrat and union leader – Göran Johansson.

On a visit to a new industrial plant, he was asked what he thought when looking out over the high-tech industrial robots on the factory floor. He said:

“I don’t fear new technology. What I fear is the old one.”

We will undoubtedly have many fruitful and interesting discussions over the next two years. New ideas will be formulated, old theories rejected. But here are three important building blocks for managing the future of work that I will bring to the table.

We need to foster innovation.

We must create conducive environments for new ideas to grow and new types of jobs to be created. At the same time, we need to focus more attention on lifelong learning. People need opportunities for retraining – often more than once – in order to take the jobs that are available on a constantly evolving labour market.

We need improved social dialogue.

The labour market is sometimes described as a zero-sum game: a tug of war in which an advantage to one side means a disadvantage to the other. Every improvement for workers comes at the cost of the employers and vice versa. However, more and more people now understand that this notion is false. Strong social dialogue does indeed often lead to improved conditions for workers. But for businesses, it leads in turn to increased stability and productivity. I call it a win-win-win situation – a win for employers, a win for workers and a win for society.

But we also need to improve welfare and social security

– investing in improved healthcare and education, better and more accessible childcare and social services so that more people are able to enter the workforce. This is especially important for women’s employment. And

believe me, women's participation in the economy has positive effects on just about everything - food security, growth, health and education.

A universal welfare system is crucial for women's liberation.

So is all this possible? Yes. Will it take a lot of effort, cooperation and political will? Absolutely.

I firmly believe that the capacity to shape the future of work is in our own hands. And so is the power to create better jobs, better working environments, more sustainable societies and a more even distribution of the benefits of globalisation.

I look forward to working with you, Ms President, with the Director-General and the members of the Commission, to lay the foundation of a working life where everyone can realise their dreams.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at The University of Warsaw, June 19 2017

Published 19 June 2017

Check against delivery!

Chancellor, students, ladies and gentlemen,

Dzien dobry!

I am pleased to be in Warsaw again. This is my third visit to this wonderful city as Prime Minister. The ties between our countries and societies are strong and manifold, and we cooperate closely not least as members of the European Union. Today, I would like to share some thoughts on our common Europe.

“When you come out of the storm, you won’t be the same person who walked in. That’s what this storm’s all about.”

This is a quote by Japanese author Haruki Murakami. It tells us that turbulence brings change, but also that we should not be afraid. The secret of change is to focus our energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new.

We have some stormy times behind us. For the last few years, the European Council has been in almost constant crisis mode. From terrorist attempts to attack the foundations of our democracies – in Brussels, Paris, Copenhagen, Berlin, London, Nice, Munich, Stockholm and many more places; from the

onslaught of the financial crisis and the EU's inability to tackle youth unemployment, social despair and the global refugee crisis, and from Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its continued aggression in Ukraine to Brexit and the long, hard negotiations that lie ahead of us.

But in recent years, we have also seen the results of strong political leadership and countries coming together to tackle the challenges we face. These results include the global climate agreement, which today demands even stronger European leadership, new sustainable development goals, and large parts of the African countries rising from poverty – faster than ever before. These advances show us that global cooperation makes a real difference. And that the EU is able to come out of these storms stronger. Standing united against external threats. Tackling common challenges with the collective strength required to resolve them. Clearing away the last ruins of the financial crisis and building strong societies again.

This is a defining moment in Europe's history. If we manage it well – if we focus on building the new – we will become stronger.

Today I would like to focus on three central values of our European Union. The first concerns added value for our citizens. We need to stop blaming Brussels and be better at delivering results that are visible in people's lives. The second concerns defending democracy, against terrorism but also about being true to our Union's most fundamental principles and the third concerns the true spirit of cooperation.

I believe that the future of the European Union must deliver on a much stronger promise to our citizens. If EU cooperation is to gain the broad popular support needed to stand strong in the 21st century, we must have a Union that works harder for the wellbeing of its people.

We need good conditions to create economic growth and more jobs in a world of increasing competition. It is clear that Asia, and in particular China, is gaining in importance, while the West's relative weight is diminishing. Europe will remain one of the most prosperous parts of the world – but only if we stick together.

Together, we represent half a billion of the world's population, and we are the main trading partner of both the United States and China. But individually, each one of our countries would have very little opportunity to

influence the changing world order. No single European economy will be among the eight largest in 2050. But the EU will still carry weight as the representative of us all. Simply put – we are stronger together.

Economic growth should never come at the expense of ordinary people. This is a lesson for all of us. Globalisation is good, but it is certainly better for some. In a world where nine of the world's wealthiest people own as much as 3.5 billion people together, we need a European Union that strives for equality and supports people's aspirations for a good life.

The Single Market and its freedoms are key to achieving this. In no other part of the world can people, goods and services move so freely between states. When travelling across Europe, to study or take a job, we should be able to do so freely. This is a cornerstone of European cooperation – and perhaps the most visible freedom for us as European citizens.

But when crossing the border to take that job, we should be able to do so without being paid less than our fellow workers in our host country. Nationality should never determine pay levels or working conditions. They should be the same for all.

Working for a Europe where all citizens benefit from growth and globalisation should be a priority. This is the background to the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth in Gothenburg in November. I am very pleased that your Prime Minister has indicated that she will join us. It will be a key moment to discuss how our societies can improve and prepare to meet the challenges and opportunities of today and tomorrow.

For me it is crystal clear. I want the EU to work hard for the size of the market, but even harder for the wellbeing of its people.

Friends, the European Union is a family of nations, united by a common vision of peace, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Being part of our community is a choice made by each Member State in the belief that we can achieve more together. It is a commitment to the shared values enshrined in the EU Treaty.

We are currently strengthening our joint actions against terrorism in the wake of a number of brutal attacks against our societies, against our peoples. Many of these joint actions are tough, but they are necessary.

However, the work to defend democracy is a much greater task. Poland knows this better than most. You have a proud history of struggling for freedom.

Defending democracy means ensuring the safety and security of everyone. It means standing up for our Jewish citizens, at a time when anti-Semitic threats, violence and the manifestations of hatred are once again reverberating throughout Europe. It means never accepting the demonisation of Muslims or other groups by populists and extremists. It also means working for the right of women to live free, earn a fair and equal wage and control their own bodies, and promoting the rights of minorities held back by prejudice and poverty. It is the obligation of all leaders in all countries to speak out forcefully against all forms of violence, oppression and extremism.

Defending democracy also means defending free and independent media, freedom of reporting and freedom of the press, because we know that politics always benefits from hard scrutiny.

Defending democracy means respecting every person's right to assemble freely, to be tried in free and fair trials, to move freely in society and to love whomever they want. Respect for the rule of law and due process that guarantee the rights of all people is fundamental to our cooperation. There is no room for trade-offs here.

If we do not defend our democratic values, we will lose our Europe as we know it.

My last point concerns cooperation itself.

In his book *Markings*, former Swedish UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld wrote:

“Never look down to test the ground before taking your next step; only he who keeps his eye fixed on the far horizon will find the right road.”

Cooperation involves give and take. Believe me; I know this from long, hard negotiations as a trade union leader. Cooperation involves making deals and compromising, giving up some of our own standpoints, listening to others and, in the end, doing what is best for everyone. It involves doing the right

thing and almost always having our eyes on the horizon and not on our own shoes.

Cooperation involves standing up for common decisions, not just those that suit us or our electorate the best. The EU cannot be reduced to some sort of cash machine from which to withdraw money when needed. The EU is a joint project that comes with many advantages, but also obligations. It is built on trust.

This trust has declined in recent years. Throughout the global refugee crisis, we have witnessed not only an inability, but an unwillingness, to share responsibility.

Many words have been said and decisions have been made, but far too little action has been taken.

It's time to ensure control of our external borders, implement the redistribution of refugees within the EU, combat human smuggling and strengthen our common foreign policy to put a stop to the root causes of the refugee crisis.

We must move from chaos to control. We must share responsibility, or we jeopardise the future of our European cooperation as we know it.

If we do not establish a new, common and sustainable asylum system, more countries will be forced to act unilaterally, which will hurt mobility and trade.

For me, this is about honesty – towards my colleagues in the European Union and my own people in Sweden. No one gains from weak European cooperation. But it is also about solidarity with, and justice for, the people fleeing for their lives.

Next month I will turn 60. I was born in 1957, the year the Treaty of Rome was signed. My generation was given vast opportunities and had great hopes and dreams for the future. I want you to have the same.

We face huge challenges today. We did in the 1960s as well. But enormous opportunities lie in front of us. I never cease to be amazed at the progress we make together: how we find new, smart solutions to climate change or injustice in the world, how the young generation explore and renew the way

we think, leading to innovation beyond our imagination.

For me, there is no greater duty than to pave the way for the young generation of today. And I know that the European Union can be a driving force for this – if we stand up for our core values: democracy, cooperation, and always serving our citizens.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Ceremonial speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven on Sweden's National Day, Skansen, 6 June 2017

Published 06 June 2017

Check against delivery!

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, Excellencies, friends,

On 7 April 2017, at 14.53, it was as though time stood still. I think we all clearly remember what we were doing that afternoon, what we felt and thought. I met many people that first evening, people who were distressed yet resolute, as though to say. This is our city. Our country. No terrorist can take that away from us.

And we saw how social media was awash with people offering help and support. Does anyone need something to eat? Do you have somewhere to sleep tonight? Do you need someone to talk to, some comfort, some support? You are not alone! And the entire community rallied behind all those working to assist people who had been affected. The number of blood donors trebled. Police vehicles were covered in flowers.

In those dark hours, there were so many people who were the light. What we saw then was a very simple yet very powerful show of solidarity. That is what I want to pay tribute to today. From the bottom of my heart: thank you.

We sometimes hear people talk about what we should actually celebrate on Sweden's National Day. I believe it's up to each of us to choose what we want to pay tribute to. But when I see the flag we are flying here today, I

think about the sense of community that leads us to help each other. I think about the kind of Sweden where we say: I am here for you when you need me and at the very same time we also know that you are there for me when I need you. We trust each other. That is what Sweden is to me.

It is more than a gathering of people in a geographic area, it is a community where we feel responsible for each other, where we help each other. The sense of community that we build together, is what I love about Sweden.

That's why I would also like to say to all of you listening here today: use this day to think about what we, each one of us, can do for our community. Ask yourself: What is my role? What is my duty? What can I do?

Be one of those who protests when people hate, incite and threaten each other. If there is anything that each citizen should begin to see as their duty, then it is this. Help to make social media the tool for democracy and freedom of expression that it can be. Never accept the unacceptable. Speak out. Show that you think that violating human dignity is just as serious in a comment section as it is in the public sphere. Anti-democratic voices must never go unchallenged. Democracy must be protected every day. We must do this together.

I also want to pay tribute to all of you who every day, year in and year out, help to build our community – everyone who goes to work, runs a business, takes care of our children and our older people, – all parents, friends, volunteers and not least, our previous generations.

Together we have built, and continue to build, Sweden as we want it to be. Together we will help to make our community even stronger. By showing respect, compassion and warmth. In good times. In difficult times. Today and every day.

Don't do so because it is smart and beneficial for you too. Do so because it is your duty as a citizen. Do so because it is morally right. Do so, to protect our democracy, and to enable our children and grandchildren to continue to celebrate one of the freest and most successful countries in the world: Sweden.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at the memorial ceremony at Stockholm City Hall

Published 10 April 2017

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, Excellencies, Swedes, people of Stockholm, friends,

Losing a loved one is the most terrible thing that can happen in a person's life.

I have thought so much about those of you who on Friday lost someone you loved more than anything in the world.

You now carry with you the memories – of conversations, looks, laughs – alongside your unfathomable loss.

I just want to say this: you are not alone. Our thoughts are with you. Sweden is with you.

* * *

And so many people have done so much for their fellow human beings in the last few days.

Sweden's brave police officers. Our highly skilled emergency services. Our fantastic medical professionals.

And all of you who discovered the hero within you, who offered help and consolation.

We cannot thank you enough.

Your actions make Sweden proud, and are a testament to people's incredible capacity in times of adversity.

You put me in mind of the following lines by priest and author Anders Frostenson:

"Our own wounds are healed when we heal the wounds of others.
Bowed down by burdens, we are carried.

From the solace I gave another, solace my own heart received.
In going to one who needed me, I came home."

So thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

You were put to the test. You stood firm. You have the gratitude of an entire country.

* * *

And I know that we will get through this as we in Sweden have always done: together.

The strength, the resolve, the steadfast values that Sweden has demonstrated in the last few days can never be taken from us by a murderer.

Our unity will always be stronger than the forces that seek to tear us apart.

Our way of life will never be suppressed.

Our democracy will triumph over fundamentalism.

* * *

Friends,

Sweden, Belgium and the United Kingdom stand together in mourning the citizens we have lost.

Our three countries have suffered horrendous acts of terrorism.
But we have also seen the strength, determination and power of our democratic societies.

We will never surrender to terror. We will get through this, together.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven's speech at the presentation of Human Development Report 21 mars 2017

Published 22 March 2017

Check against delivery.

Excellencies,
Administrator Helen Clark,
Mr Selim Jahan,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear friends,

I am honoured to be here. A special thanks to Helen Clark and the United Nations Development Programme, who have made this possible, and to Mr Selim Jahan and his Human Development Report Office and team, who once again have given us an inspiring report which will continue to push us towards the world we want.

I would like to start by quoting from Professor Hans Rosling, who sadly passed away last month. He once said:

"The first thing to think about the future is to know about the present."

Hans Rosling really changed our view of the world today. He did it with statistics, showing that the world is actually a better place than most people think. He gave us the most important tool there is for change – hope.

The Human Development Report has become an institution. This unique

report has not only helped to establish a new broad definition of development, but also to evaluate the progress made and make setbacks visible using statistics.

This report puts pressure on us as leaders around the world to keep raising our ambitions and following-up on areas that need support.

Looking back on past Human Development Reports, I am impressed by some of the amazing improvements that have been achieved. What took Sweden 100 years to achieve in terms of schooling and life expectancy, many of today's developing countries are doing within a generation – 25 years.

This year's edition of the Report is special, since it is the 25th. We can actually follow changes in the development landscape over the course of one generation, from the end of the cold war when multilateralism flourished, to a period when globalisation integrated people, markets and work and to a time when digitalisation profoundly changed our way of life.

And, since then, development has accelerated.

In 25 years, life expectancy in China went from 69 years to 76 years. In Colombia, the expected years of schooling went from 9 to almost 14. In Tunisia, the average income per person doubled.

And the big picture: fewer than 10 per cent of the world's population now live in extreme poverty. Nine out of ten boys and girls go to school. Billions of people have gained access to clean water. A global middle class is emerging and one in two people have access to a mobile phone.

The world's population is actually better-educated, better-fed, and healthier than ever before.

Therefore, it is time to raise the bar. And this is what we have done with the new Global Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

Because the challenges ahead are still huge.

We see deepening wars, conflicts and terrorist attacks and, in their wake, the worst refugee crisis in modern times. We see growing public scepticism of free trade and globalisation, and growing populist and extremist forces. And,

last year, was also the warmest on record.
Climate change is catching up with us.

And, even though we are seeing less extreme poverty around the world, inequality is increasing. If you fill a bus... I used to say a bus, but now it is actually a minibus.

If you fill a minibus with the richest people in the world, they own as much as the poorest 3.5 billion people.

It is absurd. It is totally unacceptable.

I welcome the theme of this year's report: human development for everyone.

It highlights the need for equality.

Leaving no one behind needs to become the way we operate as a global community.

There is a moral dimension, of course, but there is also an economic one.
Equality is winning new ground among economists.

Let me quote one of them, the IMF's Managing Director Christine Lagarde.
She says:

"You do not have to be an altruist to support policies that lift the incomes of the poor and the middle class. Everybody will benefit from these policies, because they are essential to generate higher, more inclusive and more sustainable growth."

Simply put – equal societies perform better.

We must address the problems in the global labour market, build social cohesion and shape a form of globalisation that represses no one, and benefits everyone.

This is also the driving force behind our Global Deal initiative. It encourages cooperation between employers, employees and governments to bring about decent work, increase productivity, and enhance economic stability and shared prosperity.

It is time to make globalisation work for everyone.

When I say everyone, I mean everyone.
Globalisation must work for both women and men.

One of Sweden's strongest forces for development is the fact that both women and men work. We have one of the highest employment rates in the world. It is well-known that women's participation in the economy has positive effects on just about everything – growth, health, education and food security.

A general welfare-system is key for women's liberation.

But still, women in Sweden are also paid less. They do more of the unpaid work at home. The fight for gender equality must go on. In Sweden, and in the rest of the world. The gender inequality index that was introduced in 2010 helps us to keep track of one of the chief factors blocking human development.

Women and men are equal.
Women and men should be treated equally.
Women and men should have equal opportunities.
Nothing else will do.

Finally, I would like take the opportunity to thank you, Helen, for having done a remarkable job.

You have served with admirable dedication and unwavering resolve. Under your leadership, UNDP has empowered people to lift themselves out of poverty and create sustainable livelihoods, in times of severe financial crisis.

You have compelled the UN Development System to increase coherence – and brought home the necessity of the UN acting in unison on the delivery of the 2030 Agenda.

For Sweden, and for me personally, it has been a privilege to be your partner.

I am now eager to listen to you addressing the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead, armed with the knowledge, facts and statistics in this year's Human Development Report.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at IVA

Published 31 January 2017 Updated 31 January 2017

Stockholm, 31 January 2017. Check against delivery.

Chancellor Merkel,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen.

I am honoured to be here today, and I am honoured to be accompanied by the German Chancellor. It is a pleasure to see and hear about the breadth of German-Swedish cooperation in the field of innovation.

And I am very happy to be here for the opening of the German Swedish Tech Forum.

Germany and Sweden are two countries with many characteristics in common. We have a large proportion of innovative problem-solvers and entrepreneurial mind-sets.

We share the willingness to adapt in times of change and make something even better for the generations to come.

To put it simply, we combine good business with the moral obligation to do the right thing.

And there is no shortage of challenges. Climate change, just to give one example, is pushing us all to find new solutions. And for sure, there is a big market waiting to buy new smart products and emission-reducing solutions.

Being at the forefront will create new jobs and growth. Innovation and cooperation are two of the keys to sustainable economic development.

I have great respect for the way Germany has been able to innovate and export new solutions and state-of-the-art technology to the rest of the world, year after year. Not least, it is inspiring to study the many medium-sized 'hidden champions', which have been powering German exports.

The success of the German Industrie-Vier-Punkt-Null is widely known and we have been fortunate enough to learn from it when establishing the Swedish strategy for Smart industry.

The German success of automation, modernising and digitalisation of its industry is something we can all learn from. I believe our countries have much to gain from increased cooperation on specific innovation projects and from sharing our experiences.

So I am very happy about the German-Swedish partnership on innovation, I see great potential in partnering more closely, both bilaterally and within the European Union.

Innovation is one of the things I personally find most fascinating and inspiring. As the proud founding country of Skype and Spotify, with Stockholm being second only to Silicon Valley in terms of the number of start-ups per capita in the world, we will continue to foster a development where new ways of thinking and smart solutions are encouraged, from preschools to universities.

Swedish success depends on our ability to stay competitive in a globalised economy. We will compete with knowledge and skills, and therefore we need the best schools for our children. We need to ensure access to good education, not only during the first 20 or 30 years of life, but throughout our ever changing working life.

We have increased Sweden's focus on innovation and stepped up broad cooperation. One of the first things I did as Prime Minister was to set up a National Innovation Council, which I chair and which is now working with representatives of politics, business, trade unions, academia and civil society to clear paths for development and growth.

We strive to learn from positive examples. For one of the first meetings, the council invited a German expert to explain more about the Energiewende, the impressive policy encompassing all key sectors for transition to green low-carbon energy.

But let's be absolutely clear about one thing.

This is not something we do for businesses; it is something we do with businesses. The success of Swedish innovation is built on close collaboration with industry and other stakeholders.

That's why we have created innovation partnership programmes, and the concept of Testbed Sweden. We are currently running five programmes, addressing: next generation transport; smart cities; a circular and bio-economy; life sciences; and connected industry and new materials.

And digitalisation is obviously at the forefront of them all.

So, what does this idea of cooperation for innovation mean in practice?

Just a few months ago, the world's first electric public road was opened in Sandviken, 200 kilometres north of Stockholm. In a partnership between Scania, Siemens, and local and national authorities, a hybrid lorry is operated by a local transport company on the electric road, delivering materials to the steel industry in the area.

This has gone from being a vision for the future to a reality today. It gives us a hint of what can be done to achieve a fossil-free transportation sector. I am eager to continue this journey together with you all here.

Today's round-table has initiated a new and stronger German and Swedish partnership for innovation.

We have four priorities:

First, mobility. The demands on transportation will continue to rise. Future travel and transport have to cut down greenhouse gas emissions dramatically. Today we are taking the very first steps towards an eHighway between Germany and Sweden.

Second, digitalisation. Both Sweden and Germany have strategies for smarter, connected and more competitive industries. We face the challenge to get small and medium-sized enterprises to lead the digital transformation. Now, we are joining forces to create the best possible conditions for small and medium-sized companies in both our countries.

Third, strengthening eHealth. Our populations are getting older and the demands for quality in health care are increasing. We need to seize the

opportunities of digitalisation to improve quality, efficiency and access to health care. Tools in the field of eHealth enable remote expert consultation, monitoring and medical education. And we have much to gain from the closer cooperation that we have agreed upon today.

Fourth, we will improve test facilities for industrial development. As global competition is increasing we need to take our innovation capacity to the next level. We aim to increase the number of innovations tested in real life environments and launched on the global market. Now we are opening up our testbeds and making it easier for German and Swedish companies to test new products and take the leap from start-up to scale-up.

Chancellor Merkel,
this partnership brings together our governments, businesses and institutions.

It paves the way for deepened future cooperation and for new innovative breakthroughs.

I look forward to our growing partnership, where we will work together to promote growth and economic development in the best interests of everyone.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at Euroskills 2016

Published 02 December 2016 Updated 02 December 2016

Gothenburg, 30 November 2016 Check against delivery.

Young talents, family members, teachers, representatives of business and trade unions, friends.

Welcome to Sweden. Welcome to Gothenburg.

It is an honour for any country to be allowed to organise large events.

And an event of this kind, where young people from 27 European countries, alongside guest competitors from around the globe, have the opportunity to show off the fantastic skills that build all of our societies – in my view, that is the greatest event of all!

**

Once upon a time, long before any of the contestants here today were born, I worked in a timber sorting plant in Ångermanland in northern Sweden.

And when the sorting equipment broke, we called in a welder.

He had an almost magical ability to take something that was completely broken, and make it like new again. And I thought: "I want to do that!"

So I trained, and went into my first workplace as a welder, and although I never became the best, I remember the pride I felt at doing something really well.

**

I want to congratulate all of you who are here competing.

You have that pride. You have become the best in your professions. And that is why you are here. And through your efforts, you have also become representatives of your home towns, your countries, your generation.

You also represent the future.

Your hands create the furniture of the future, the design of the future, the communication of the future.

Your drive will digitalise society, produce solutions to the climate threat, build the houses and lay the floors that our children and grandchildren walk on.

Your dreams will become the reality of the future.

So treasure them. Take pride in them. And never hesitate to make them a reality.

* * *

Your know-how and your professional skills inspire me. But I am also inspired by your teachers.

You and your teachers have probably not always got on, and they have probably not always realised how smart you actually are, but they must have been doing something right to have got you here!

So, before you leave this competition, don't forget to thank the people who have inspired and paved the way for you.

Role models like them are one of the most important things in life. And your presence here today shows that you are potentially on the way to becoming such role models yourselves. Shoulder that responsibility. Help others, just as you yourselves have received help along the way.

* * *

Because I must tell you that you are needed.

In a world in which the pace of change is constantly increasing, the need for people who are constantly striving to develop, to be the best and the most

skilled in their profession, to try new technologies and push new boundaries is greater than ever.

Here in Sweden, perhaps the greatest threat to our economy at the moment is the shortage of people with vocational qualifications.

And this competition also shows the absolute best thing about being extremely skilled in your profession: it is really good fun.

So my message here today is this:

The world needs your pride; we need your hands, your drive, your dreams, and we need you as role models for the future.

So once again: welcome to Sweden, welcome to some hard work and difficult challenges.

Let the fun begin and good luck in the competition!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at the Strategy Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

Published 09 November 2016 Updated 09 November 2016

Speech held in Stockholm at the Strategy Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region 8 November, 2016. Check against delivery.

Colleagues,

friends from around the Baltic,

The theme of this conference is Vision 2030 for the Baltic Sea Region.

We are here because we want to have our own hands on the rudder, and not simply be steered by events elsewhere.

We are here to shape the future of the Baltic. So welcome to Sweden, welcome to Stockholm, and welcome to the incredibly important work we have ahead of us.

We learned to cooperate early on. As early as the 12th century, the Baltic was bound together by the Hanseatic League, and the prosperity created remains in evidence in many of our ports and cities.

But the Baltic has also been a region marked by conflict.

Throughout history, states and warlords have forcibly occupied land and moved borders back and forth around the Baltic. Plundering. Attempting to

control people and trade. Making short-term gains.

For a large part of the 20th century, the Baltic was divided by the Cold War's iron curtain.

But through the independence movement at the end of the century, trade and growth increased again. And when Poland and the Baltic States joined the European Union in 2004, the old tradition of mutual dependence and trade around the Baltic was restored.

And that is why we are here today. To develop this cooperation further.

We are meeting at a time when the security situation in the Baltic is once again deteriorating. Our situation is becoming hallmarked by unease and fear. This is dangerous.

It could lead us into a new era of arms race, which would freeze and paralyse development in our region.

I am a firm believer in the idea of common security. Common security is a term coined by one of my predecessors, Olof Palme, and is based on the idea that we must cooperate across national borders and create a common future built on trust and dialogue. Exactly as we are doing here today. Common security is built on international law. On strong international institutions. On reduced tensions and on disarmament. Trusting dialogue together with trade, investment and increased cooperation. This must be the future of the Baltic – and we can only build this security together.

Peace and growth are also created by tackling the two crucial global challenges for the future: poverty and climate change.

Last year, I met my good friend and colleague Jonas Gahr Støre at the World Economic Forum. We noted that the tide has turned in discussions of equality and sustainable development.

Some 25 years ago, when Gahr Støre was working on follow-up of the Brundlandt report on sustainable development and equality, he encountered considerable resistance. The goals were considered unrealistic and wrong.

That has now changed. And this was visible in Davos. Now sustainability and equality are on everyone's lips. It began with the realisation that equality and sustainable development are tools for change.

Now we have reached a point where people understand that they are prerequisites to bring about positive change. This was also clear when the world's leaders gathered in New York at the end of last year and agreed on the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Global Goals.

And the work in the 2030 Agenda is not to be done by someone else, somewhere else.

It has to be done by all of us together.

The goals place great demands on all countries and all actors.

It is my ambition to see Northern Europe take the lead.

And there are two reasons for this.

1. It is morally right.

We have a responsibility towards others, and not just ourselves here and now. We have a responsibility towards people all over the world, but also towards future generations.

2. But it is also economically smart.

Our companies can be the ones to develop the new technologies and solutions that the world is crying out for to reduce carbon emissions. Our region will benefit from being at the forefront of climate adaptation.

This is why we should take the lead.

It is time to get stuck in.

The Baltic is now a polluted sea. Large areas of the seabed are suffering from oxygen depletion. Levels of several hazardous pollutants are high. Severe algal blooms bear witness to an ecosystem out of balance.

For far too long we have allowed excessive nutrients to feed into our shared sea. Eutrophication affects all of our countries in the form of a declining marine environment. We must live up to the commitments we have made under the Helsinki Commission.

The Baltic is already one of the world's busiest waterways. And traffic is expected to double by 2030. In essence, this is positive: we should continue to bind our countries closer together. But at the same time, we risk both increased emissions and a higher chance of serious accidents as traffic expands. This is unacceptable. We must be able to interconnect our

countries safely while at the same time increasing security and reducing emissions.

But we need to continue to tackle environmental damage in the Baltic together. The joint strategy is needed if we are to meet the environmental challenges we face.

No country can resolve the environmental challenges alone, but together there are few issues we cannot resolve.

And in our efforts to improve our weaknesses, we can mobilise our region's great strengths.

We must take advantage of the fact that our region is at the cutting edge of digital development. We have the technological know-how. But we also have people – customers – who are world leaders in drawing on digital innovations.

Whether it is the latest way of listening to music or talking to each other by telephone, or furious feathered creatures from Finland, we possess an innovative power that often astounds the world.

With us here today we have Niklas Zennström, who changed global perceptions of communications with his Swedish-Estonian collaboration, Skype. I am sure that I am not the only one who is looking forward to hearing about his experiences.

Another opportunity is the transition to a fossil-free society. Here too we have the right conditions. We have rivers. We have plenty of wind. And we have forests. We can do a great deal with our forests.

The bioeconomy offers fantastic opportunities. Renewable fuels. Clothing made from forest-based materials. Bioplastics replacing fossil-based plastics. Anything that can be done with oil can also be done with wood – the KTH Royal Institute of Technology here in Stockholm is, for example, currently undertaking research to produce the first transparent wood-based material that could replace plastic.

It is important to strive to find common strengths and explore joint opportunities. For the development of sustainable products that can be exported beyond our region. For the growth of countries in the Baltic region.

Digitalisation and fossil-free societies are just two of the opportunities open

to us.

There are probably thousands more – and they are precisely what we hope will emerge from this forum. None of us know exactly what the path to 2030 will bring.

But from our thousand-year history, we do know this:

When free trade and joint development are the hallmarks of our region, and when we discuss our common security in a trusting dialogue, life is improved for people all around the Baltic.

Thank you.



Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Remarks at 'From Conflict to Communion: Together in Hope'

Published 03 November 2016 Updated 03 November 2016

Malmö 31 October 2016. Check against delivery.

Friends,

I would like to begin with the words of the German Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who confronted Nazism in his time. For this, he was interned and murdered. But his thoughts on optimism live on.

He said: "Optimism, in its essence, is not a view of the current situation, but a life force, a force of hope, when others resign, a force to hold your head high, when everything seems to fail, a force to endure setbacks, a force that never leaves the future to its opponent, but claims it for itself."

Friends,

the number of armed conflicts in the world have increased over the latest decade. In the face of the cruelties of war, we now, more than ever, need a force of hope – creating a global momentum for peace.

A force that compels warring parties from the trenches to the negotiation table. A force that shines a light on conflicts that are outside the world's spotlight. A force that tackles the roots of conflict: in social divides, in the destruction of our earth, in intolerance, extremism and hate. We can all be that force!

And in all the darkness of the world – there are rays of light.

We created one such ray of light in Paris, where the world agreed on the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate deal. We created a ray of light in New York, where the world agreed on 17 Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty and ensure prosperity for all.

Rays of light are created wherever we come together – to raise our ambitions and set goals for a more peaceful world.

But a force is needed to fulfil those goals. A force that sets new examples. A force that pushes for new commitments. And a force that makes sure we all respect the promises already made.

This cannot be left to us politicians alone. We must all be that force!

And here tonight shines a new ray of light, from all of you coming together in hope.

You represent all the women and men of faith, who live by the ideals of peace, in marches and protests, in humanitarian aid and international development, in simple solidarity with your fellow human beings.

Your determination matters. Your action matters. Your communion matters.

Because time and time again, people have proven that war is only a creation of man, and that when enough people come together to demand peace – then peace is created.

And we, all people of good will, share this responsibility. So let us promise each other: We will be that force.

A force of hope, a force to hold our heads high, a force that claims the future for optimism, and the steadfast belief in peace.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at the Leaders' Summit

Published 21 September 2016 Updated 21 September 2016

New York 20 September 2016. Check against delivery.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin by thanking President Obama for initiating this Summit and for his personal engagement in the global refugee crisis.

I am proud to be one of the co-hosts of this summit.

No country, no continent, no organisation can handle this challenge alone. We must work together. This is why we are here.

We need to bolster global efforts with ambitious new commitments. More countries have to take a greater share.

During my recent visit to Jordan I met with King Abdullah II and visited the Za'atari refugee camp.

I would like to start there. Because as Europeans or Americans or Australians, we must always remind ourselves that most refugees never come to our countries.

They walk cross borders in search for safety. They stay there with the hope of being able to return to their homes and relatives as soon as possible.

While they wait, and hope, there should be more than a roof or tarp over their heads. There should be safe water, enough food rations, heat if it is cold. There should be classrooms for the children and increased possibilities of work for women and men.

This is not of benefit to the children, to the women and men alone but to society as a whole, and it will prepare them for their return home.

Proximity to countries of origin should not be the only determinant of solidarity. We all have a shared global responsibility.

Sweden has for many years shown a strong commitment to good humanitarian donorship.

Last year Sweden was the seventh largest humanitarian donor. For 2016, Sweden has so far allocated approximately USD 625 million in humanitarian aid.

Today I am proud to announce that the Government of Sweden plans to make an extraordinary contribution of USD 17.5 million to the IOM-UNHCR Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism and USD 20 million to the World Bank Global Crisis Response Platform.

Our strong and long-standing commitment to resettlement continues. We have committed to gradually increasing the number of resettlement places in the coming years.

It is high time to take responsibility. Together we can ease the suffering for many more people. Together we can make a difference.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Statement of Government Policy

13 September 2016

Published 13 September 2016 Updated 13 September 2016

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, the Riksdag, 13 September 2016.

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of the Riksdag,

We live in an age of contradictions.

Our security, our prosperity, our health, our democracy, our climate – challenges unite the countries of the world, in setbacks and success. A banker's speculation in Manhattan jeopardises jobs in Malmö. City developers in Shanghai are assisted by research from Chalmers. Climate adaptation in California creates optimism in Karlskoga.

While societies and people are becoming increasingly interconnected, we are being torn apart. We see growing gaps between rich and poor, between urban and rural areas, a divided labour market, anxiety and uncertainty about our own future and that of our children.

Understanding that the future – yours, mine and ours – is a common future must permeate policy in our country. Sweden must stand together.

Inwardness has never been Sweden's path. Openness to the world characterises Sweden and the everyday life of every inhabitant. For a small nation with high ambitions for jobs, climate and education, this is a decisive choice. Today, leadership calls for broad and active collaboration – locally, nationally and internationally.

The Government's response is therefore twofold: we will advance Sweden by building our society and by choosing cooperation.

* * *

Two years have passed since the parliamentary election. Sweden's economy is performing strongly. The Government has changed the direction of Swedish policy – from tax cuts and cutbacks to vigorous investments in building our society. We are beginning to see results.

So far, 120 000 additional jobs have been created. Employment rates are the highest in the EU. Youth unemployment is declining. Today, significantly more school leavers can look forward to a job or higher education. For the first time in more than seven years, unemployment is under seven per cent. The budget deficit has essentially been wiped out. Public finances are in good order.

The years of welfare cutbacks are over. Over the last two years, an extra 13 000 people have been employed in schools alone. Investments in climate adaptation lead to reduced emissions. Long-term and vital action to curb growing insecurity and break down segregation has begun.

The parliamentary session we have ahead of us will be shaped by the Government's priorities: jobs, education and climate. This is a policy for responsibility – for the future, for Sweden and for the world around us.

Taking responsibility for the future requires us to modernise Sweden – our education system, our energy production, our public administration and our labour market.

Taking responsibility for the world that we are so dependent on requires active global collaboration, solidarity and the recognition that security must be built in partnership with others.

Taking responsibility for Sweden requires us to stand together, develop the Swedish model, and invest in welfare and the things that make our country both strong and secure.

Mr Speaker,

Building our society means focusing on the future.

Strong economic growth, full employment, and socially and ecologically sustainable development lay the foundation for the possibility of a good life for future generations. Quicker climate adaptation contributes to both new jobs and a more secure world for our children and grandchildren.

Employment growth will continue to be stimulated and labour market matching improved. The objective of achieving the lowest unemployment rate in the EU by 2020 guides economic policy. Initiatives are being taken in broad collaboration – with the business sector, academia and civil society.

Sweden's potential will be strengthened in five areas:

1. Sweden will compete on the basis of knowledge and expertise – not low wages.

Later this year a research, innovation and higher education bill will be presented. Appropriations to research and third-cycle education are being increased. Sweden's position as a leading knowledge nation will be strengthened.

Today, Sweden's labour market is hampered by a lack of people with appropriate training. Labour shortages are taking their toll on businesses and the public sector alike.

Strong investments are therefore being made in new educational opportunities. The Adult Education Initiative is being expanded to include a special focus on vocational education and training for adults. An education entry grant will be introduced for unemployed people who have relatively little education and training and considerable educational needs. A proposal will be presented to entitle all adults to municipal adult education to complete their upper secondary school education. The quality of upper secondary school vocational programmes is being enhanced. The reintroduction of higher education eligibility is being prepared. Additional measures to achieve the 90-day guarantee are being taken.

Regional collaboration is being strengthened to ensure that vocational education programmes are more responsive to labour market needs. New arrivals who already have educational qualifications or experience in a shortage occupation will be fast-tracked into jobs. Fast tracks for twenty or so occupations have been set up and the number of participants is increasing steadily. The Swedish Public Employment Service is to be a matching agency with a clearer employer focus.

To address future skills supply in the Swedish labour market, I intend to invite the social partners and industry representatives to further discuss the design of these major education initiatives.

2. Sweden's exports will grow to create more jobs and increase prosperity.

The Government supports the EU's upcoming signing of a new trade agreement with Canada. The trade and investment partnership negotiations with the United States continue. The objective is as ambitious an agreement as possible while ensuring the ability to maintain and strengthen the protection of workers, the environment, and human and animal health. The agreements must respect democratic decisions. Sweden should be a pioneer of free and fair trade.

The Government's export strategy enhances growth and development opportunities for Swedish enterprises. Export successes are emerging from the creative and climate-smart industries. Initiatives to win major export deals and attract business start-ups to Sweden are strengthened by Team Sweden. Regional export centres are being set up in several places around the country. New embassies are opening in important growth markets – in the Philippines, Peru and Tunisia.

3. Sweden will be one of the world's first fossil-free welfare nations.

The transition to a green economy strengthens Sweden's competitiveness. Our leading position in international climate action is being consolidated.

In a week's time the largest climate and environment budget in Sweden's history will be presented. A new climate policy framework and new climate objectives will be adopted. A broad agreement in the Riksdag will see the energy system modernised and long-term, sustainable electricity supply secured for both households and industry. Investment support for solar electricity will increase eightfold over three years. The goal is 100 per cent renewable energy.

The Climate Leap and urban environment agreements are resulting in climate investments for living cities and vibrant rural areas. New electric buses are on the roads of Umeå. New bus roads are being built in Växjö. New tram lines are being laid in Lund. From north to south, investments are being made in biogas, biofuels and charging points. The trend that is seeing more people cycling to work and school will be encouraged. The super green car rebate and reduced preferential taxation of green cars will be extended. The objective is a fossil-free vehicle fleet.

Efforts to protect the environment and ensure a toxin-free everyday life are being intensified. Swedish schools and preschools must be free from harmful

chemicals. A strategy for sustainable consumption will be presented. Decisive steps are being taken to ensure that the environmental objectives are met. The principle is simple: it has to be cheaper to be a friend of the environment and more costly to release emissions.

4. Sweden will be a world leader in innovative and sustainable industrial production.

The five strategic collaborative programmes of the Innovation Council will be set in motion. Innovative solutions are creating next-generation transport, smart cities, a circular and bio-based economy, life sciences, connected industries and new materials.

Industry-related research is being developed. The attractiveness of Sweden's innovation environments is being strengthened.

Self-employed entrepreneurs can employ their first colleagues using the new 'growing support'. Central government venture capital reform will make it easier to get money for new ideas. The new state-

owned company Saminvest will support more innovative and growing businesses. The 'Smart industry' reindustrialisation strategy is being implemented.

Public procurements should to be used strategically to contribute to a sustainable society and new innovative solutions. Opportunities offered by digitalisation will be seized for both businesses and citizens. A new digital strategy will support the business sector and social development. To enhance service and accessibility, the digital transformation of Swedish public administration will continue.

5. Sweden's infrastructure will be sustainable and promote development throughout the country.

It must be possible for people to move out of home or find a place to live where they find a job. The Government is making a historic investment in more housing. According to forecasts, construction will begin on 61 500 new homes next year. This is an increase of more than 50 per cent in three years.

Housing construction will be facilitated further. It will be easier to produce modular houses. More exemptions from building permit requirements will be introduced. Amended tax regulations will stimulate mobility in the housing market. More climate-smart homes will be built. An architecture policy for

more sustainable urban environments will be drawn up.

Infrastructure and transportation must be reliable. Improvements in transport make larger labour market regions possible and are key to companies' freight transport. An infrastructure bill for 2018–2029 will be presented before the end of this year. Considerable investments are being made in the operation and maintenance of roads and railways. The railway network is being expanded. Long-haul freight transport should shift from lorries to trains and ships. Travelling by train should be faster than driving and cheaper than flying.

The Swedish forestry sector has a key role to play in enabling the transition to a circular and bio-based economy. This will create new, green jobs. A national forestry programme will be presented in 2017.

For the first time, an integrated approach to the entire food chain is being taken in a food strategy. Conscious consumers see the added value in Swedish agriculture, helping to make it an industry for the future. The rising demand for organic products will be met.

Mr Speaker,

We live in an age when it is becoming increasingly clear that our own security is synonymous with common security. The Government is strengthening its commitment to a strong and assertive EU, and to an effective UN.

Our need for functioning European cooperation has never been greater. Sweden will contribute actively to shaping Europe's future. The EU has to be better at living up to citizens' expectations. A Europe for jobs and growth, an ambitious environment and climate policy, and shared responsibility for migration are priorities. The EU single market is crucial to curbing high unemployment. At the same time, decent working conditions must be secured. Equal pay for equal work must apply in accordance with laws and agreements in the country of employment. Sweden is pushing for a social Europe, and will host a social summit in the second half of 2017.

In one week's time, Sweden – together with a large number of countries, companies, trade unions and international organisations – will launch the Global Deal initiative to strengthen workers, businesses and societies. The advantages of globalisation must benefit everyone.

During this parliamentary year, negotiations on the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union will begin. The EU's good relations with the United Kingdom must be maintained. And so must Sweden's.

* * *

Security in our neighbourhood has deteriorated. Russia's aggression against Ukraine and illegal annexation of Crimea, the situation on the EU's southern border, the attempted coup in Turkey and the ongoing war in Syria – all of these issues require strong and joint action, in both the EU and the UN.

Sweden's election to the UN Security Council is an acknowledgement of Swedish foreign policy and of our Foreign Service. Our foreign and security policy is based on the universal principles of democracy, international law and human rights. Efforts to promote disarmament and prevent conflicts are a priority, as are efforts to combat new security threats, such as climate change. Women's participation in peace processes is being highlighted; this is one of many examples of how the Government is developing its feminist foreign policy. Openness and dialogue, for example with the countries in Africa, will be the hallmarks of our work in the Security Council.

Sustainable peace can only be achieved by attacking the root causes of conflicts. Sweden is taking a leading role on the UN's global 2030 Agenda. At national level, municipalities, county councils, NGOs, the business sector, researchers and government agencies are taking part in its implementation. A new policy framework for development cooperation will be presented.

Responsibility must be taken for the environment and the climate. Later this year, a government bill will be presented for Sweden to approve the historic Paris Agreement. The aim is to keep the global rise in temperature as far below 2 degrees Celsius as possible, and to strive to limit it to 1.5 degrees. The countries and the people who are most vulnerable to the impact of climate change must be supported. Sweden is the largest donor to the UN Green Climate Fund.

The breadth of security policy instruments, such as diplomacy, mediation and trust-building measures, helps ensure that threats do not emerge. 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. Sweden is strengthening its defence capability. Since the start of this year, defence policy has had a new direction. The prime focus of the Swedish Armed Forces is defending our country. The operational capability

of military units is a priority. Personnel supply will be guaranteed for the long term.

Defence and security policy cooperation is being broadened and deepened. Our partnership with NATO is being developed and the transatlantic link strengthened. Cooperation with Finland is pivotal. Involvement in international peacekeeping operations will remain important. This session, the Government will seek broad support for a national security strategy.

Next year marks the fiftieth year of Israel's occupation of Palestine. The situation continues to deteriorate, with new illegal settlements. Violence against civilians is increasing as a result of the conflict. Both parties have a responsibility to end the violence. Sweden's long-term and strong commitment has an unequivocal goal: a two-state solution with Israel and Palestine living side by side, in peace and security.

The war in Syria and the serious situation in Iraq also require the joint fight against Daesh to continue. Sweden's active role in the global coalition continues. A doubling of the military contribution in Iraq is proposed.

Mr Speaker,

Let me tell you about Muzon. She has gone through things that no child should have to experience. She fled with her family from Syria to the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan. There she was able to finish her schooling. She says:

"No one needed to tell me that education is important. I've always understood that. Our house was built by an architect. When I was ill I went to see a doctor. Education is everything in life."

Our humanitarian assistance in neighbouring regions provides people with food for the day and a roof over their head. More children have the opportunity to go to school. Sweden will remain one of the world's largest humanitarian donors.

The global refugee crisis continues to cause unimaginable human suffering. More countries must contribute more – in the EU and globally. The causes forcing people to flee must be combated. These will be Sweden's demands at the UN summit on migration, and at the summit on the global refugee crisis that Sweden is co-hosting with the United States later this month.

Sweden is pushing for a functioning asylum system in the EU. Responsibility for people who are fleeing must be borne by all Member States in a spirit of

solidarity. The Government has done, and will continue to do, what is necessary to manage reception and introduction in Sweden, maintain regulated immigration and protect the right to asylum.

Mr Speaker,

The Swedish model is based on trust and solidarity. It can be described as a mutual social contract. All people must have equal rights and opportunities. With rights come obligations and responsibilities.

Sweden has a system of universal welfare. It applies equally to everyone – regardless of whether you are rich or poor. Welfare systems must be robust, and adapt as society changes.

But the social contract also includes an obligation to do the right thing. To contribute by working and paying tax. Not to commit fraud, crimes or shirk responsibility. To contribute to gender equality, democracy and respect for others.

Sweden is now growing, with many new inhabitants.

People who have fled their homes and been given the right to stay here belong to our country just as you and I do. We are all part of building our society.

Now there are new members of our communities who will need to start studying and working to contribute to society. Very many local inhabitants, employees and volunteers are currently doing great work to this end. Together we must fight segregation and discrimination. We must stand side by side, for human dignity and democracy. And we must stand up to racism, extremism and divisive hatred.

The Swedish model is the foundation as we continue to build our society and modernise our country. Sweden must stand together.

* * *

If we are to trust each other and society, equality before the law must be upheld.

Vigorous action must be taken against tax evasion and aggressive tax planning. Minister pensions are under review. Overuse and incorrect use of our welfare systems and social insurance must be prevented. A new

delegation has been appointed for this. Requirements concerning staff registers and monthly statements will reduce levels of undeclared work and exploitation in the labour market. This will reward serious employers. Additional measures will be taken to combat increasing fraud.

No one should be able to buy their way to the front of the queue for publicly financed health care. Draft legislation banning the privatisation of university hospitals will be presented. A new regulatory framework will ensure that taxpayers' money is used for its intended purposes.

Quality and freedom of choice must be the hallmarks of our welfare system.

* * *

There is a line in Elin Wägner's debut novel, *Men and Other Misfortunes*. The book is about four young women – office clerks – in Stockholm at the turn of the last century. One of them, Eva, explains that she has met an old classmate from the business institute where she studied. She says:

"Our results back then were about the same. But would you believe, now his basic salary is 4 600 crowns, and mine is 1 000, isn't that odd?"

A hundred years later, we see that during their working lives, women on average earn SEK 3.6 million less than men.

I would say: that is odd.

Shortly, the Government will present a gender-responsive budget. For the second year in a row, economic equality between women and men is increasing. The goal of a gender balance on the boards of central government agencies has been achieved. Governance and follow-up of gender equality policy is being strengthened. The pace of gender equality efforts is accelerating.

Girls should not have to think twice about attending music festivals or concerts. Women and men should be able to feel safe, even after dark. Women's safety must increase – both at home and in public spaces. It is not up to men to decide where women can go, or how they should dress.

Sweden is governed by a feminist government. A new strategy to combat men's violence against women will be presented. Sexual offences legislation is being strengthened. Honour-related violence is being combated. Support to non-profit organisations is being increased, while requirements for efforts to

combat racism and promote democratic values and gender equality are being tightened.

Sweden should be a safe place.

Nobody should be subjected to hate or threats because of their beliefs, their sex, the colour of their skin, who they love, their identity or their disabilities. A plan to combat hate crime and racism will be presented. Legislation against online hate is being tightened.

Efforts to help improve living conditions in vulnerable EU citizens' home countries continue. No one should have to beg in Sweden.

Shootings, car burnings and drug dealing must not be allowed to destroy people's security. Robust action is being taken this year to break the trend and combat organised crime. More resources than ever before have been invested in the Swedish Police in recent years. The upcoming budget will include further substantial reinforcements. More civilians can be employed, freeing up police officers for other duties. More future police officers can begin their training. Police presence will increase in crime-prone areas. Protection of emergency services staff will be strengthened. Penalties for vandalism will be tougher.

Terrorism must be defeated. The Swedish Police National Task Force will be able to receive foreign support. The Swedish Security Service will be given greater resources. Terrorist travel and participation in terrorist training have been criminalised. Additional measures against radicalisation and extremism are being taken.

We must come down hard on crime, and on the causes of crime. A new crime prevention programme is being drafted. A multiannual initiative to break segregation is being launched. Long-term unemployment must be beaten and housing segregation must be reduced. Support will increase for schools and preschools where conditions are difficult.

Mr Speaker,

From the time when I was a welder attending evening seminars in Örnsköldsvik to the present day, when I represent Sweden as Prime Minister at the World Economic Forum in Davos, I have followed the economic debate.

Universal welfare is unsurpassed when it comes to creating equitable living

conditions. But as globalisation intensifies, knowledge and security are also crucial competitive advantages. More and more people around the world understand the importance of equality for a growing economy.

For this Government it goes without saying that welfare is the priority rather than further tax cuts. The general government grants to municipalities and county councils will be permanently reinforced to the tune of SEK 10 billion.

The principle of public access to official documents and freedom of communication must apply in tax-financed welfare. Governance must draw on the skills of staff to the benefit of citizens and business. This is the starting point for the Government's trust reform.

A comprehensive initiative to turn around performance in schools is under way. Investments in schools have increased by more than SEK 8 billion.

More and more people are applying to teacher training programmes, which are now being expanded to tackle the teacher shortage. The quality of these programmes will be enhanced. The Teachers' Salary Boost will give around 60 000 teachers a higher salary. Measures are being implemented to ensure that more schools take in new arrivals. It will be obligatory for all education providers to offer holiday school in years 8 and 9.

The early years of school are a priority. Preschool and after-school care groups are now smaller. Support must be given at an early stage to pupils who are behind in mathematics or reading. Pupils who are ahead must be given new challenges. A reading-writing-arithmetic guarantee will be introduced. A major reading promotion initiative is being launched because reading is not only fantastic in itself - it is also the foundation of all other learning. Initiatives will be taken to ensure that schools are better at preventing bullying. More people are being employed in school health and welfare services.

The Swedish school system must offer high quality. Where you live or the school you attend must not determine your future. All schools must be good schools. In the first half of next year, the Government will receive proposals from the Schools Commission that will lay the foundation for clearer governance and a more equitable school system.

Health care needs to be modernised. A new regional structure and increased coordination of specialist health care services will guarantee equitable health care throughout the country. Staffing problems will be tackled through

increased government grants and the 'health care professionals billion'. Training programmes for nurses and specialist nurses have been expanded.

Higher staffing levels will both ensure better operational standards and improve working conditions for those employed in welfare services. Work environment initiatives are under way. Sick leave forecasts are now being revised downwards. The social partners have once again demonstrated the responsibility that is a cornerstone of the Swedish model. All the partners have committed to improving the work environment and bringing sick leave rates down.

It is a victory that a record number of people are able to celebrate their hundredth birthday. Sweden must be a welfare nation for older people, too. The shortage of accommodation for older people will be eliminated through more construction. A new form of investment support is being introduced. Elderly care will be reinforced through continued investment in more staff. The first step has been taken towards abolishing the unfair tax on pensions.

Society must step in to offer support to those children and young people who need it most. Social care for children and young people is being strengthened. Initiatives to combat mental ill health among young people are being given priority. Family policy is being developed because all children should have equal opportunities in life. Reforms for more gender-equal parenting continue.

The rights of LGBTQ people remain a priority. A review is under way to adapt parental insurance to contemporary families and modern working life. Efforts to consolidate the rights of national minorities continue. Sami self-determination will be strengthened. Sami culture and society will be safeguarded.

Competition for jobs is, and will remain, tough. Collective efforts to build our society must also create opportunities for people with relatively little education and people with disabilities. For this reason, more paths into the labour market are being created.

Areas with the most job opportunities should take in the most newly arrived immigrants. Modern temporary jobs in the public sector will be introduced. 'Extra jobs' will be developed so that more people can work in welfare services. Employment support is being adapted to make it more targeted. Wage subsidies will be improved so that more people with disabilities that entail reduced working capacity can find jobs. A new disability policy will be

presented. Efforts to combat discrimination are being strengthened.

Opportunities to engage in outdoor activities are being improved. Everyone should have access to the natural environment. Valuable nature areas are being protected and managed. More natural forests are being preserved. New marine reserves are being established. Ambitions are being raised for biodiversity. Support to both the sports movement and outdoor activity organisations is increasing. Public health efforts are being upgraded.

In many places jobs are in short supply, services are closing down and there is a feeling of exclusion or of having been forgotten. This is a dangerous trend. Throughout the country there must be good conditions for people to live and work.

Public services throughout the country must be improved, step by step. The expansion of broadband and mobile coverage will be strengthened further. Higher education will be expanded. The presence of central government agencies will increase. Municipal art and music classes, county theatres, museums, regional music institutions and libraries make it possible for everyone to access and participate in cultural life. Investments in art and culture are continuing. Support to cinemas will increase. School libraries can employ more staff. More children will have the chance to attend municipal art and music classes. Hundreds of thousands more people are visiting the national museums now that free admission has been reintroduced. Depopulation is being counteracted through favourable conditions for small businesses and a varied business sector. Strategic investments are being made in the important and growing hospitality industry.

Society is us, all of us. People and places, urban and rural, together.

Building our society encompasses all of us.

* * *

In the first two years of this electoral period, several parties in the Riksdag have concluded 15 important agreements, most recently concerning energy policy, new climate targets, and the entire economic framework. I would like to warmly thank all of you who have so constructively contributed to these agreements. Our cooperation makes Sweden stronger.

* * *

Sweden is part of the world, and the world is part of Sweden.

Now Sweden is being modernised, with new strides towards sustainability and growth, climate adaptation, equitable knowledge-based education and more jobs.

Now our international engagement is being strengthened at all levels.

Now investments are being made in the things that make our country both strong and secure. The Swedish model will not be dismantled: it will be developed.

This is taking responsibility for the future, for the world around us on which we are so dependent, and for a Sweden in which we stand together.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven on the shooting in Orlando, USA

Published 13 June 2016 Updated 13 June 2016

Statement, 13 June 2016

A brutal attack in Orlando, Florida, has shaken the United States and also shocked the Swedish people. More than 50 people have lost their lives. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families at this difficult time.

The brutality of the attack is further amplified by the fact that the victims were at a club for LGBTQ people. Together, we must combat hate, violence and terror and stand up for human rights.

Today I have sent condolences to President Obama and the people of the United States.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at European Parliament

Published 09 March 2016 Updated 09 March 2016

Strasbourg, 9 March 2016 Check against delivery.

President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, thank you for your kind invitation to be here today. Vice President of the European Commission, Kristalina Georgieva, members of the European Parliament, ladies and gentlemen,

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."

Many of you probably recognise the opening lines of Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*. He is describing Europe at the end of the 18th century – but he could just as well be talking about our own times.

We have weathered a winter of despair. Of terrorists and extremists attempting to attack our fundamentals. Of Russia continuing to try to move European borders using armed force. Of our union not being able to cope with youth unemployment, social hopelessness and the global refugee crisis.

But there are also some rays of hope in the world. The global climate agreement, the new sustainable development goals, and large parts of the African continent rising from poverty show that we live in a time when global cooperation can make a difference.

And the EU also has a chance at a spring of hope. Standing strong and united against external threats. Tackling common challenges with the collective strength required to resolve them. Clearing away the last ruins of the financial crisis and starting to build strong societies again.

I was born in 1957, the same year as the Treaty of Rome. My generation was given vast opportunities and had great hope for the future. To many of us, the world seemed to be ours to explore and to make into a better place.

I cannot see any greater duty than to give the same opportunity and hope to the young generation of today. And I know that the European Union can be a driving force to this end, if we stand up for three central values of our union: Democracy. Cooperation. And added value for our citizens.

Let me start with **democracy**.

We are currently strengthening our joint actions against terrorism following cowardly and appalling attacks against our society. Many of these actions are tough, but necessary. But the work to defend democracy is a much greater task.

Defending democracy is standing up for the safety of our Jewish citizens at a time when anti-Semitic threats, hatred and violence once again echo throughout Europe.

It is never accepting or spreading populists' and extremists' demonisation of Muslims, even if it scores cheap points with the electorate.

It is working for the rights of the Roma and of all minorities who are held back by prejudice and poverty.

Defending democracy is also defending free and independent media, freedom of reporting and freedom of the press, because we know that politics always benefits from hard scrutiny.

Defending democracy is respecting every person's right to meet, to be tried in free and fair trials, to move freely in society and to love whoever they want.

If we do not defend these democratic values, we will lose Europe as we know it.

That brings us to my second point, **cooperation**.

Rarely have so many people been displaced in the world as they are right now, but rarely have so few European countries stepped up and been prepared to act.

During a two-month period last autumn, Sweden took in 80 000 people at a rate that is equivalent to 25 million asylum seekers annually in the EU as a whole.

This brought our reception system to the brink of collapse and, in the absence of working European solutions, it forced us to take unilateral action.

The Schengen Agreement and the free movement it creates is a mainstay of the EU, and crucial for our economies.

But if we do not act, and act fast, we risk losing it.

I see a lot of words and plans to move forward, but far too little action. I urge all member states to take their responsibility.

It's time to act, to ensure control of our external borders, enhance our cooperation with Turkey on the basis of International law, implement the redistribution of refugees within the EU, fight human smuggling and strengthen our common foreign policy to put a stop to the causes of the refugee crisis.

We must move from chaos to control, otherwise we risk the future of European cooperation as we know it.

And looking ahead, it is time to admit that the Dublin Regulation is not working and must be replaced.

If we do not create a new, common and sustainable asylum system, more countries will be forced to act unilaterally, which will hurt mobility, trade and – most of all – the human beings who are fleeing.

Sweden will work for a new asylum system in the EU that is based on equal distribution, and in which asylum is sought in the EU – not in an individual country.

Quite simply, if we are to share an external border and have free movement between our countries, we must also share a system of asylum reception.

And I cannot see how countries that do not participate in the common asylum system can participate in Schengen cooperation either.

This is also clearly linked to my third point, **added value for our citizens**.

We have shown that we are ready to work hard to keep together, as we have recently done to help keep the United Kingdom within our union.

But the complaints against the EU all over our continent should not be brushed aside. They show us the dire need to emphasise that special something that keeps us together – the European spirit, the shared value of cooperation for our citizens.

We need to demonstrate the value of 28 countries and 508 million inhabitants joining together:

To address challenges such as climate change that no country can manage alone, in this time of global interdependence.

To create an even larger common market, in this time of global competition.

To generate greater security for our people, in this time of global unease.

But if EU cooperation is to truly gain the broad popular support that is needed to stand strong in the 21st century, we must have a union that works harder for the wellbeing of the people.

In a world where 62 people own as much as 3.5 billion people, we need a European Union that works for equality, and everyone's chance to pursue their innermost hopes for a good life.

This is why we need to build a social Europe that strengthens people through more secure jobs and living conditions and strengthens enterprises through more secure access to citizens with purchasing power. Because when people and enterprises are strengthened, economies grow.

In a social Europe, the EU is a prime advocate for good terms and conditions for everyone working in the union. Making sure that workers never are forced to compete against each other through lower wages or poorer working conditions. Ensuring that in a tricky world of global subcontractors, there is always someone who is responsible for ensuring that you are safe at work.

In a social Europe, the EU should work to unleash the energy in a growing labour force. If women were employed to the same extent as men in the EU, GDP could increase by 12 per cent by 2030. The EU must not only act as a sentinel for sound finances, it must also act as a driving force for women's entry into the labour market and a truly equal world of work. This is as

ethically right as it is economically smart.

In a social Europe, the EU should take a collective stand against the youth unemployment that is breaking down our economies and our societies' faith in the future. We should prioritise investments in education. Expand exchanges of European students between not only higher education institutions but also upper secondary schools. And create the jobs of the future for young people via social investment, ambitious free trade agreements and a digital internal market.

This is the kind of social Europe that can win the hearts of the European people.

The Commission's proposal for amending the Posting of Workers Directive and the development of the social pillar show that the work is finally and truly under way, which I welcome. Taking steps towards more decent working conditions and social progress is paramount. So let us continue onwards and upwards. Let us come together for a summit in Sweden in 2017, and draw up a strategy to move the idea of a social Europe forward.

For an EU that works hard for the size of the market, but even harder for the wellbeing of the people.

I see the European Parliament and the Commission as key actors on all these three issues.

I feel that in this hall and in this union, we carry the ability to create the same hope I felt in the generation of 1957, for the generation of 1997, 2007, 2017, and many generations to come.

Europe's winter of despair has been long and hard. But if we stand up for democracy when it is tested, if we cooperate and turn words into deeds to address the migration crisis, and if we create a social Europe that increases the wellbeing in people's everyday lives, then we will be able – in these best of times and worst of times – to create a new spring of hope in Europe.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at memorial for Olof Palme

Published 28 February 2016 Updated 28 February 2016

Kulturhuset in Stockholm, 28 February 2016 Check against delivery.

Friends,

It is wonderful to be here – I can't think of a better way to honour the memory of Olof Palme than talking about the future.

There is a classical satirical cartoon of Palme – one of the more sympathetic ones – in which he is dressed as Sisyphus, the Corinthian king from Greek mythology.

The one who was condemned to push a boulder up a hill, only for it to roll back down every time he reached the top.

And so there is Palme in his toga, with a boulder that is an enormous version of the 1969 and 1970 May Day slogan: "Greater equality".

And it is true, the work for an equitable future may appear to be a Sisyphean task. It has been rolled back down the hill not only by centre-right politics, but also by global developments that are often beyond national control.

Palme himself experienced the oil crisis in the 1970s, which was followed by the banking crisis in the 1990s and the global financial crisis in the 2000s.

Palme was also quick to see this development, and he often spoke of the modern world's "common destiny".

And today, nobody can be in any doubt as to how right he was. Everything concerns us all. Everything affects us all. Anyone who wants to effect change must look far and wide.

And at the moment, we see much that challenges our common global development.

We see impending climate change, war, terrorism and persecution, and in their wake we see the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War.

But at the same time, there are contrasting images.

I remember a time, around the turn of the millennium, when few, if any, believed that the UN's Millennium Development Goals could be achieved.

But poverty was halved – five years ahead of the deadline. Today, nine out of ten girls and boys around the world go to school. Maternal mortality has fallen. Child mortality has fallen.

And last year the world's leaders agreed on 17 new global development goals and a historic climate agreement, and the American magazine *The Atlantic* dubbed 2015 "The best year in history for the average human being".

Amidst the darkness, there are bright rays of light. And it is up to us to allow the light to penetrate.

For this reason, we are now raising Sweden's voice in the world, for equality and international solidarity, through a strong UN and a feminist foreign policy.

The right tries to call it Palme-nostalgia, but global cooperation for global equality is our best strategy for the future.

Palme understood this. More and more people understand it today. Now we are just waiting for the Swedish right.

And we see the same complex situation, with light and dark, at national level.

When Palme took office in 1982, the centre-right government bequeathed him a substantial budget deficit, dwindling competitiveness and high

unemployment. Something about that situation rings a bell...

The maintenance of Sweden has been neglected.

We see this in the insecurity, the unemployment, the lack of hope for the future, and the hate and polarisation that are sweeping forward in their wake.

But there is also another side to this. Since the last change of government in Sweden, some 80 000 more people have a job to go to, and many of these are young people who were previously trapped in long-term unemployment.

Exports are increasing, growth is increasing, and we now have the highest rate of growth in the Nordic region, and one of the highest in Europe.

There is light. There is vigour in the Swedish economy.
And with this vigour, we will begin to aim for an equitable future.

But therein also lies the central conflict in Swedish politics today.

Because there is an abundance of proposals that would mean we would – in Sisyphean style – see much of the Swedish efforts to promote equality wiped out.

The right are now coming out with ideas about reduced wages. Reduced social security. And sweeping cuts in welfare and education to fund further tax reductions to the tune of SEK 64 billion.

They promise positive outcomes. But quite honestly, I fail to see how lower wages, reduced welfare and weaker social safety nets are to give people greater faith in the future.

Insecurity cannot be combated through greater insecurity.

This is what the Swedish labour movement must take a stand on.

Of Palme's accomplishments I take with me his sense of confidence – fighting spirit – that stems from an awareness that another society is possible.

Naturally, taking in more than 160 000 people in one year has placed an

enormous strain on Sweden, and will lead to even more work in the future.

The task will definitely not be made easier by our having had years of under-investment, tax cuts and cutbacks.

But it is equally evident that the solution cannot be to cut off the strongest branch on which we are sitting, and get rid of the model that has made Sweden strong and cohesive.

This is why our work for an equitable future is also a fight for the Swedish model.

In these times of generalisations and false dichotomies, of 'either or', we must fight for a Swedish model that represents 'both'.

Both growth – through new innovations and new businesses – and justice – through new school initiatives and new social reforms.

Both rights – to welfare and security we can depend on – and obligations – to educate ourselves, develop ourselves, and work and do our share.

Both individualism – and the possibility to follow your innermost wishes – and solidarity – and the confidence that when you are at your weakest, our community is at its strongest.

This is the only way we can build an equitable future.

And even though the centre-right parties did everything in their power to delay it, the Government has now begun this new development of society.

With new investments in housing and infrastructure. Through a new education initiative with 50 000 new educational places. Through more teachers and elderly care staff. Better unemployment insurance, more secure sickness insurance, and stronger finances for pensioners.

And we will do more. To ensure that welfare is reliable. To ensure that school performance finally improves. To ensure that every adult in Sweden who is able to work can say: I am going to work now.

Step by step, we are launching real reforms that are the basis for "free and equal people in a society based on solidarity", which we declare to be the goal of democratic socialism in our party programme.

This is how we will advance efforts for an equitable future. It will not happen quickly. It will not be easy. But it will be done. Yes, we have grand goals. But the Swedish Social Democratic Party seldom has small ones.

And if we learned anything from Palme, it was also that society is different from the myth of Sisyphus. Nothing is predetermined. Our destiny is in our own hands.

Inequality is not a law of nature. It is man-made – and it can therefore be changed.

Fighting for an equitable future may often feel difficult. At times, the challenges increase. We may be knocked back and have to redouble our efforts.

But there are many of us to share the work, and we know what we want to achieve. And we are doing our best, Olof: we are doing our best.



Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Addis Abeba, 30 January 2016

Published 09 February 2016 Updated 09 February 2016

Check against delivery.

Prime Minister Hailemariam and other representatives of the Government of Ethiopia, African Union Commission Chairperson Dlamini Zuma, President of the AU, President Déby African Heads of State, Secretary-General of the UN Ban Ki-moon, Members of the African Union, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, Dear friends,

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to my colleague, Prime Minister Hailemariam, for this wonderful event, and the fine opportunity to speak to you all. It is a great honour to be the first Swedish Prime Minister to address the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, and a great privilege and pleasure to be back in Addis Ababa.

I was here a year ago and met with many of you. I was here again in July at the Financing for Development Summit. And now I'm back again. Addis is becoming like a second home to me, and due to the long, dark Swedish winters – I might need it!

As I return to Addis, I can see how fast things move around here! I am not only speaking of the new railway here in Addis, where Swedish consultants have been honored to play a part, but of the extensive and rapid development in general. In this sense, Addis is an example of Africa.

Great things are happening in many parts of this great continent. It makes me want to learn, listen, understand and bring back to our cold north the message of an Africa of inspiration, growth and opportunities. I will tell them about hard work. Ambitions for progress. Impressive growth figures. And –

not least – human development.

And my words will not fall on deaf ears. Your development has caught the attention of Swedish businesses, and many of them are ready to engage or expand in Africa. Emerging economies will soon drive the majority of the world's growth. I want my country to be part of that; I want us to increase our trade as equals, and share our future together.

And we will build that shared future on our shared history. Sweden's support for national independence and freedom from poverty and hunger has over the years evolved into a strong partnership.

We are partners in addressing regional and global challenges. We listen to one another. We share expertise. And we act. Together. This is why Sweden wants stronger cooperation between the AU and the UN. And why it is necessary to increase the African representation in the UN's Security Council.

One great and mutual commitment where we act, together, is the United Nation's Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

That's why I'm very glad that President Johnson Sirleaf, President Zuma, President Magufuli and President Caïd Essebsi, as well as other world leaders, have joined me in the informal high-level support group to mobilise strong political support for the important work of implementing the Agenda. Future generations will thank you.

These days are special to Swedish Social Democrats. It is almost exactly 30 years ago that our Prime Minister Olof Palme was murdered. Palme held his last speech at the People's Parliament against apartheid in Stockholm, just a week before he was murdered. Although his speech was filled with rage against apartheid, it also expressed faith. Faith in peace, development and justice. It expressed faith in Africa. It expressed faith in cooperation.

Today, I see this same faith and ambition in Africa's Agenda 2063 and its vision for Africa's advancement.

I am particularly happy to welcome the theme of the AU, the 'African Year of Human Rights with particular focus on the Rights of Women'.

I am inspired by the leadership on gender equality demonstrated by the African Union and in particular by you, Madame Dlamini Zuma. Together with President Kagame and President Mutharika, I am a champion for UN

Women's HeForShe campaign. I urge all men to join in – at work, in their home life and among their friends.

Together we can create a gender-equal society – it is as morally right as it is financially smart.

And I'm proud to say that Sweden, as a partner, will stand alongside you, in the fight against climate change and the quest to improve energy supply in Africa, in the promotion of better education and employment opportunities for young people, in the creation of better systems for migration, that are circular, safe and sustainable both for receiving countries and for those African nations who need their young and ambitious to develop their societies, and in the many more challenges we face together.

Our development cooperation will remain broad and reliable.

The future is always uncertain, but of one thing I am very sure: Sweden's solidarity, friendship and longstanding partnership with the peoples of Africa.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Addis Abeba, 30 January 2016

Published 04 February 2016 Updated 04 February 2016

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Prime Minister Hailemariam and other representatives of the Government of Ethiopia, African Union Commission Chairperson Dlamini Zuma, President of the AU, President Déby African Heads of State, Secretary-General of the UN Ban Ki-moon, Members of the African Union, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, Dear friends,

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want to learn, listen, understand and bring back to our cold north the message of an Africa of inspiration, growth and opportunities. I will tell them about hard work. Ambitions for progress. Impressive growth figures. And – not least – human development.

And my words will not fall on deaf ears. Your development has caught the attention of Swedish businesses, and many of them are ready to engage or expand in Africa. Emerging economies will soon drive the majority of the world's growth. I want my country to be part of that; I want us to increase our trade as equals, and share our future together.

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One great and mutual commitment where we act, together, is the United Nation's Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

That's why I'm very glad that President Johnson Sirleaf, President Zuma, President Magufuli and President Caïd Essebsi, as well as other world leaders, have joined me in the informal high-level support group to mobilise strong political support for the important work of implementing the Agenda. Future generations will thank you.

These days are special to Swedish Social Democrats. It is almost exactly 30 years ago that our Prime Minister Olof Palme was murdered. Palme held his last speech at the People's Parliament against apartheid in Stockholm, just a week before he was murdered. Although his speech was filled with rage against apartheid, it also expressed faith. Faith in peace, development and justice. It expressed faith in Africa. It expressed faith in cooperation.

Today, I see this same faith and ambition in Africa's Agenda 2063 and its vision for Africa's advancement.

I am particularly happy to welcome the theme of the AU, the 'African Year of Human Rights with particular focus on the Rights of Women'.

I am inspired by the leadership on gender equality demonstrated by the African Union and in particular by you, Madame Dlamini Zuma. Together with President Kagame and President Mutharika, I am a champion for UN Women's HeForShe campaign.

I urge all men to join in – at work, in their home life and among their friends.

Together we can create a gender-equal society – it is as morally right as it is financially smart.

And I'm proud to say that Sweden, as a partner, will stand alongside you, in the fight against climate change and the quest to improve energy supply in Africa, in the promotion of better education and employment opportunities for young people, in the creation of better systems for migration, that are circular, safe and sustainable both for receiving countries and for those African nations who need their young and ambitious to develop their societies, and in the many more challenges we face together.

Our development cooperation will remain broad and reliable.

The future is always uncertain, but of one thing I am very sure: Sweden's solidarity, friendship and longstanding partnership with the peoples of Africa.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven on Holocaust Remembrance Day

Published 29 January 2016 Updated 29 January 2016

Malmö Synagogue, 27 January 2016 Check against delivery.

Friends,

I would like to start by reading from an album that belonged to 16-year-old Ester Goldstein and which is full of messages from her family and friends. One message reads:

"Do good, enjoy beauty itself,
Love life, and don't be afraid of death,
Believe in God and a better future.

These words are written to you,
dear Ester, so that you remember Bella Lasso,
15 September 1942, Berlin."¹

This album was donated to Yad Vashem in Israel by Ester's cousin David. It is now part of an exhibition displaying albums that belonged to children in cities, ghettos and concentration camps during the war.

Some of these children survived the war years.
But Ester was deported to Riga.
Her friend Bella was deported to Auschwitz.
Both were murdered in the Holocaust.

And the exhibition has been named after the words that recur in various guises in so many messages and wishes in the albums.

It's called: "Don't forget me."

* * *

And one of my strongest memories from when I visited Yad Vashem in 2012 was when I entered the children's memorial.

It is a dark and silent room, but the darkness is broken by memorial lights that feel like they are as many in number as the 1.5 million children who were murdered.

And the silence is broken by a voice which reads the name, age and origin of each and every one of them. One after the other.

I will carry this memory with me for the rest of my life.

* * *

The name Yad Vashem comes from the Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament.

In it, the Lord talks about those who act righteously, and says:
"Even to them I will give in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name" – which is yad vashem in Hebrew.
The piece ends with: "I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."

I would like to thank you for having me here today to join you in carrying forward the memory of those who fell victim to the Holocaust, to continue to give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off, to say: "We will never forget you."

* * *

And the best way to honour the victims of the Holocaust is to combat the hatred we see in our everyday lives.

The Holocaust may be history, but the persecution of Jews is happening here and now.

Here in Europe, here in Sweden, here in Malmö, we are seeing anti-Semitic attacks against synagogues, against Rabbis, against women, men and children.

Abhorrent acts of violence, taunts, conspiracy theories, prejudices and threats.

And the terrible seriousness of these acts is emphasised by bloody terrorist attacks all over the world that are directly targeted against Jews and Jewish communities.

And the result is fear.

A fear of showing pride in one's Jewish identity, a fear of wearing a kippah or a Star of David, a fear that is even manifested in a desire to move to a different city or country.

This is a disgrace. A disgrace for all of Swedish society.

A disgrace that we all have to admit and free ourselves from.

This anti-Semitism cannot be met with anything other than zero tolerance. If we have learnt something from history, it is that we cannot, must not, will not yield an inch to the demonisation of the Jewish identity and the harassment and attacks that occur as a result.

You must be able to feel safe in your homes, in your communities, in our streets and squares that belong to us all.

Whether you gather in joy or sorrow, one thing must always be there: safety in your own country, Sweden.

Friends,

Jewish culture is an invaluable part of Swedish culture,

your history is part of all our history,

your future must be part of all our future,

and ensuring your right to live your lives in safety and freedom here in Sweden is an unwavering duty for our country.

So wherever and however anti-Semitism appears, it must be fought.

* * *

My Government is not starting from square one.

Former Prime Minister Göran Persson founded the Living History Forum and the systematic teaching of the Holocaust in Swedish schools.

Former Minister for Integration Erik Ullenhag did some very good, often excellent, work for the rights of minorities.

I would like to continue this work and expand it.

This is being led by Minister for Culture and Democracy Alice Bah Kuhnke and Minister for Home Affairs Anders Ygeman, but I also feel a personal responsibility for ensuring it succeeds.

Safety must be the focus.

State and religious communities are now working together to improve the safety of vulnerable communities and community premises, and the police have been tasked with working in closer dialogue with religious communities, both locally and nationally.

Religious communities can now also apply for a government grant for security staff and safety-enhancing measures – this is something I know was implemented after a dialogue with the Jewish Community here in Malmö.

The police have also received instructions about prioritising and combating hate crimes. The special groups against hate crimes in Malmö and Stockholm will be expanded, recruitment will soon be completed for a completely new group in the Western Region, and all seven police districts will now have the capability to deal with hate crimes.

These enhanced measures will be supported by a new IT centre which is in the process of being built, in order to target the crimes we see being committed online.

There is now a concerted effort under way in Sweden against violent extremism. Efforts to combat violent rightwing and leftwing extremist groups and Islamist extremist groups have been too fragmented and sporadic.

The national coordinator, Mona Sahlin, has received doubled resources to disseminate knowledge, prevent recruitment and radicalisation, and make it easier for people to defect.

In August, we also presented the new national strategy for preventing, thwarting and pre-empting terrorism, which strengthens the work of the Swedish Security Service and gives the Swedish Prison and Probation Service the task of stopping extremist recruitment in our prisons.

And a great deal of this work is being conducted in close cooperation with the opposition parties.

Safety must not be a bone of contention. We cannot protect ourselves

against everything, but together we must do all we can to protect ourselves.

* * *

But in the long term, safety is not built by guards, but by values.

It is created by cohesion and trust between people, by understanding for each other's history and culture, by an openness and joy about our individual similarities and differences.

Shneur Kesselman, who is the Rabbi here in Malmö and who has personally experienced terrible anti-Semitism in his day-to-day life, has on many occasions raised the need to work in schools so that the children who may be imbued with hatred from their home life or from the internet can encounter a contrasting picture and get on the right track.

I agree.

This is why the Living History Forum has been given a broader task – in addition to teaching about the Holocaust, it is also to conduct a major education initiative about intolerance, racism and anti-Semitism.

The Swedish Media Council is to extend and develop the No Hate Speech Movement campaign, which counters online hatred among young people.

The National Agency for Education is also to improve knowledge in Sweden's schools, train staff and produce support material so as to nip intolerance in the bud.

In addition, we are providing support to civil society organisations, such as the Swedish Committee Against Anti-Semitism, for training initiatives and visits to Holocaust memorials.

This national work is also being supplemented by all the local initiatives, such as investments in school visits, language cafés and dialogue forums, which have been organised here in Malmö.

Friends, the whole country must support this mission.

The battle against anti-Semitism, racism and intolerance is not a single project, not a one-off measure – it is an ongoing mission that we must pursue every day, every generation, in every part of our society.

* * *

And looking forward, I believe that one of the biggest tasks for my Government – and the whole of Sweden – will be to counter the growing polarisation of society.

Over the past decade, Sweden has been drifting apart. We are seeing greater differences between those who have a long and a short education, between rich and poor, between inner cities and suburbs, between urban and rural areas.

These differences also go deeper than they have for a very long time.

Changes in the media landscape mean that more and more people are selecting information that confirms their view of the world and does not call it into question.

Participation in democracy is decreasing and segregation between schools and residential areas means that few natural meeting places are created for people with different backgrounds.

So while the information age has given us fantastic opportunities to create understanding about other parts of the world, there are many people who do not have a clue about how their fellow human beings live just a few bus stops away.

* * *

This is dangerous. Very dangerous.

It is these social divides and this lack of knowledge about each other that extremist groups – be they rightwing extremists or violent Islamists – use to favour their own agenda.

And this is why we also need to counter ignorance and polarisation – in addition to investing in jobs, schools and housing that counter social divides.

We can do this by investing more in fighting intolerance and violent extremism, as well as in greater democratic participation, better education in terms of source criticism and the principles of citizenship, more meeting places across class divisions and a broader debate on what kind of society we want Sweden to be.

* * *

And I know that there is a broad will to tackle this work.

I have seen it in the demonstrations against racism, in the massive turnout following the Nazi attacks in Kärrtorp, in the anger, determination and hope in so many people's eyes.

I have seen it in the growing voluntary work, not least during the refugee crisis, in sports associations, in homework help, in the study associations that had more than 50 000 asylum seekers attending adult education classes last year.

I have seen it in the kippah walks, and when we formed a ring of peace around Stockholm's Great Synagogue, made up of young representatives of many different religions and groups, to say: if you attack one of us, you attack us all.

And I can see it here today.

Remembering the Holocaust and its victims has a central place in the defence of human dignity and democracy, as evidence of what can happen when humanity gives way.

And now as the survivors are getting older and passing away, the task for those of us still alive is all the more important. To carry the memories forward. To always keep a place of memory, a yad vashem, in our hearts. To talk about it, to each other and our children.

And to say: We know what happened.
We refuse to allow it to happen again.
We will never forget you.

¹ "Don't Forget Me" - Ester Goldstein's Personal Album



Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Key note by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven address at World Economic Forum Session "Operationalizing the Sustainable Development Goals" (SDGs)

Published 27 January 2016 Updated 27 January 2016

Davos, 20 January 2016 Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Bad news tends to dominate today's political agenda. We need to give these issues our full attention, of course, and find solutions.

But we should also feel encouraged. A few months ago, in New York and Paris, international leaders showed a common determination to take on the long-term challenges we face. I want to commend the Secretary-General of the United Nations for these tremendous achievements last year.

The 2030 Agenda adopted in September provides a solid platform for the policies needed to build equitable and sustainable societies. And to help ensure that the 2030 Agenda is not only adopted but also implemented, I have launched a High-Level Support Group with eight other world leaders to maintain the highest level political engagement.

The implementation of the global goals is also a high priority for the Swedish Government. And – I am pleased to say – for Swedish society. Swedish business, trade unions, CSOs and academia have been deeply engaged in the formulation and negotiations on the 2030 Agenda and are now preparing for its implementation.

Last Monday, I met almost 600 representatives of all sectors of Swedish society to discuss how we can best implement the 2030 Agenda. Let me take a minute to share with you some concrete actions we discussed.

Firstly, the Swedish Government has high corporate social responsibility ambitions. We have recently launched a National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights to better support Swedish companies' CSR efforts.

Secondly, we want to make greater use of public procurement to achieve the global goals. By enforcing sustainability requirements in public procurements, the Swedish contracting authorities will use their resources more responsibly. We are currently working on a National Procurement Strategy to clearly establish public procurement targets. A dedicated National Agency for Public Procurement has been established to provide support aimed at making procurements more sustainable.

My third example relates to environment policy. Sweden aims to have a fossil-free vehicle fleet by 2030 and, in the long term, to be powered by 100 per cent renewable energy. To speed up reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, a grants programme for local and regional investment to mitigate climate change was introduced last year. This will also create new green jobs.

We are now launching a national implementation scheme for the 2030 Agenda. It includes a designated national committee and specific assignments for a number of government agencies. We will invite municipalities, the business sector, trade unions, academia and civil society to contribute. For truly transformative results, early involvement of the local level is essential.

I look forward to exchanges of mutual learning about how to organise our work, both nationally and internationally. I believe that sharing best practices and concrete examples of collaboration, as we are doing here today, is the key to achieving great results for our countries, and thus for the world.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Opening remarks by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at World Economic Forum session "Sustainable Business – Advancing standards in global supply chains"

Published 27 January 2016 Updated 27 January 2016

Davos, 20 January 2016 Check against delivery.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We share a planet, we share a global economy – and we share an increasingly global labour market.

I am convinced that rights at work are fundamental prerequisites for the freedom of women and men. Decent working conditions are also key to sustainable businesses.

How can these rights and conditions be achieved? Through social dialogue between trade unions, employers and governments.

Let me give you an example.

The HIV pandemic has had devastating effects on working women and men and their families, and threatens fundamental rights at work.

In southern Africa, one important social dialogue project aims to prevent the spread of HIV and reduce its effects by informing workers in their workplaces. The main winners are the workers, whose improved health

means they can continue working. But the companies also benefit through increased productivity and reduced absenteeism. And society benefits too when health care costs fall.

Examples from my own country can also demonstrate the power of social dialogue.

In the early 1900s, Sweden was severely plagued by social conflicts, resulting in strikes and lockouts. We had one of the highest number of work days lost in the world. That changed when employers and trade unions struck a nationwide agreement in 1938, setting rules on how to conduct social dialogue and conflict resolution.

I hope that a new global concept can be developed where stakeholders join forces to promote joint solutions, while still representing their different interests. Each actor needs to pay attention to and take into consideration the aims and limitations of the others. This is what I call a Global Deal.

An approach of this kind can encourage cooperation between social partners. It could bring peace to the labour market, promote competition, and enhance inclusive growth and shared prosperity.

For states, a Global Deal implies promoting and respecting the ILO core conventions and ensuring the implementation of policies to promote productive employment and decent work. States should recognise the role of social dialogue in democratic governance and encourage concrete agreements through collective bargaining.

For employers, this means respecting these rights in practice, social responsibility and being prepared to negotiate locally, regionally or globally.

For trade unions, this means considering social responsibility when negotiating, but also contributing to the company's overall development.

A more equitable, sustainable and just world is not an altruistic objective but very much a shared interest of states, companies and workers.

I look forward to continuing working with ILO Director-General Guy Ryder and OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría to advance the Global Deal concept so that countries, companies and unions, like those represented here, can join in this effort.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at the launch of Sweden's action towards the Global Goals

Published 19 January 2016 Updated 19 January 2016

Stockholm 18 January 2016 Check against delivery.

Your Royal Highness,
Dr Nabarro,
Friends,

A very warm welcome to this launch of Sweden's action to implement the 2030 Agenda. It is particularly exciting to see so many here from so many sectors of society.

Because if there's one thing I know, it is that we get results when we work together – the business sector, trade unions, civil society, researchers, politicians and civil servants at all levels.

One of the success factors for the Global Goals and the 2030 Agenda is that so many have been involved in developing them.

This gives us strength as we move forward and begin to implement the goals.

Thank you for being here ready to take on this task. I very much look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas about the work that lies ahead of us.

Friends,

"A quiet life on the peak of a volcano is illusory. In today's world everything concerns everyone."

These were the words of Václav Havel, formulated when the Berlin Wall fell and the world was in upheaval. Gone was the stalemate of the Cold War and a new era of global cooperation began. It was a time when world leaders and countries came face to face with the completely new challenges and new opportunities that globalisation presented.

The decade that followed was a time when the major future global issues were discussed at a string of world conferences, not least the Earth Summit in Rio, the Conference on Women in Beijing, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and the Conference on Population and Development in Cairo.

And it was those efforts that resulted in the Millennium Development Goals.

And I know that at the turn of the millennium, there weren't many who believed that those goals could be achieved.

We were used to the United Nations setting important goals and visions but we were also used to careless implementation of the decisions that were taken.

But the prophets of doom were wrong. We have proved that it is possible to change and improve the world. When there is willingness, when global leadership is strong and when the opportunities globalisation offers are seized.

At the end of last year, the American magazine The Atlantic wrote that 2015 was "the best year in history for the average human being".

And much of what was reported there relates to the UN Millennium Development Goals. Poverty was halved – five years ahead of the deadline. Today, nine out of ten girls and boys around the world go to school. Maternal mortality has fallen. Child mortality has fallen.

Billions of people have gained access to clean water. A global middle class is emerging where every second person has access to a mobile phone.

Friends, the world is not worse. It's better.

But we live in paradoxical times.

Alongside positive developments we see deepening wars and conflicts, terrorist attacks, an ongoing refugee crisis and serious environmental and

climate threats. This adds to our unease.

And despite the huge progress that has been made 800 million people are still living in extreme poverty. Ninety million children around the world are still suffering from malnutrition. Women across the globe still have less power, and poorer access to the labour market and education.

A lot of work remains to be done.

It was with this perspective – of challenges and opportunities – that the world's leaders gathered in New York in September last year and adopted the 2030 Agenda and its 17 global goals.

And it was recognising our common destiny that we gathered in December and agreed on a new binding climate agreement.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has expressed it well. "We are the first generation that can eradicate poverty. And the last that can put an end to climate change."

And the work is not to be done by someone else, somewhere else. It has to be done by all of us together. The goals make great demands on all countries and all actors. It is my ambition to see Sweden take the lead.

And there are two reasons for this.

1. It is morally right.

We have a responsibility towards others, and not just ourselves here and now. We have a responsibility towards people all over the world, but also towards future generations.

2. But it is also economically smart.

I want Swedish companies to be the ones to develop the new technology and solutions that the world is crying out for to reduce carbon emissions. Our country will benefit from being at the forefront of climate adaptation.

Sweden's strength lies in being an egalitarian and gender equal society, which not despite, but because of its solidarity and tolerance, is rich, modern and a world development leader. This is the Sweden we are striving to build. This is the Sweden we believe in.

And I know that there are plenty of ideas and solutions in Sweden.

Just over a year ago, I met Mehrdad Mahdjoubi when he was named

Technologist of the Year. I'm sure you have heard of him. He has developed the world's most advanced and efficient shower system, saving 90 per cent water and 80 per cent energy, and the shower water is cleaner than ordinary hot tap water. In addition, he has succeeded in turning his innovation into a business idea and set up a company called Orbital Systems. It is now ready for a global launch.

Many Swedish companies are well ahead. Scania and Volvo, working tenaciously for a low-emission green transport sector. H&M, one of the world's largest users of organic cotton and working for workers' rights.

There are more examples: Ericsson's digital solutions, ABB's development of smart grids and IKEA's goal to produce its own renewable energy and make it easy for us ordinary people to live greener lives with LED lights and solar panels.

I could go on because this is what I think is really exciting – when jobs are created through innovations that are turned into business ideas and reach new markets.

Sustainable business models give Swedish companies a competitive edge. This is Sweden's future. This makes a difference – in Sweden and in the world. And this creates jobs and growth.

Let me give you another example of leadership. Malmö – a municipality that has made the global goals its own. You are showing the way both on innovative environmental efforts and proposals to reduce health inequalities. And there are many more municipalities making important investments in sustainable development – Karlstad, Örebro, Lomma, Östersund and Borås to name but a few.

We have to take advantage of all the available knowledge and experience.

Three government ministers have particular responsibility for implementation. Minister for Public Administration Ardalan Shekarabi, Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin and Minister for Strategic Development Kristina Persson.

The Government will soon appoint a national delegation to facilitate and stimulate implementation. It will be tasked with producing a national action plan.

We will be assisted by a large number of government agencies that will

contribute their knowledge, such as SCB, which will help to develop indicators for the follow-up. This will make our work and the results concrete.

But what is most important is all of you here today, the breadth that you represent and the engagement you bring. Your knowledge is essential. Your work is crucial. We will do this together.

And what a historic opportunity to be a part of this process and make a difference.

We have a long to-do list. Let's get started.

Once again, a warm welcome to you all.



Speech

Statement by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on developments in Israel and Palestine

Published 06 December 2015 Updated 06 December 2015

Developments in Israel and Palestine are deeply troubling. October and November were the bloodiest months in more than a decade in Israel, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. In a situation where violence and hopelessness are increasing and the rhetoric is becoming more strident, it is even more important to uphold dialogue and diplomacy as our foremost tools.

Against this backdrop, it is unfortunate that statements on the situation in the Middle East by representatives of the Swedish Government are misunderstood and blown out of reasonable proportion. The most recent misunderstanding concerns the interpellation debate in the Swedish Riksdag on Friday. The Minister for Foreign Affairs did not, as alleged, say that extrajudicial executions occur in Israel; she talked in general terms about principles of international law concerning the right of self-defence and the importance of the principles of proportionality and distinction.

The situation in the Middle East is difficult enough without having to be encumbered by misunderstandings about anybody's intentions. And it is unfortunate when strong reactions are based on false premises.

The Government completely rejects violence against civilians. All acts of terrorism are despicable and must be universally condemned. We seek good relations with both Israel and Palestine. This includes our desire to deepen

and develop our relations with Israel.

The Government's support for a two-state solution in the Middle East peace process is based on the aim that Israel and Palestine will be able to live side by side in peace and security. Israel's security, and our bilateral relationship with Israel, are fundamental components of our commitment to the peace process. We in Sweden seek to be a friend to both Israel and Palestine, while expressing ourselves clearly on issues where there is disagreement.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at COP21

Published 30 November 2015 Updated 30 November 2015

30 November 2015, Paris. Check against delivery.

Mr President,
Mr Secretary-General,
Your Majesties and Royal Highnesses,
Distinguished colleagues and delegates,

I am an industry man. I started my working life as a welder. I know first-hand that with the right foresight, industry can bring about change, massively and fast.

In fact, the industrial revolution is what brought us here today. It gave us unprecedented wealth and growth. But it was also the starting point for an economy built on coal and other fossil fuels, and for unsustainable global warming.

We are gathered here today to accelerate a new green industrial revolution that will be ever as transformative as the one 250 years ago. But this time change must be global, it must build on renewables, and it must be just.

But just as before, change will be guided by innovations. The solar cell, combined with smart energy storage, might very well be the ‘Spinning Jenny’ of our time.

Winners will be societies at the forefront – not those that wait until the last minute. So I have set an ambitious goal for my country: Sweden will be among the first fossil free welfare nations of the world.

It is not only a matter of climate-altruism – it is also in our best economic interests. I want Swedish companies to develop the new emission-reducing products and innovations that the world is asking for. This will create jobs and export revenues.

Being a rich country, we have a head-start. Consequently, it is our duty to support those countries that did not cause the emissions, but are most vulnerable to its effects. Sweden is strongly committed to showing leadership. We remain the largest per capita donor to the Green Climate Fund. In addition, we will make substantial new contributions to the Adaptation Fund and to the Least Developed Countries Fund.

Altogether, Sweden is here to enter into an ambitious, fair and durable agreement. Our main priority is to keep global warming as far below two degrees as possible.

So let us not see Paris as an end, but as a beginning. Let us continue to raise the level of our ambitions. And let us be guided by this core belief: global climate action will not hold humanity back – it will propel us forward.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven on Paris attacks

Published 14 November 2015 Updated 14 November 2015

Today Sweden mourns with the people of France.

The terrorist attacks we witnessed last night reek of a vile hatred and contempt for the value of human life.

We think of the victims and their families, the parents who have lost their children, the children who have lost their parents, the lives that will now never be lived. These are terrible hours for Europe.

* * *

One Swede has died, and we have received reports that another Swede has been shot and injured.

We are in touch with their families, and I want them to know that my sympathy, and the sympathy of the entire Swedish people, is with them. Our hearts are with you. The French authorities are still working, of course; this work is ongoing, so we do not yet have all the official answers.

* * *

Paris is a city many of us hold dear, as a symbol of exuberant culture, joy and freedom. An attack on Paris is an attack on Europe, on the free and democratic world.

Sweden stands side by side with France in solidarity at this time, and we have let France know that we stand ready to give them the support that is needed, for which they themselves express the need.

* * *

Today I convened the security policy council. The members of the council were briefed by the National Police Commissioner and the head of the Swedish Security Service, and I have passed on this information to the leaders of the other parties in the Swedish Riksdag.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has updated us on its consular activities to support Swedes in Paris. The Ministry also advises Swedes in Paris to follow developments closely in the media and to listen to the advice of the French authorities.

The Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs will also be convened in the next few days.

* * *

Today is a day for mourning, it is true. But also a day for resolve.

President Hollande has reported that these deeds were carried out by the terrorist group that calls itself the 'Islamic State'. And this group has indeed claimed responsibility. They also recently claimed responsibility for a horrific attack in Beirut, and carry out summary executions, rapes and torture in Syria and Iraq.

The Government has recently announced its intention to extend Sweden's training operation for the Kurdish forces that are fighting ISIL. And what has happened now reinforces the need for the entire international community to come together to oppose and combat this abhorrent sect.

* * *

EU foreign ministers will meet on Monday to discuss this. Sweden also believes that the EU should meet urgently at ministerial level to discuss the consequences of what has occurred, and determine what measures will be taken in the short and the long term.

* * *

Sweden has also recently taken clear steps to intensify its efforts to prevent, preempt and protect against terrorism, under the leadership of Minister for Home Affairs Anders Ygeman.

The national counter-terrorism strategy aims to

- counter radicalisation and recruitment to extremist and terrorist groups,
- reduce the capability and opportunity to commit terrorist attacks,
- maintain protection for individuals, and
- reduce the vulnerability of society to terrorist attacks.

This work is under continuous development. Measures are now being taken, for example, to prevent the misuse of Swedish passports. The Swedish Security Service will receive an increase of SEK 225 million in its appropriations up to 2018 to step up its counter-terrorism efforts. And legislation to make recruitment to, organisation of and financing of terrorist activities criminal offences will be in place by the end of the year.

These efforts are at the heart of the responsibilities of the Swedish state. The events we witnessed last night underscore the importance of intensifying and coordinating this work throughout the country.

All societies are vulnerable, but Sweden must persist in its work to reduce our vulnerability, independently and together with others.

I see this as one of my foremost responsibilities as Prime Minister of Sweden.

* * *

I would also like to speak directly to all those who feel afraid and worried right now. We are living just now in a time when we see an incredible amount of human suffering.

I, and the Government I lead, will work indefatigably so that you can feel safe and secure.

If you are wondering what you can do at this precise moment, you can do something as simple as to show your solidarity with the people of France in any way you wish. They need the support of the whole world.

And in these times, the most important thing of all is to remember and stand up for the values that are our beacon in the dark. Sweden is and remains a society that believes in democracy, freedom and equality between people. Terrorism can never shake these values, nor shall it ever do so.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Stefan Löfven at the Valletta summit on migration

Published 12 November 2015 Updated 12 November 2015

11 November, Valletta, Malta. Check against delivery.

Mr President, esteemed colleagues. I speak as the leader of a migrating country.

Many Swedes spend part of their lives outside Sweden, many young people see the world as their working place, and half of all graduated economy students have studied abroad. People travel and move all over the world. And they come back home again, bringing new ideas, new contacts and business opportunities. That's why we should facilitate circular migration, and lower the cost of remittances. That's why regular migration is key. And that's why migration can be one of the strongest imperatives for development.

I thank you all for being here today to decide a path forward for that imperative to be shared by Europeans and Africans alike.

The current global refugee crisis is a long way from this positive vision of migration. People are fleeing for their lives, and a great many lives are being lost at sea.

The right to seek asylum is a cornerstone of international law, but the refugee situation in several countries in Europe is becoming unsustainable.

This includes my own country. 10 000 people seek asylum every week in Sweden. That would correspond to half a million people seeking in asylum in the EU on a weekly basis. This has put us under severe pressure, and we are reaching our maximum capacity for migration. This is not a sustainable situation.

And even though this is a great challenge for many European countries, the

challenge is even greater for many African countries. We are seeing people put their lives in the hands of smugglers, who do not always place great value on a human life.

You are losing your young and your educated, those who should be building your societies for the future. That's why we're all in this together. That's why our cooperation is so crucial. We can only fight the root causes of the migration crisis together. We need cooperation that creates greater opportunities for studies, secures decent work and shared prosperity in all parts of Africa, and brings hope to the young.

Therefore, Sweden will be a founding and contributing member of the EU Emergency Trust Fund, as a part of our long lasting development partnership with the entire region.

We need cooperation that enhances capacity-building, protects children in mixed migration flows and reaps the positive economic rewards of migration.

And in order to achieve this, a credible policy on irregular migration and return is a must, because return arrangements and readmissions agreements remain necessary parts of a functioning migration system.

In short: We need cooperation for a migration that is both sustainable and safe – and out of free choice, not forced choice.

The path towards that goal is a long one. But this makes the steps we take today even more important. So let our work not merely result in words on paper, but also constructive action for many days to come.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Opening address by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Nordic Council thematic debate

Published 29 October 2015 Updated 29 October 2015

Reykjavik, 27 October 2015 Check against delivery.

Mr President, Esteemed Colleagues, Nordic Friends,

They travelled towards the north-west. They came from different countries, fleeing from conflicts, from oppression, from poverty and starvation. Many of them had only what they could carry, and had to try to build a new life for themselves and their families.

That is how this beautiful country was founded – the country we today call Iceland. That's why there is no better place to gather to discuss the greatest challenge currently facing the Nordic countries – the global refugee crisis.

We are all aware of the situation. Escalating wars, conflicts and oppression, combined with greater opportunities to move between countries, has produced the largest number of refugees since the Second World War.

All the Nordic countries have seen increased refugee flows, and my country now estimates that in 2015 alone, up to 190 000 people may seek asylum in Sweden. We have filled our refugee centres, hostels, old school buildings and public premises. Preparations are now being made for housing in tents.

People in Sweden have taken on the responsibility with immediate empathy. We have seen heinous, racist acts of violence, murder and arson. But Sweden's greatest contribution is defined by the struggle against racism, fundraising and volunteer work, resolution and humanism. We are proud of this.

The Swedish Government is also working around the clock to support municipalities, social workers, teachers and the police – who are doing a fantastic job – through national coordination, new legislation and increased resources. But in recent weeks, it has become clear that the Swedish reception system is nearing the limit of its capacity.

We previously fought for a more equal distribution of refugees across the EU, and we now request that Sweden be part of the EU's relocation scheme, so that people who apply for asylum in Sweden can be resettled in other EU countries.

Sweden will also apply for EU funds for the large number of refugees we have received. No one can doubt Sweden's humanitarian commitment, but our capacity is also limited. All countries must now take their full responsibility.

The time has come to acknowledge that refugee reception is facing a paradigm shift – from being a national issue to being an international issue. We in the Nordic countries must safeguard our openness to the world around us. This is – and will remain – one of our countries' greatest strengths. We must safeguard the right of asylum. It is a human right, and a right that we all want to know would apply if war one day came to us.

And the best way to safeguard both openness and the right of asylum is to have orderly and regulated immigration that does not give rise to shadow societies and that has broad public support.

And, in turn, the best way to safeguard orderly and regulated immigration is through the even distribution of refugee reception in Europe – and in the Nordic countries. It is therefore time for all Nordic countries to take their responsibility to enable an even distribution.

At the same time, we must take action against the causes of the refugee crisis. We must focus on efforts to create stability and security in the Middle East. This requires statebuilding, counter-terrorism activities, democratic development, water resources management and combating climate change. In these areas, the Nordic countries can make significant contributions.

We have extensive experience of mediation. That is why, in addition to helping in the fight against ISIL, we should also intensify our efforts to support Staffan de Mistura's peace mediation efforts in Syria and the creation of an international contact group consisting of key actors. We must

also clearly call for a stop to Russia's bombing of the armed opposition. There is no military solution to the war in Syria, only a political solution.

We are also prominent development cooperation partners. For example, next year, Sweden will launch a five-year regional strategy for the Syrian crisis. The strategy focuses on improving people's life chances in Syria and its neighbouring countries through their ability to provide for themselves, combatting sexual violence and enhanced capacity for statebuilding. But its impact naturally depends on the combined contributions of all actors – what we do together.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the face of all global challenges – whether they involve refugee issues, peace-making or the transition to a sustainable world – all countries must step up and take their responsibility.

And we do this in the Nordic region, guided by the principle that has always characterised our cooperation. We may be strong on our own – but we are always strongest when we stand together.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Stefan Löfven at Stockholm City Hall

Published 19 October 2015 Updated 19 October 2015

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Stockholm, 19 October 2015
Check against Delivery.

Madam President, President of the Stockholm City Council, Mayor of Stockholm, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, friends,

I would like to extend my warmest thanks to the President of the City Council [Eva-Louise Erlandsson Slorach] and the Mayor of Stockholm [Karin Wanngård], for hosting this lunch in this remarkable building – the City Hall – one of Stockholm's most famous landmarks.

This is where the Nobel Prize Banquet is held on the 10th of December every year to honour the laureates for their outstanding discoveries, innovations and achievements. Brazil and Sweden are proud partners in innovation, science and research. Madam President, your visit is a testimony to our joint ambition to strengthen our bilateral cooperation in these fields. Stockholm is a small city by Brazilian standards – but one of the fastest growing cities in Europe. It attracts by virtue of its beauty, good services, but also by virtue of being innovative.

Your visit is an expression of our mutual ambition to expand our cooperation. One important aspect of this is our people-to-people relations – and not least, sports. I myself never miss a sports event if I have the time.

We have an Olympic year coming up and I am convinced that Rio de Janeiro will do a fantastic job of hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2016. I will follow it, rest assured.

Today, I am very pleased that athletes from the Swedish Olympic and

Paralympic national teams are joining us. I am sure they are very excited about the experiences that await them in Brazil. We are all looking forward to their achievements in Rio next year – and to ever closer ties with Brazil.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Stefan Löfven at Business Forum

Published 19 October 2015 Updated 19 October 2015

Stockholm, 19 October 2015 Check against delivery.

Madam President, Ministers, CEOs, business partners, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to welcome President of Brazil Dilma Rousseff to Stockholm today. It is a testimony to the close friendship between our Governments and nations.

I have had the privilege of visiting Brazil many times, most recently for President Rousseff's re-inauguration ceremony in January.

In my previous role as a trade union leader, I saw first-hand how important Brazil is as a partner for Swedish industry. Our partnership with Brazil is of the highest priority for my Government and this is also why our Minister for Enterprise and Innovation, Mikael Damberg, chose to visit Brazil in May with a large delegation.

We have a long-standing partnership. Swedish enterprises have been doing business in Brazil for decades, some even for a century. Others are new to the Brazilian market. All of you here are part of the broad bilateral relationship we enjoy today.

Former President Lula described our mutual interests well when he said that Brazil and Sweden complement each other: Sweden, a modern, international and knowledge-based economy and Brazil, a resource-rich, dynamic, emerging market and a platform for the rest of Latin America.

Let me focus on three key aspects of our bilateral relationship: trade, innovation and sustainability.

The global economy brings new opportunities and new challenges. Sweden is an exporting country and we will strengthen our position in the global market with a new and active business policy. We have recently presented an export strategy that will help boost exports and enhance the participation of Swedish companies in the global economy. It will also help attract investments to Sweden.

Open, predictable and transparent trade and investment regimes are key. Goods and services are no longer made in one country and shipped to another. Rather, goods and services are increasingly 'Made in the World'. Brazilian aircraft company Embraer and Swedish car manufacturer Volvo Cars are good examples of this.

I see great potential for trade between our countries. I would also welcome more Brazilian investments in Sweden. Swedish investments in Brazil have increased over the past few years and now amount to USD 4.5 billion. Stockholm is a business and financial centre and serves as a regional hub for many foreign companies. It can also serve as a springboard to the rest of Europe.

The President and I meet today to renew and strengthen the strategic partnership between our countries.

The Gripen agreement on joint development and production of 36 new generation fighter jets creates a lasting bond between our nations. This strategic project will deepen and broaden our relations across the board and have positive spin-off effects in other areas.

Innovation is one such area and it is high on my agenda. Our ambition is to make Sweden a world leader in the development of innovative products, services and business models through joint efforts by all relevant stakeholders. This is at the heart of the new National Innovation Council, where I meet with business, academia and civil society. Our competitiveness depends on our ability to create and make practical use of new scientific discoveries. In short: our capacity to innovate. Continuous innovation and adaptation to new circumstances have made Swedish companies globally competitive over the years. Today, the world is moving into a new industrial era where digitalisation will play a fundamental role. Last year, Stockholm was ranked as the city in Europe with most billion-dollar start-ups, and per capita second only to Silicon Valley as the birthplace of successful internet

companies. The importance of digital innovation cannot be overestimated and new digital solutions will be essential for industrial competitiveness. This is an area where we should explore future Brazilian-Swedish cooperation.

Innovation is about finding smart solutions to everyday problems. However, innovation is also about finding solutions to the major challenges of our time and being able to transform them into goods and services in the global market. Swedish companies should be the ones developing the innovations that the whole world is asking for at a time when we need new and better solutions to reduce emissions. It is good for the climate – and it is good for business.

With the challenges of climate change and the UN Climate Conference in Paris in mind, I would like to emphasise the importance of seeing sustainability as a driver of innovation and development.

A couple of weeks ago, Sweden launched a high-level support group for the implementation of the sustainable development goals in New York. I appreciate President Rousseff's engagement in the group with nine heads of government. However, if we are to achieve the goals, your involvement – private sector involvement – is crucial.

To attract investments and develop advanced products, a country needs a solid knowledge base. Today, we are pleased to welcome Brazilian students to Swedish universities. We are also strengthening our cooperation in research and development.

The rapid transformation of society will make the development of people's skills increasingly important. We can see that companies working proactively to promote diversity and gender equality have a stronger culture of innovation and perform better.

New ideas often arise and evolve when stakeholders with different backgrounds and skills meet.

I hope that today's Business Forum will stimulate new ideas and a productive dialogue on how business can both enrich and benefit from the privileged relationship between our countries.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Address by the Prime Minister at the 70th UN General Assembly

Published 30 September 2015 Updated 30 September 2015

New York, 30 September 2015. Check against delivery.

Mr President, Mr Secretary-General, Fellow Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sixty years ago, UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld said these simple words, summarising our task here today:

“The United Nations is an expression of our will to find a synthesis between the nation and the world, [...] to serve the world by serving our nation, and to serve our nation by serving the world.”

We will never forget Dag Hammarskjöld’s life, and we welcome a new resolution examining his death; but now, more than ever, we need to ensure that his idea of international solidarity lives on.

The current refugee situation is a global crisis, a global responsibility, and now also a global crisis of responsibility. The UN system, and all leaders of the world, need to come together to ensure that those fleeing from war and repression are treated in a safe, orderly and dignified way.

We should dramatically increase the number of resettlement places, expand legal avenues for migration, and base all our efforts on the principle of non-refoulement and the right to seek asylum. And it is extremely urgent that all countries of the European Union treat the people seeking refuge in the Union in a spirit of humanity, solidarity and shared responsibility.

Sweden will do its share. We are the largest per capita receiver of asylum seekers in Europe, and we are increasing our funding to UNHCR, which is in dire need of more resources. But this is something no country or continent can tackle alone. It’s time for us all to step up and solve this crisis. It is not

only our task. It is our duty – in the serving of our nations, and of the world.

To solve this crisis, we also need to stop the horrors in Syria. Extrajudicial executions, sexual and gender-based violence, atrocities that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity cannot be tolerated by our international community.

Sweden supports the efforts to secure humanitarian assistance for the Syrian people. We stand behind Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura's proposal to form working groups with Syrian participation to put into operation the Geneva Communiqué. To support this process we want to see an international contact group comprising key international and regional actors. And time is of the essence. The Security Council and its major powers must shoulder this responsibility. This bloodbath must end.

Meanwhile, other conflicts should not be forgotten. A seven-year-old child in Gaza has already lived through three wars. Peace talks need to be resumed so that the State of Israel can live alongside a democratic, coherent and viable Palestinian State. Sweden has recognised the State of Palestine. We want to see a more equal relationship, to pave the way for the two-state solution that Israelis, Palestinians and a broad international community view as the right path to peace.

Sweden will also step up efforts for peacekeeping and crisis management.

We are contributing civilian personnel to missions in South Sudan, Afghanistan, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Middle East, and we have sent military personnel for the UN Stabilisation Mission in Mali and the international coalition to combat ISIL.

We stand ready to contribute to future UN missions and are continuing research on developed doctrines and methods for peacekeeping, to share within the UN.

Working to keep the peace also means following through on our mutual promises of disarmament:

- to pursue legal, practical and technical solutions to fully rid our world of its remaining 16 000 nuclear weapons;
- to finally destroy what remains of other inhumane arms, such as biological and chemical weapons;

- to realise the Arms Trade Treaty; and,
- to fight the spread of small arms and light weapons, including ammunition.

If we sway from these goals, humanity will suffer for our faults.

And if peace is more than the absence of war, peacebuilding is more than the direct prevention of military conflict. Lack of resources, rising sea levels and natural disasters have already wreaked havoc for women and men living in vulnerable states. Climate change can work as a conflict multiplier, threatening peace as well as our chances of achieving all of our Sustainable Development Goals.

We need a course of action to create a low-carbon and climate-resilient world economy. We must protect land and ocean ecosystems. It's not a choice, but a necessity for survival. The world must reach a fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement in Paris in December, which over time keeps the rise in global temperature as far as possible below two degrees Celsius.

And Sweden will play its part, becoming one of the first fossil-free nations in the world, and having no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050. We will be strong financial supporters of the Green Climate Fund and international climate action, to support adaptation and transfer of technology on a global scale.

The coming decade will also need to see major investments in the schooling, higher education and professional training of our young.

We need fair and equal societies, where the just contributions from those who have, finance the giving of knowledge and power to those who have not.

This is a foundation for peace that is too precious to neglect. And this is closely connected to the potential of gender equality. The barring of women from power and public debate, from work and education, from their human right to decide over themselves, including their bodies, reproduction and sexuality, is a global disgrace. It is time to once and for all get rid of structures that discriminate against and belittle people, on whatever grounds.

It is time to fully realise UN Security Council Resolution 1325, granting women their crucial role in peace and state building. It is time to see sexual violence as one of the most destructive weapons of all and to fight it with the full force of the international community.

And new times demand a new mindset. As several leaders of island countries have told me: “We’re not a small island nation, we’re a large ocean state”. To fully grasp the potential of the new world economy, we need to remove old colonial prejudice and false conceptions of large and small, North and South, East and West.

We should welcome and enhance the transformation and expansion of the global economy through free and fair trade, and create a Global Deal for decent work, while also working to free about 160 million child labourers and end modern slavery.

Sweden is taking concrete measures to maintain political support at the highest level for our common Agenda 2030, and we will continue to allocate 1 per cent of GNI to official development assistance. For me, words that are not followed by actions are not worth being spoken.

But the challenges for the international community also show the dire need for a strengthened and reformed UN. Sweden contributes resources, but we also want to contribute reforms. We want to make the UN more effective, transparent and fit-for-purpose. We will work to strengthen cooperation between the UN and regional organisations, not least the African Union.

Dear friends,

In 2017 it will be twenty years since Sweden last took a seat on the Security Council. Over the years, we have stood by those fighting for independence and dignity, and against repression, colonialism, apartheid and inequality. We now seek your confidence to champion the perspective of small and medium-sized states, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

We will strive tirelessly for a Council that can respond swiftly to the security challenges of our time; a Council that is more representative, transparent and effective. A reformed Council must reflect the realities of today, with adequate representation of Africa, Asia and Latin America, and we support efforts to limit the use of the veto.

And although we see distress, we also see hope. The agreement on the Iranian nuclear issue was indeed a victory for the idea of diplomacy and shared efforts creating shared progress. Our decision on the new Sustainable Development Goals will, if thoroughly implemented, have the chance to form another landmark in human history. And the upcoming climate summit in Paris will give us the opportunity to act: late,

but hopefully not too late.

Sweden is fully committed to these tasks. We believe that international solidarity is the first and foremost foundation for our shared peace and prosperity. International cooperation is the only way to transform this solidarity into substantial change.

2015 must be the essential milestone for global development and for future generations. So let's create that milestone, serving our nations – serving the world.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Address by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at the Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism

Published 29 September 2015 Updated 29 September 2015

New York, 29 September 2015. Check against delivery.

Mr President, (Prime Minister al Abadi), Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking the United States for its leadership in countering ISIL.

The efforts of the Coalition to defeat ISIL must be complemented by solutions to the underlying political problems in Syria and Iraq.

In Syria, the root causes of the civil war and ISIL are political. A durable solution needs to rest on a political settlement. It is crucial that the UN efforts to find a peaceful solution are firmly backed by the international community. Let me be clear: in view of the unspeakable atrocities the Assad regime has committed, it cannot be a partner in the struggle against ISIL.

The immediate humanitarian needs in and around Syria are immense. Sweden is doing its share with 230 million US dollars in humanitarian support, including to Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. But more is needed. I commend Kuwait for its humanitarian leadership in this regard.

Just as in Syria, Iraq's difficulties can only be overcome by political means. Military and stabilisation efforts in Iraq must be underpinned by an inclusive political process of national reconciliation. Prime Minister al Abadi has taken bold steps in this direction. The international community must support him.

In addition to Sweden's extensive assistance, and military training in northern Iraq, I am pleased to announce today that it is my Government's intention to make a substantial contribution of 4 million US dollars to the UNDP Stabilisation Fund for Iraq. My country's commitment to Iraq is strong - bolstered by the special relation we have with 2% of Sweden's population having roots in Iraq.

We need effective tools to prevent radicalisation. Democracy, human rights and equality are crucial components. Civil society organisations, religious leaders, social workers and teachers are examples of those who can make a difference on the ground. My Government recently adopted a national counter-terrorism strategy, with a special focus on prevention of radicalisation and recruitment.

The widespread and systematic brutality of ISIL and other groups, such as Boko Haram, against women and children is unacceptable. Gender equality is fundamental in preventing violent extremism in the long run. We need to find ways to enhance the role of women in countering violent extremism and terrorism. Sweden is ready to be part of such efforts.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Global Leaders Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment – A Commitment to Action (UN Women)

Published 27 September 2015 Updated 27 September 2015

New York, 27 September 2015. Check against delivery.

Co-chair, Excellencies, friends,

I am proud to lead the world's first Feminist Government, guided by the principle of international solidarity. Today, we all commit to the accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the achievement of gender equality no later than 2030, as set out in our new Agenda.

Gender equality can only be achieved if all social, economic and legal barriers to women's and girls' empowerment are removed. Gender equality is a fundamental matter of human rights – but it is also smart economics. By offering one half of our populations the same opportunities as the other half, we can double the talent pool and unlock enormous potential for prosperity.

And we know that actions do speak louder than words. Therefore, my Government is stepping up its actions to achieve gender equality this year: We will ensure that our national policies and national budget allocations contribute to gender equality. And we will ensure that our development and humanitarian aid is gender-sensitive across all areas of cooperation and support.

Fellow feminists,

The Beijing Platform for Action and the new 2030 Agenda are powerful action plans for equality, development and peace.

In this spirit, Sweden is taking action to strengthen women's contribution to peace and security: We will develop a network of women mediators, which within two years will be ready to assist peace efforts wherever they occur. The aim of this initiative is, however, not only to develop our own capabilities, but more importantly also to cooperate with female mediation networks from the global south.

We know that women's participation at all levels is vital to the success and sustainability of peace processes and peacebuilding efforts. Proactive leadership is needed to promote and include women.

In a world where women are dramatically underrepresented in peace negotiations and four out of ten peace agreements collapse within ten years, we need to act differently. For this generation, and for generations to come.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech at Global Citizen Festival

Published 27 September 2015 Updated 27 September 2015

New York, Central Park, 26 September 2015. Check against delivery.

I'm glad to be here, and proud to represent Sweden and the first feminist government in the world.

In a world where the 80 richest people own as much as half of the global population, we need to be dedicated to the hard work to end poverty, driven by the idea of international solidarity, and determined to achieve equality for all.

And access to sanitation, especially, is crucial for global equality, and for the rights and needs of women and girls.

So as a feminist, I make this pledge: Over the next 15 years, Sweden's 10 million inhabitants will support efforts to improve access to sanitation for 60 million people throughout the world.

Our country may be cold – but our hearts are warm. Our population may be small – but we will do our part for the greater good.

And I would like to thank you all for not being bystanders; thank you for showing that the spirit of citizenship can be global, and thank you for doing your part in the fight for human dignity.

Together, we will make a difference.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

The Prime Minister's speech at the roundtable discussion on economic growth and decent work

Published 26 September 2015 Updated 26 September 2015

New York, 26 September 2015. Check against delivery.

Thank you, co-chair.

I would like to address one crucial precondition for achieving inclusive and sustainable growth, and that is decent work for all, women and men, including for young people and migrant workers.

Decent work is crucial for each individual worker. But ensuring labour rights is very beneficial for responsible employers. Decent work increases productivity, competitiveness and economic stability. It creates a win-win-win situation – for workers, for employers and for societies.

As an example, I can give my own society, where independent and strong social partners have helped build one of the most innovative and equal economies in the world.

This relationship between sustainable development and decent work has been established in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and in the 2030 Agenda.

That's great. But how do we move forward and transform these affirmations into partnerships and policy actions? My answer is: through joint action between governments, trade unions and employer organisations. And to this end, I have proposed the concept of a Global Deal.

For states, the Global Deal concept means ratifying and respecting the ILO's core conventions, including the right to organise, the right to negotiate and

the right to strike, and recognising social dialogue as an essential part of the democratic form of government.

For employers and companies, it means respecting these rights in practice, taking their social responsibility and being prepared to negotiate agreements locally, regionally or globally.

For trade unions, it means cooperating and bearing in mind their social responsibility when they negotiate, but also contributing to the overall development of the company.

This Global Deal concept does not require new institutions. The ILO has a central role in promoting decent work globally. The OECD plays a leading role on the issue of inequality and economic growth. The World Bank, the IMF, the WTO, the B20 Coalition and ITUC can all play important roles as well.

The Global Deal is a concrete approach, a method, which would contribute to reaching SDG 8, also in Sweden. My Government has developed a national action plan for business and human rights, which includes a call for Swedish companies to engage in social dialogue, wherever they are operating in the world. I look forward to discussing the concept of a Global Deal here today.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech at the UN Sustainable Development Summit

Published 26 September 2015 Updated 26 September 2015

New York, 26 September 2015. Check against delivery.

Mr President, Mr Secretary-General, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

I was a foster child. Ten months old I arrived by train to my new parents in the northern part of Sweden. I had the good fortune to be taken into a loving home and to be brought up in a society where the legacy from the past does not prevent a good future, a society where people take responsibility – not only for themselves but also for others.

The 2030 Agenda carries that same shared responsibility. It is grounded in the firm belief that poverty can and should be eradicated, that climate change can and must be stopped, that equal societies are better societies – and the foundation for a better future for all of us.

We have a new roadmap – it is universal. No country can shirk its responsibility. But governments' efforts alone will not be enough. Efforts are needed at all levels, across all sectors, and by all stakeholders.

That's why Sweden has launched an initiative with 9 world leaders in a high-level support group to bolster momentum for the implementation of the agenda.

The mission ahead of us as a global community is not only morally right, it is also economically smart. Because equality and development are two sides of the same coin.

When we promote gender equality, talent and strength are released.

GDP grows when more women work. Skills are unlocked when all girls and boys go to school.

We cannot afford to hold half of the population back. All legal, social and economic barriers to women's and girls' empowerment must be removed. When we promote decent work for all, competitiveness will increase.

Some say that this is a contradiction in terms. I say it is a win-win-win situation. A win for employees. A win for employers. And a win for our societies. With decent work that respects fundamental labour rights, we can increase both productivity and inclusive growth.

When we develop new solutions to reduce emissions, we will stop climate change and in doing so create new jobs.

My goal is for Sweden to be among the first fossil-free welfare nations, and I want Swedish companies to develop the climate-smart innovations that the world is asking for.

Our development cooperation will help to break the link between development and fossil-fuel dependence. We remain the key donor to the Green Climate Fund. We stay true to the goal of one per cent of our gross national income to ODA.

What we need now is determination and start fulfilling the goals. And in doing so we all gain something more. We return to the true purpose of society: to grant all girls and boys the simple things that I once was granted. A fair chance, an equal education, a decent job – a free life.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfvens address at the launch of the High Level Group on the implementation of the global sustainable goals

Published 26 September 2015 Updated 26 September 2015

New York 25 September 2015. Check against delivery.

Your Majesty, Your Serene Highness, the President of the General Assembly, Mr Mogens Lykketoft, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr Jan Eliasson, Excellencies, Colleagues, Friends,

It is a great pleasure to have you all here this evening.

If there is one thing I've learned in life – from working on a factory floor, in unions in Sweden and internationally, and in politics – it is this:

People might not have the same values, the same ideology or the same outlook on life. But if they are willing to listen to each other, they almost always find that they share common goals.

And if they decide to work together towards those goals, side by side, they can achieve almost anything.

I believe that this summit expresses precisely this idea.

But, our actions will speak louder than words.

We need high-level political leadership to ensure that we keep up the momentum when this meeting is over.

This is why I have asked the leaders of eight other countries to join me in a political initiative for effective implementation.

Together, we will pledge to actively support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and we will encourage other world leaders to do the same.

We come from different backgrounds and we have different views on many things.

But we have come together, our goals are set, and we are determined to work side by side to achieve them.

As Nelson Mandela said: “It always seems impossible until it’s done”.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Statement of Government Policy

15 September 2015

Published 15 September 2015 Updated 15 September 2015

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, The Riksdag, 15
September 2015

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses,

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of the Riksdag,

What should our blue and yellow flag symbolise?

In the face of increasing polarisation and widening unease, we need to rally around what kind of Sweden we want to be.

What do we want to tell our children and grandchildren about the society they are growing up in?

What do we want to say when we are abroad and are asked about our country?

What do we want Sweden to stand for?

I believe in a Sweden that we build together, that is more than just a gathering of people in a geographic area – a community where we feel responsible for each other.

Where people's engagement and desire to work is what makes our society strong. Where we welcome people fleeing from war and oppression.

Where no one is left behind and no one is held back.

An open Sweden, where we strive to have the most advanced high-tech

companies, world-leading cutting-edge research and environmental technologies, as well as to be the most gender equal and egalitarian country in the world.

Because a cohesive and solidarity-based society is a prerequisite for a rich and prosperous country.

Sweden should be a country busy at work. Investments are now being made in new housing and infrastructure, in entrepreneurship and in educating and training people for employment. This is what will drive down unemployment.

The significant needs of Swedish schools are now being met through investment in the teaching profession, more staff, smaller classes and an equitable education system. This is how learning outcomes can be improved.

Climate change adaptation is now being accelerated because it is essential for the future of the planet and because it enhances our competitiveness and quality of life. This is how we are taking the lead on climate action.

This is our common project for the future.

This is how we are building a Sweden to be proud of.

Over the last parliamentary year, the parties in the Riksdag have entered into a number of important agreements. We now have broad consensus on the budget process, defence, arms exports, school grades, press subsidies, home loan amortisation requirements, military operations in Mali and Iraq, and ongoing effective collaboration on the pension system. This is a strength for our country. The cooperation Government would like to thank all those who have played a constructive role in these agreements.

Mr Speaker,

The security situation in our part of the world has deteriorated.

Russian aggression and the destabilisation of Ukraine pose the most serious challenge to the European security order since the end of the Cold War. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea is a violation of international law. Borders must not be changed by force. Our support to Ukraine, both political and economic, will continue.

A modern total defence is being developed to respond to the challenges presented by the changing security policy situation. The cross-party agreement lays the foundation for the future direction of defence. Defence appropriations will be increased. Sweden's military capability will steadily increase. At the same time, our international cooperation is deepening. Swedish-Finnish cooperation is of particular priority. Sweden's non-participation in military alliances continues to serve our country well.

A broad initiative is under way to shape a policy for Sweden's security. The threats to our security are evolving and complex. Contemporary threats include terrorism, cyber vulnerability, epidemics and climate change. A number of parties are invited to take part in this work.

Sweden's candidacy for the UN Security Council is a concrete expression of the Government's desire to take on greater responsibility for peace and security. Sweden will promote active conflict prevention and early responses. Efforts to end ongoing wars and conflicts must be intensified. To achieve a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine, direct negotiations must begin.

Humanitarian operations must also be reinforced and made more effective. Sweden continues to be one of the world's largest humanitarian donors. We must be a strong voice in the world for freedom, peace, human rights and solidarity.

The war in Syria continues to cause immense human suffering. The Government condemns the Assad regime's far-reaching attacks against civilians and the barbaric acts committed by ISIL. The systematic violence perpetrated against women and children is particularly horrifying. More than 250 000 people have lost their lives. To reach a political solution, more pressure must be brought to bear on the Assad regime and the states that support it.

Sweden wants the EU to focus on playing a greater and more active role, in dialogue with countries in the region, and to constructively support the UN Special Envoy for Syria. Sweden wants to see an international contact group formed, comprising the United States, Russia, regional partners and the EU, to support UN efforts. And time is of the essence. The Security Council and its major powers must shoulder responsibility if this blood bath is to end.

Millions of people are fleeing from the war. More countries must do more to offer people protection. Sweden is increasing its support to the UNHCR relief operations on the ground. Rescue operations in the Mediterranean continue. Legal routes for people to seek asylum must be available.

Sweden stands up for the right of asylum. In times of crisis, this is more important than ever. Those fleeing war and oppression must be able to obtain protection in Sweden. Those without grounds for remaining must leave. Immigration in Sweden is regulated.

Responsibility for asylum seekers must be shared. In the EU, between the EU Member States. No country must be allowed to shirk its responsibility. And in Sweden, between the municipalities. No municipality must be allowed to shirk its responsibility.

Many people today are making important contributions. Teachers who are doing their utmost to give children a new start in Sweden. Football and bandy coaches who welcome new players to join the team. Volunteers who are helping with homework. This is how today's newly arrived people, just like those who once fled the dictatorship in Chile or the war in the Balkans, can more quickly become a part of our community and help to build Sweden. These are contributions that the Government applauds.

I will be convening a national action, 'Sweden together', to ensure more effective introduction. Municipalities, regions, civil society, the sports movement, religious communities, authorities, the business community, trade unions and others will be invited to develop the best solutions for successful Swedish reception.

The situation in many municipalities is strained. A major initiative is therefore being taken to ensure swifter introduction. Municipalities will be given increased resources to improve the teaching of Swedish for adults and education for children and young people. Central government compensation for reception of newly arrived immigrants will be significantly increased. Compensation for unaccompanied children and young people will be adjusted to make it more predictable and cost-effective.

All adults coming to Sweden must be able to find work and do their share. Swedish language instruction will begin at asylum centres. More will be invested in validation to more quickly identify people's skills. A fast track to the labour market is being developed.

This will enable people who have fled war and persecution to start a new life. This will make Sweden better prepared for demographic change. This will transform present-day challenges into an asset for Sweden.

Anna Lindh once reminded us of why the EU was originally created:

"Through economic cooperation and casual interaction, states that for generations had fought against each other were to prevent armed conflict in Europe. War is unlikely between countries that are interdependent – economically, socially and politically."

The refugee crisis, the economic crisis in Greece and the upcoming referendum in the UK pose a range of challenges to the European Union. Sweden is working for a strong and cohesive Europe that creates more jobs, increases gender equality and adopts an ambitious climate policy. Equal pay for work of equal value in accordance with laws and agreements in the country of employment is a principle that must apply throughout the EU. As a result of a Swedish initiative, several countries are now pushing to ensure that freedom of movement cannot be used to circumvent national laws and collective agreements. This is how a citizens' Europe can be created – a Europe that shows its worth in everyday life.

Mr Speaker,

Hard work lies ahead of us.

For several years, Sweden's productivity and competitiveness have fallen. The deficits in central government finances have grown. Unemployment has risen. Gaps have widened. School performance has declined. Environmental efforts have been accorded lower priority.

But efforts to reverse these trends have now begun. Our goals are ambitious. Employment and hours worked will increase to make Sweden's unemployment rate the lowest in the EU by 2020.

Responsible economic policy is the foundation. Keeping public finances in good order is a prerequisite for more jobs and sustainable welfare financing. Short-term tax cuts must take a back seat to long-term investments. The deficits will be tackled.

Step by step, the employment target will be achieved through Sweden's new

job agenda. The agenda has three parts.

The first consists of future investments.

A major housing policy initiative will be carried out.

Investment support targeting small and energy-efficient apartments will be introduced. A special stimulus will be introduced for rapid construction of more student housing. A construction bonus will be given to municipalities where new housing is built.

Railway and road maintenance will be increased throughout the country, from north to south.

Infrastructure investments leading to more housing, better freight transport and reliable commuting will be given priority. Investments will increase by more than 40 per cent by 2019.

Sweden will be one of the world's leading research countries.

During the year, a new research bill with a ten-year perspective will be prepared.

Climate adaptation will accelerate.

Environment and climate technology investments to strengthen companies' innovative capacity will be expanded. The 'Climate leap' investment support will target actions that have the greatest effect on climate emissions.

The second part of Sweden's new job agenda is an active business policy for more and growing companies.

A reindustrialisation strategy will be drawn up.

Industry-related research will be developed. Sweden will become a more attractive country for investments in modern industrial enterprise.

Government venture capital will be reformed to support innovative companies throughout the country.

Companies in start-up and growth phases of development will be given priority. The National Innovation Council has so far identified three collaborative programmes in life sciences, environmental and climate

technology, and digitisation.

A modern business policy will create jobs throughout the country.

The forest – ‘green gold’ – will contribute to more jobs and be used sustainably. Work on a national forestry programme will continue. Sweden’s potential as a destination for ecotourism and nature-based tourism will be used to advantage. A food strategy will be drawn up to increase production throughout the food chain and meet the demand for organic food. A regional reform will be prepared. Major investments will be made in broadband expansion. Support to basic commercial services in rural areas will be increased.

An export drive will be launched.

Exports will be facilitated for small and medium-sized enterprises. Sweden’s presence in growth markets will be strengthened. A coordination function, Team Sweden, will streamline and strengthen the State’s export promotion. An export strategy will be presented during the year.

Free and fair world trade will be promoted.

Negotiations between the EU and the US on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) will continue. The most ambitious outcome possible must be achieved, without jeopardising workers’ interests, environmental protection, or human and animal health. The agreement must respect democratic decisions.

The third part of Sweden’s new job agenda involves investments in job matching and skills.

There are 375 000 unemployed people in Sweden. At the same time, there are more than 80 000 vacant positions.

This is an enormous waste. Efforts to improve job matching and make use of all skills will now begin. No one’s desire to gain an education, improve their skills or progress in their career should be squandered.

A new adult education initiative will be launched, offering 50 000 new educational opportunities in 2016. More people will be given access to vocational higher education, folk high schools, higher education, and municipal vocational and adult education. In 2017, all adults will have the right to municipal adult education to complete upper secondary school and

qualify for higher education studies.

No young person should be condemned to long-term unemployment.

Young people should study or work. Sweden's municipalities are now set to provide young people under the age of 25 with education, work or work experience within 90 days. Trainee jobs and education contracts will be expanded.

Phase 3 will be wound down.

Labour market policy should not lead people into an occupational dead end. 'Extra jobs' will be introduced. Long-term unemployed people will be given the opportunity to study while retaining activity support.

Procurement must be used strategically.

It should be a requirement that long-term unemployed people be given a job or work experience. The Swedish Transport Administration is the first government agency to be given this task.

Participation and employment opportunities should be available to everyone, regardless of functional capacity.

Subsidised wages will be expanded. New jobs at Samhall will be opened up. Support to disability interest groups will be increased.

Through Sweden's new job agenda, the Government will invest in housing, infrastructure, research and climate. Cooperation will increase for more and growing companies. Steps will be taken to ensure effective labour market matching in Sweden. Everyone can – and must – contribute their strengths.

In a Sweden to be proud of, everyone who is able to work will do so.

Mr Speaker,

Many of us remember a special teacher.

A teacher who explained things that were hard to understand and challenged you when you were ready.

A teacher who expected great things of you and helped you achieve them.

A teacher who noticed you.

Teachers are key to reversing the trend in schools. But they cannot do it on their own. It will require hard work – from us as a society, and from all pupils and parents. The Government will focus on three areas: boosting learning outcomes, increasing equity and enhancing the attractiveness of the teaching profession.

Early action will be given priority.

Preschool groups will be made smaller. More staff will be employed in compulsory school to give teachers more time for pupils and to make primary school classes smaller. After-school care will be strengthened. More special needs teachers will be employed. A school development project will be developed to give teachers basic special needs tools. This is important, not least for children with neuropsychiatric impairment. A reading-writing-arithmetic guarantee for the early years will be drawn up.

Resources to schools will be allocated according to need.

Homework support and holiday school will be given to those who need it – not just those who can pay for it. Special initiatives will be undertaken in schools where conditions are difficult. Resources will be increased to municipalities that receive children seeking asylum. Head teachers will be bolstered in their role as educational leaders.

The quality of teacher training will be improved.

SEK 3 billion will be provided on an annual basis to increase teacher salaries. The national action for the teaching profession will continue. Digitisation of national tests and fewer administrative duties will give teachers more time for pupils.

Mental ill health will be combated.

No one should have to suffer discrimination, bullying, or other abusive treatment. This applies both at school and on the internet. Pupils must feel well to perform well. Racism and sexism must be combated. School health and welfare services will be augmented. Swedish schools must be safe and secure.

In a Sweden to be proud of, every child will flourish.

Mr Speaker,

More than 1.1 million square kilometres of Arctic sea ice have vanished. This is equivalent to the combined area of Sweden, Finland and Norway. Climate change is upon us. It is serious and it affects everyone – those of us living now and future generations.

Climate change can be curbed if we want to do so. Global warming must be kept as far below two degrees as possible. The threat of climate change is the critical issue of our time. Global greenhouse gas emissions must be halved by 2050.

The Government wants to take a climate leap that accelerates the transition to a more sustainable society.

By taking responsibility for our climate impact in Sweden, we will demonstrate leadership in the global arena. Investing in climate change adaptation will create new Swedish jobs.

Sweden will become one of the world's first fossil-free welfare countries. Emissions will be reduced at the rate necessary for globally sustainable development. The transition must be effective and provide long-term rules. Trains should be faster than cars and cheaper than air travel. A climate policy framework will be prepared.

Climate efforts require global leadership.

"We are the first generation that can put an end to poverty. And the last that can put an end to climate change."

These are the words of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. World leaders will meet in Paris at the end of the year to adopt a new climate agreement. Sweden is pushing for the most ambitious agreement possible. Development cooperation must contribute to a transition from fossil-dependent economies. At the same time, poor countries' resilience must be supported through climate change adaptation. Sweden will continue to be one of the main donors to the UN Green Climate Fund.

Sweden will also take a leading role in implementing the new UN Sustainable Development Goals. Poverty reduction, environmental and climate action, and peacebuilding go hand-in-hand. Sweden will lead the way with a coherent policy that takes into account the perspective of poor people, human rights and planetary boundaries. Work to meet the new Sustainable

Development Goals in Sweden will commence.

Sweden will have a fossil-free vehicle fleet.

Conditions for green cars will improve. New support will be introduced for electric buses. Investments in charging infrastructure and biogas will be enabled. The super green car rebate will be strengthened. The effect of environmental taxes will increase. New public transport will be enabled through urban environment agreements. Initiatives will be introduced to encourage more people to cycle.

The energy transition will continue and climate-smart housing will be encouraged. Cross-party cooperation in the Commission on Energy is crucial to creating a long-term energy policy.

Investments for 100 per cent renewable energy will lead the way. Ambitions will be raised. This will create impetus for technological development, economic development and jobs throughout Sweden. Electricity certificate system goals will be raised. Support to marine-based wind power will continue. The million home programmes will be upgraded and made energy-efficient.

Sweden will lead the way in environment action. The planetary boundaries must be respected. The environmental objectives must be met. Biodiversity, a toxin-free everyday environment and a healthy marine environment will be priorities.

The bar will be raised for biodiversity and ecosystem services. Initiatives for the protection and management of valuable natural habitats will increase. More natural forests will be protected. More marine reserves will be established. Opportunities for people to engage in outdoor activities and spend time in nature will improve. The appropriation for outdoor activity organisations will be increased.

Children should grow up in an environment free from toxic substances. The precautionary principle, the substitution of hazardous substances and the polluter pays principle are the basic premises. Phasing out chemicals that are harmful to people and the environment creates incentives for better alternatives. When EU regulatory frameworks are insufficient, Sweden will lead the way.

The foundation will be laid for a circular, bio-based economy that

contributes to the achievement of the environmental objectives. What is waste today will become a resource, inspiring new business opportunities. Hazardous toxins will be phased out of ecocycles. Materials will be reused to a greater extent.

The Government's Future Groups will provide long-term idea and policy development, combining competitiveness and job creation with ecological sustainability and social development.

In a Sweden to be proud of, we will take climate responsibility for future generations.

Mr Speaker,

Honourable Members of this assembly,

Do you know the story of Bridget? That fantastic picture book by Pija Lindenbaum about the girl who gets lost in the woods and comes across a pack of grey wolves? It is a tale about a little girl who finds great courage.

Few things are as important or as simple as reading to children. It can open up whole new worlds. The role of the school library in fostering young people's ability and desire to read will be promoted. Resources will be provided to increase staffing in school libraries.

Society is reflected in its arts and culture, which offer us a deeper understanding of ourselves and the age in which we live. Arts and culture should be available to people in their neighbourhood. Children's artistic creativity will be given priority. Free admission to state museums will be introduced. Resources will be given to cinemas in rural areas.

Additional resources will be injected into the sports movement to provide greater opportunity to engage in sport. Special measures will be taken to strengthen the sports movement's role in the introduction of new arrivals.

The Sami have special status as Sweden's indigenous people. The Government intends to increase Sami influence and participation, and will reinforce the role of the Sami Parliament.

Sweden must be a secure country in which we stand united. The insecurity and barriers caused by violence, hatred and crime must be forcefully

combated.

The fight against serious organised crime is intensifying.

Swedish Customs has been instructed to give priority to combating arms smuggling. Attempt, preparation or conspiracy to commit gross firearms offences will be criminalised. Targeted initiatives will be carried out in the most affected areas. The local police presence will increase. Recruitment to criminal gangs will be reduced through preventive measures. Defector support will be reinforced.

Preventive action to combat domestic violence will be strengthened.

Government grants for activities supporting victims of violence will be increased. Sexual offences legislation will be reviewed to strengthen the position of crime victims in the legal process.

Terrorism will be prevented, thwarted and preempted.

Travel to participate in terrorist wars will be criminalised. Passport abuse will be stopped. More effective tools will be put in the hands of law enforcement authorities. New resources will be injected into the Swedish Security Service. Collaboration will be enhanced between the police, customs and coast guard. Civil society preparedness must increase to meet new security threats.

When prejudices spread and hatred grows, when refugee centres are attacked, when Roma are assaulted and camps set on fire, when Jews, Muslims and Christians are attacked for their faith, and when LGBTQ people are met with hatred – this is when we must stand up for the equal rights and dignity of all people. The battle for democracy must be won and won anew. Each one of us shares this responsibility in everyday life.

A national plan to combat racism and hate crime will be drawn up. Preventive action to counter violent extremism will intensify. A national research programme on racism will be set up. Information security will be enhanced, and work to combat internet-based crime, abuse and threats will be intensified.

In Sweden, everyone must have the right to be exactly who they are. This must be a place that is safe for everyone, regardless of gender, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual

orientation or age.

Europe cannot accept anti-Roma sentiment. It is the responsibility of each Member State to ensure that its citizens are not discriminated against and to safeguard their social rights. Charity is not the way out of poverty. No one should have to beg on the streets. The solution is education and jobs.

An agreement to promote job opportunities and social security in the country of origin has been concluded with Romania. Talks with Bulgaria are under way to achieve the same goal. Law and order in Sweden will be upheld. Illegal settlements on public or private land will not be permitted. Hate crime must never be accepted.

Mr Speaker,

The gaps in Swedish society today are too large.

There is a five-year difference in life expectancy between those with relatively limited education and those with higher education. Elderly people are at risk in understaffed elderly care. This is not how our country should be. Insecurity and gaps are holding Sweden back.

The universal welfare system is unsurpassed at levelling out living conditions and creating security. Cutbacks will now be replaced with new investments. Our public funds must be used for their intended purposes. Staff knowledge and skills must be utilised. Let the professionals be professionals.

A commission for equitable health has been appointed.

People's health must not be determined by their socioeconomic status. The goal is to end avoidable health inequalities within a generation.

More resources will be injected into health care to ensure higher quality.

Initiatives will be implemented to improve cancer care. Mammography screening will be free. Maternity care will be improved. Resources will be provided to reduce mental ill health in young people. A women's health initiative will be launched.

The financial position of pensioners will be improved.

Tax on pensions will be reduced as a step towards equalising the taxation of pensions and wages. The tax gap will be closed entirely for pensioners with the lowest incomes. The housing supplement has been raised. Investment support for more housing for older people will be introduced. Staffing in elderly care will be increased. Work on a national quality plan will be launched.

Gender mainstreaming of all our policies is under way.

Women and men must have equal power to shape society and their own lives. The world's first feminist government is now implementing policies that increase equality between men and women.

Family policy will be strengthened so that all children are given equal opportunities in life.

The basic level of parental insurance will be raised. A modern parental insurance system will be designed that is adapted to today's labour market and serves the diversity of family forms, including non-nuclear families. A third month will be reserved for each parent.

An initiative will be launched to improve social care services for children and young people.

Society's protection of its most vulnerable is provided by a network of people, often social workers, who have long laboured in obscurity.

Fraud in welfare systems will be combated.

Work will begin to tackle the abuse of personal assistance services and subsidised employment. The welfare system must be protected from economic crime. A new anti-fraud delegation will be appointed. 19

A powerful package of measures will be drawn up to curb the rise in sickness absence rates.

No one's work should make them sick. A new work environment strategy will be presented. The maximum time limit for sickness insurance will be removed. Sickness insurance must lead people back to work, not into poverty.

Unemployment insurance will be improved.

The ceiling has been raised. Work is being initiated to ensure that more people are able to qualify and sign up for such insurance. A legislative proposal will be presented to stop the abuse of fixed-term employment contracts. Financial security leads to people having a positive outlook on change in the workplace. This is good for both the individual and for Sweden's businesses.

Mr Speaker,

We have begun our journey towards a society that stands united and where people are there for each other.

Step by step we are laying the foundation for a Sweden where more jobs are created and unemployment declines. No one will be left behind. Nor will anyone be held back. Because a society based on solidarity is also a successful society.

Step by step we are creating a school system in which our children are learning more. Each child is being challenged and is receiving the support they need. Because we know that an equitable school system leads to better learning outcomes.

Step by step we are raising our ambitions in climate policy. Because there is no other way forward if we are to curb climate change. And we know that this will prepare Sweden for the future.

This is what our blue and yellow flag should symbolise.

Together we are creating a Sweden to be even more proud of.



Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at World Water Week

Published 24 August 2015 Updated 24 August 2015

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Folkets hus in Stockholm Check against delivery.

President Loeak, Prime Minister Ensour, Ministers, Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to deliver the opening remarks at the 25th anniversary of the World Water Week. The impressive programme reflects the accomplishments that you have made.

I am always proud to welcome international guests to Stockholm: Beauty on Water, the Venice of the North. One third of the city is water. And the water is so clean that you can catch fresh fish in the middle of the city, just a few minutes' walk from here.

But it has not always been like this.

150 years ago not everyone had access to clean water. The surrounding lakes were polluted by waste and emissions from the local industries. People had to walk a long way to get clean water.

In 1927, an annual swimming contest, Riddarfjärdsimningen, had to be cancelled because the water was so polluted that it was a health hazard.

Let me mention a few milestones:

- In 1850, after a cholera epidemic, Stockholm started to build water pipes to improve hygiene.

- In 1861 Stockholm inaugurated the first water plant.

- In 1930 the first water treatment plant was built and from then on water – and life in the city – improved.

Because development goes hand-in-hand with access to clean water.

The story of Stockholm's water tells us several things: that water is key to development and health, that new technologies and innovations for water management have created jobs and growth. And it will continue to do so because of the growing demand for water but also for new smart solutions.

The most important lesson is that better living conditions, city life, industries, public transport, and a growing population need not result in water pollution.

Today, in Stockholm, we have safe, and excellent tap water. And we can take a swim in Riddarfjärden.

Even so, our job is not finished. We face new challenges in Sweden, such as emerging pollutants, pharmaceuticals and chemicals and the effects of climate change with heavy rainfalls and floods.

Water management remains a fundamental part of a modern society.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am fully aware that not all cities and countries have the water resources that Sweden has.

In ten years' time one third of the world's population will be living under water stressed conditions. With the world population projected to grow from 7 to 9 billion, the need for fresh water will increase by more than 50 percent.

These facts have led the World Economic Forum to place water crisis among the biggest threats that could impact our societies the most.

So, now when the international community is shaping a new sustainable development agenda, water management and allocation must be at its heart not only as a separate goal, but as an essential vehicle for development and health.

Ladies and Gentlemen Let me outline three major challenges ahead.

Firstly, water scarcity risks holding back development and economic growth.

The rapidly growing demand for water, especially in non-OECD countries, will put even more pressure on water supplies. Demands for water for

different purposes, such as food production, basic sanitation, and industrial and energy production must be made compatible with sustainable development and growth.

Part of the solution can be found in more effective management and new technologies.

Many innovations already exist but they do not reach developing and emerging countries. So we must support the best innovators, entrepreneurs, businesses, students, and organizations that can help solve the global water challenge. And we must make sure that new technologies also benefit the poor.

Secondly, the number of people without access to clean, fresh water is likely to increase.

The world achieved the millennium development goal for water five years ahead of schedule. Since 1990, more than 2 billion people have gained access to improved water and sanitation. That is encouraging and inspiring. At the same time, increased competition for fresh water risks hitting the poor and vulnerable hardest.

Official development assistance has an important role to play in minimising that risk. This is why Sweden's development cooperation has a special focus on access to sustainable water and sanitation solutions for people living in poverty.

Another priority is women and children. In many societies, women and girls are traditionally responsible for domestic water supply and sanitation. They are more seriously affected by lack of access to water and inadequate sanitation and hygiene conditions.

Thirdly, when competition for water increases, so does the risk of conflict and war.

Numerous conflicts around the world have been triggered by degraded access to water. Disputes over water systems increase the potential risk of social tension, political instability and intensified refugee flows.

There is a clear need for a transboundary approach to peace, conflict and regional development.

Ladies and gentlemen, Climate change is no longer about the future. People

and countries are already feeling the impacts.

The low-lying shores of the Marshall Islands are already severely affected. President Loeak, I share your quest for a global, fair and legally binding agreement that keeps global warming as far below 2°C as possible.

Water is one of the resources most severely affected by climate change.

You all know the consequences. It will increase rainfall, change sea levels, reduce the reliability of monsoons, prolong drought in semi-arid areas and reduce water storage in snow and ice.

A strong deal at the climate change conference in Paris is crucial for a stable and predictable global water system.

No country or society can escape the impact of climate change, but the poorest and most vulnerable will suffer the most. I hope that we can all join forces to make the Paris outcome as strong as possible.

We need to use all available tools: trade, investments, exchange of ideas and knowledge, cooperation with businesses, civil society, between governments and with the international community.

This interaction between science, business and politics is the key new solutions and innovations and making them available around the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, We are all different in many ways, but we have one thing in common: We cannot live without water. Sweden remains committed to ensuring availability and sustainable management of water for all.

I wish you all a successful conference.

Thank you.



Speech

ODA – still a crucial source in financing for development

Published 15 July 2015 Updated 15 July 2015

The Third International Conference on Financing for Development Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, 13-15 July 2015
Check against delivery.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great honour to welcome you to this event on the importance of official development assistance, ODA, as a crucial source of financing for sustainable development.

To be sure, ODA is one of many financial resources needed to implement the sustainable development goals.

However, when it comes to the alleviation of poverty and sustainable development, ODA is and will remain a particularly important and strategic instrument. It is a unique source of financing.

ODA can be used in a catalytic manner to mobilise further resources for development and improve impacts, strengthening the ability of governments to attract and administrate other financial flows.

It can help to create an enabling environment for the private sector and attract long-term sustainable investments.

It is also a key to ensuring a clear poverty focus for investments and enhancing the ability of poor people to take a more active role in changing their lives and benefiting from economic development.

The new universal development agenda requires that we all take our

responsibility.

Sweden will continue to dedicate 1 per cent of its gross national income to ODA.

And we believe that existing commitments on ODA, including the UN target, should be reaffirmed and honoured in practice. We must reverse the declining trend of ODA to help stamp out poverty.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development: Global Partnerships for a Transformative Agenda for the Least Developed Countries

Published 15 July 2015 Updated 15 July 2015

The Third International Conference on Financing for Development, Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, 13-15 July 2015.
Check against delivery.

Mr President of Benin,
Mr Prime Minister of Ethiopia,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great honour to co-sponsor this LDC high-level event.

We appreciate the unique character of the LDC group, representing a broad spectrum of countries in special situations which require sustained engagement.

The world is changing dramatically, and fast.

There is good news – the world's middle class is growing. Extreme poverty has been reduced by half. More children than ever before are in school. Maternal mortality has been reduced. More people have access to safe water.

But there is also bad news. There are more conflicts and war in the world than in a long time. Inequality is rising, both within and between countries.

Wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few. The world's richest 80 people own assets worth as much as is owned by half of humanity.

Closing the gap is of overriding importance today.

Social division costs lives, it creates wars and forces people to flee their homes. Social division also weakens growth, it hampers creativity and innovation.

I know, you know, today even economists know: equal societies perform better.

There are so many reasons to strive for equality, both nationally and globally. A special focus must be on those in the greatest need.

Because it is the morally right thing to do, but also because it is the economically smart thing to do.

When formulating the new goals for sustainable development, we would do well to put a strong focus on the challenges that the countries in the LDC group are facing.

Experience has shown that the Millennium Development Goals failed to secure sufficient support for the poorest and most vulnerable countries.

Let us not repeat this failure.

Sweden's development cooperation is well attuned to the challenges that the poorest and most vulnerable countries are facing. We allocate 1 per cent of GNI to ODA, and well above 0.20 per cent of our GNI to LDCs.

This conference should deliver a compelling package of commitments to support LDCs.

It should include increased ODA for LDCs, with an ambitious timeline, and it should include commitments and measures in areas such as trade, infrastructure, resource mobilisation and, not least, the building of accountable and effective institutions.

Let us use the commitments in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as a basis

for further action.

True, we need partnerships. But most of all, we need a commitment, political and financial, to support those countries – the LDCs – who need it most.

That is the solidarity which, at the end of the day, must underpin our global efforts to root out poverty and craft a sustainable future for all.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech

Financing for gender equality – results and good practices

Published 15 July 2015 Updated 15 July 2015

Mr Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr President of the World Bank Group, Madame Executive Director of UN Women,

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

I wish to thank UN Women and the World Bank Group for organising this important event.

I am honoured to reflect, with you, on how we can enhance one of the smartest development investments of all: the investment in gender equality.

And I am impatient. There is no time for complacency. Because we have to be honest: gender equality is still a distant goal.

However, fortunately for us feminists, 2015 is a year of political opportunities. A year in which we can close the gap between talking and doing.

We have celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. A universal stock-taking exercise that injected energy into our mission.

Here and now in Addis, and later in New York, we have a chance to set the world firmly on course towards actually achieving gender equality. And we cannot afford to waste that opportunity.

The first requisite for action is to understand why investing in gender equality is so smart.

In Sweden, if women had the same employment rate as men and worked as many hours, GDP would increase by 12 per cent. Similar or even higher rates could be achieved in most countries if work was gender equal.

Gender equality is not only morally right. It is also an extremely potent development and growth booster.

So what should we do? A good starting point is the draft Action Plan we are discussing here and now.

The Plan's philosophy is that, first of all, we must level the playing field. We must stop the political, economic and legal discrimination against women and girls.

Because if we fail, financial flows and opportunities will continue to be structurally tilted to favour men and boys.

Women's rights are human rights, and human rights are women's rights.

Being safe is a human right – and an essential element of an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment. All forms of violence affecting women and girls must be stopped.

Gender-based violence is a huge – and universal – development obstacle. A man-made, fully reversible obstacle.

Another element of an enabling environment is women's equal rights to economic and productive resources, including property, credit and other financial services. Governments must ensure that women enjoy equal rights in this area.

My background is in the male-dominated manufacturing sector. I have seen first-hand how businesses improve through the equal participation of women in the workforce, workplace and in decision-making.

In Sweden and Europe we have not completed –sometimes not even initiated – the reforms we need to achieve gender-equal work.

Women still work part-time more than men. They earn less. And they still do most of the unpaid work at home.

To increase the participation of women in the labour market, we therefore need social reforms. Paid parental leave. Family welfare, for children and the

elderly. And training and education.

Indeed, education deserves particular emphasis.

Because the gender differences in education between girls and boys, women and men, are particularly large and a particular obstacle to development.

But also because hardly any investment yields higher returns than ensuring the right of girls to attend school. Investing in the education of girls is self-evidently beneficial – a low-hanging fruit for any government dedicated to development.

The investment level also mirrors the commitment of a country to actually achieve gender equality. Where are you putting the resources?

Friends,

Gender-responsive budgeting is the next frontier. It is how we move from words to deeds as we empower women and girls.

It is a highly rewarding gender mainstreaming enterprise. To ask ourselves – how does this particular allocation contribute to gender equality?

The Swedish Government has started to systematically pose this question, as we plan, budget and implement all political reforms.

True, we dedicate specific resources to specific gender equality actions.

But it is through the integration of a gender perspective across all sectors that we can correct structurally gender-skewed public spending and services.

I challenge all actors involved in sustainable development to practice gender-responsive budgeting: fellow governments, the UN system, the World Bank Group, civil society, academia, business and everyone else.

This is a joint challenge and opportunity. And I believe our efforts in this area could advance faster.

We could be more precise and more bold. Be more impatient – with ourselves.

Why? Because it is we, here and now, who must show leadership. Act as we

preach.

Make sure that we invest in gender equality. That we direct our resources to empower women and girls, to the benefit of all.

As Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai said: “We cannot succeed if half of us are held back”.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development

Published 13 July 2015 Updated 13 July 2015

The Third International Conference on Financing for Development, Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, 13-15 July 2015
Check against delivery.

Mr Secretary-General, Honourable Heads of State and Government,
Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,

There was plenty of scepticism when we set the Millennium Development Goals. But for the last 15 years they have been the blueprint for the global community. They have helped us to pool our efforts. They have helped us to focus. And they have spurred progress.

On fighting AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis. Getting more children than ever before to school. Reducing maternal mortality rates. Giving more people access to safe water. And of course, more than halving poverty among the developing countries as a whole.

Goals matter.

So let's set strong new sustainable development goals. Let's spur progress again. Let's seize the opportunities in front of us.

With the summits in Addis Ababa, New York and Paris, 2015 is an unprecedented opportunity to set the world on the right path towards a sustainable future.

With the new goals, we will add important new aspects of development. We must combine economic development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

This is the path to fairness in the world, to security and prosperity for all.

In the long run it's not just a matter of giving and receiving – traditional official development assistance. It's also a matter of working together in partnership to achieve good things, through trade, investments, exchanges of ideas and knowledge, through cooperation with business and civil society, between governments and in the international community.

I would like to underscore the multi-stakeholder character of our endeavour, including the valuable participation and contribution of civil society.

Because this interaction between science, business, society and politics will give birth to new solutions, innovations, and will carry them out in the world.

We know much of what needs to be done. So it's time to close the gap between knowledge and action and bring all good forces together to create a globalisation that works for all.

In doing so, I think we should have three priorities that are key for a successful development agenda.

First, we need to increase legitimate financial flows and curb illicit flows.

Financing for development is, ultimately, about believing in each other. Investing in each other. For that, we need more financial resources.

National tax revenues are the basis for common welfare and for poverty reduction. Huge amounts of money are lost today in tax evasion and capital flight – money that could be used to build societies.

That's why we need to fight illicit financial flows and create an enabling environment with well-functioning and accountable institutions. A particular focus on how to increase overall financial flows to the least developed countries is essential.

ODA is not the answer to how to finance the new development agenda. But that is no excuse for failing to respect the UN target on ODA. There is still an urgent need for substantial, effective and predictable ODA, especially in the least developed countries.

It is important that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda underlines the continued need for and unique role of ODA. I can assure you that Sweden will continue to allocate 1 per cent of our gross national income to ODA every year. We urge others to also set targets and timelines, and fulfil their promises.

Second, we need to understand that women are key to sustainable growth.

Evidence shows that ensuring women equal opportunities helps build societies, democracies and economies.

Investing in women and girls reduces poverty. Women spend 90 per cent of their income on the family's health and education. Men spend 30 to 40 per cent.

Gender equality also improves growth. In Sweden GDP would increase by 12 per cent if women had the same employment rate as men and worked as many hours.

Therefore, empowerment of women and girls should be an integral part of all development goals and of the agreement on financing for development. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda must provide a strong basis for action.

Because gender equality is as financially smart as it is morally right. Just like social equality.

Third, we should take steps towards a new green economy.

We should integrate sustainability in all its aspects in all development finance. Create incentives and mechanisms to direct financial flows into sustainable energy and infrastructure. Introduce a high and fair price for carbon dioxide.

And we need to pull together, to create a sustainable way of living, eating and working so that our children and grandchildren can have a safe planet with equal opportunities for a good life.

Sweden is willing to do its part, promoting green growth and supporting the establishment of a new green economy at a global level too.

But each and every one of us is needed, to understand, act, and never rest in our work for sustainable societies, and with that, a sustainable world.

Excellencies,

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda is not the end of a process. It is the beginning.

Now is when the hard work starts, turning the commitments into real change. It will require action at all levels – national, regional and global – and by all actors – public and private.

I truly hope that, years from now, we will look back at 2015 and say that this was the year when the international community decided to make a change.

This was the year we all acted in response to the global challenges we were confronted with, to the benefit of all.

Or, to borrow from Mahatma Gandhi: This was the year we decided to be the change we wanted to see.

Thank you.



Speech

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven

Published 13 July 2015 Updated 13 July 2015

The Third International Conference on Financing for Development Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, 13-15 July 2015
Check against delivery.

Mr Minister,
Mr Secretary of State,
Mr Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having a job and an income is an important key to every person's freedom. A job enables us to provide for ourselves and our families. It gives us independence and even a sense of pride.

At least, this is how it ought to be. But we know this is not the case for many millions of working people around the globe.

Many jobs are scandalously underpaid. The widespread problem of precarious work creates uncertainty and denies workers social benefits and the right to organise.

People are exposed to terrible risks in their workplace. Children are cynically forced to work in inhumane circumstances. Every year, two million people die at work. Two million people – every year!

This happens in the pursuit of profit. But a world that builds on the exploitation of people is neither ethical nor profitable. On the contrary.

We need to make work decent. It's a win-win-win opportunity. If

fundamental union and workers' rights are respected, both productivity and growth will increase.

If we reduced deaths and accidents in the workplace by just a quarter, we would unlock resources corresponding to one per cent of the world's GDP.

How can we achieve this?

One important tool could be a partnership, for decent work, that I call a "Global Deal".

Globalisation has opened up the world, spread knowledge and technologies, and lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty over the past few decades.

But true globalisation rests on the idea of sharing.

We share a planet, we share a global economy, and we increasingly share a global labour market.

For this reason, we also share the task of finally taking responsibility for global working life.

And the seeds of a solution are already there – when representatives of labour and capital meet to ensure fair conditions for employers and employees alike, to the benefit of both – and of the society they work in.

What I hope can be developed is a new global concept, where various stakeholders can see the benefits of joining forces to promote joint solutions, while still representing their different interests.

For states, it means ratifying and respecting the ILO's core conventions, thereby recognising the right to organise, the right to negotiate and the right to strike.

For employers and companies all around the world, it means respecting these rights in practice, taking social responsibility and being prepared to negotiate agreements locally, regionally or globally.

For trade unions, it means cooperating and bearing in mind their social responsibility when they negotiate, but also contributing to the overall development of the company or the organisation.

And it means states recognising the social partners and social dialogue as

integral parts of the democratic form of government, and encouraging concrete agreements through negotiations.

This concept of shared responsibility between all stakeholders is the core of the “Global Deal”.

Indeed, decent work is part of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Countries would undertake to include full and productive employment and decent work for all as a central objective in development strategies. References to the ILO and its conventions would strengthen this objective.

I believe that a Global Deal between the stakeholders, as a sort of partnership for decent work, would make a valuable and concrete contribution to sustainable development in all three of its dimensions.

The Global Deal does not require new institutions, it merely gives the existing institutions new tasks.

The ILO, with its tripartite structure, has a central role. The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation provides a solid foundation for this work.

Needless to say, there is scope for important contributions from the OECD, the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank.

Bringing about cooperation between parties based on mutual respect and shared objectives is not always easy.

On the contrary, it requires that all parties involved are willing and determined.

It will not go quickly.

But the advantages of choosing this path must be obvious to everyone.

Instead of paralysed workplaces, we will have more stable and growing economies.

Instead of labour that is repressed and silenced, we will have people who believe in what they are doing and want to contribute to its success.

Instead of a global economy that is stagnating for want of purchasing power, we will have more equal and free individuals who dare to invest and consume.

And we will more rarely have to pull people out of the ruins of collapsed factories. Instead, we will let everyone in our three billion-strong labour force be part of an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable global economy that does not repress anyone.

This is the target I want to set for a Global Deal. A handshake and partnership bringing us closer to the objective of decent work for all.

Thank you.



Speech

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at The Third International Conference on Financing for Development: Global partnership and the three dimensions of sustainable development:

Published 13 July 2015 Updated 13 July 2015

Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, 13-15 July 2015 Check against delivery.

Honourable President, Honourable Ministers, Madame Chairperson, Mr Secretary-General, Mr Commissioner, Madame Executive Director, Distinguished Delegates,

The new sustainable development agenda will require a global partnership in the true sense of the word. Or rather, many partnerships.

Partnership

A distinct feature of this third conference on financing for development is the impressive participation by different stakeholders. It speaks to the broader understanding we have, today, about who can contribute to sustainable development.

As we look for more sources of financing for development, we look for more stakeholders. And partnerships become the vehicle to harness resources and capacity.

Because in the long run it's not just a matter of giving and receiving – traditional official development assistance. It's also a matter of working together in partnership to achieve good things, through trade, investments, exchanges of ideas and knowledge, through cooperation with business and civil society, between governments and in the international community.

This interaction between science, business, society and politics will give birth to new solutions and innovations. And bring good forces together.

One field of promising interaction is in the greening of our economies and societies. We need to establish an environment where green partnerships can flourish.

Make it simple and easy to make the good choices – and difficult and expensive to make the bad ones. Create incentives and mechanisms to direct financial flows into sustainable energy and infrastructure. Introduce a high and fair price for carbon dioxide.

This requires cooperation, partnership and rules.

Global deal

Another area with partnership potential is decent work for all.

I know the power of joining forces, when representatives of labour and capital meet and agree on fair conditions in the labour market. With decent work, respecting fundamental labour rights, we can both increase productivity and promote inclusive growth.

- If we reduced deaths and accidents in the workplace by just a quarter, we would create resources corresponding to one per cent of the world's GDP.

- If we let more women into working life, GDP growth would keep rising even faster.

- If we have good working conditions, people work better and achieve more.

There are opportunities here that the world cannot afford to ignore.

What I hope can be developed is a new global concept, where the various stakeholders in the labour market can see the benefits of joining forces to promote joint solutions, while still representing their different interests.

I like to call it a Global Deal.

Coherence

Excellencies,

You can't give with one hand and take back with the other.

National policy on trade, migration, environment, fisheries, agriculture, and so on, should be analysed with regard to the possible impact – positive and negative – it might have on development efforts elsewhere.

When Sweden adopted a national agenda for policy coherence for sustainable development ten years ago, it was a step forward. It applies to all national policies and all ministries. Today, more are using this concept.

To be sure, coherence is complex to manage in the world of partnerships. But partnerships also make coherence more essential. Because we must ensure that our actions leverage development efforts – and never frustrate them.

The new development agenda demands partnership. We must work together to succeed. It also requires coherence. We cannot treat today's challenges one by one, as isolated issues.

In this approach lies the opportunity for change, for new solutions, innovations and true justice.

Thank you.



Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven's speech at the high-level meeting on fair conditions in the labour market

Published 25 June 2015 Updated 17 May 2016

Brussels, 25 June 2015 Check against delivery.

Friends and Colleagues,

Charles, Xavier, Mark and I would like to welcome you to this roundtable discussion. The issues are complex and points of view differ.

Let me give you mine: Europe needs open markets and fair working conditions – together. Some say this is a contradiction in terms. As I see it, it is a win-win-win situation. A win for employees. A win for employers. And a win for our societies.

Together, they contribute to inclusive and innovative societies. And strengthen productivity and competitiveness.

We all know the reality: - Workers from the EU, and also from other parts of the world, are not always paid what they should be. They are too often exposed to dangerous situations, because no one takes responsibility for safety at their workplaces. - Rogue companies put reputable companies out of business through unfair competition. And the result is that we lose both productivity and competitiveness.

None of this is acceptable. Not financially, not morally, not in any way.

So what should be the way forward?

We need to show that the European Union can improve people's working lives. This is essential to maintaining legitimacy and the confidence of European citizens.

We should strengthen workers' rights, stop unfair competition and the abuse of regulations. We must stand up for the principle of equal pay for equal work.

And we should strengthen the dialogue with the business community and smooth the path for reputable companies so that they can grow and create new jobs.

All this should be done, knowing that there is no 'one size fits all' solution. Methods for regulating national labour markets vary between Member States. And that is a good thing.

I appreciate the Commission's efforts, both in enhancing the social dialogue and preparing a Labour Mobility Package. I urge you to be ambitious.

We, the leaders, must also make sure we follow this up in our discussions on growth and employment at an upcoming European Council meeting.

I am now eager to hear your views and thoughts on how to advance this pressing matter.



Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech at EAT Food Forum

Published 02 June 2015 Updated 02 June 2015

Stockholm 2 June Check against delivery.

Thank you very much for inviting me. I appreciate the opportunity to be here and am happy you chose Sweden and Stockholm for this important forum.

Last year I met my friend and colleague, Jonas Gahr Støhre, at the World Economic Forum. We noted that there has been a major shift in the debate.

We compared the present with the situation 25 years ago.

At that time, equality was a word very much owned by Social Democrats. It was seen as something unrealistic and even wrong.

This has changed. And that was obvious in Davos.

Equality is now acknowledged as a driving force for development, as a means to create innovative societies. Today, even economists warn against social division. For one simple reason: equal societies perform better. So my message here today is: if we want to improve health and sustainability, we must perform better on equality.

There is good news – the world's middle class is growing. Extreme poverty has been reduced by half. The first Millennium Development Goal was reached before schedule.

But there is also bad news. Inequality around the world is rising. Wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few. The world's richest 80 people own assets worth as much as the 3.5 billion poorest people's. It is beyond comprehension.

Yesterday I met with the President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, he reminded me of Mahatma Gandhi's words. "The world has enough for

everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed.”

And we can see this trend in Sweden as well. Inequality has risen more than in the rest of the OECD, and this has affected productivity and sustainability. It has affected health.

Take the metro here in Stockholm, take the red line. Get on in Danderyd and get off in Vårby gård. This is a trip that takes 42 minutes. Life expectancy drops four years between these two stations.

And the health gap continues to widen in Sweden. This is due to social and economic inequality.

My point is – closing the gap is key.

I would like to mention two initiatives that we, as a government, have prioritised at national level to promote health and sustainable food production.

First, we are committed to eliminating the health gap within a generation. A national commission for equitable health will be appointed shortly. Efforts to improve public health will be strengthened, as will follow-up. There will be a clearer division of responsibilities in the public sector. Prevention must be included. We will tackle the social determinants of poor health.

Second, we will present a new Swedish food strategy. This strategy will cover the entire food chain, from primary production all the way to the consumer. We have the resources for sustainable food production. We have know-how, we have high environmental awareness. We have a lot of land and clean water. Based on these good conditions, Sweden can produce safe and high quality products. And we can do it sustainably. Our aim is to increase food production and make the rural areas in Sweden more viable. This is a win-win strategy.

The challenges we face at national level are mirrored globally in several ways.

Food is lost – up to 30 per cent. In high income countries because we throw food away (often edible food), in low income countries because of losses in the production chain.

Obesity is now a bigger health risk globally than malnutrition. But many

developing countries actually have a double burden – undernourishment and overweight.

In all countries a lot of food production contributes to climate change and environmental damage.

Initiatives for better health and food security must be taken both nationally and globally. And they need to be addressed together.

Cooperation between science, policy, civil society and business will lead the way not only for decision-making, but for new solutions and innovations, and more sustainable food production.

If we do this right we can create new jobs while promoting better health and sustainable development. We can do what our late Foreign Minister Anna Lindh once said about youth unemployment and climate change: “From two problems, we create one opportunity”.

This year these issues will be brought to the United Nations Summit to adopt the post-2015 agenda in September and to the climate change negotiations in Paris in December.

We have a momentum for new commitments. Development should include everyone. It should be sustainable, because we owe that to future generations. It should be equal, because this is as economically smart as it is morally right.

Thank you very much.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Address to the plenary session of the Eastern Partnership Summit on 22 May

Published 22 May 2015 Updated 25 May 2015

Check against delivery.

Dear colleagues,

Let me begin by stating this simple fact: overall, the Eastern Partnership is a success. A lot of hard work has been put into uniquely comprehensive Association Agreements, visa facilitation and liberalisation processes. We have broadened and deepened sectorial cooperation. We have created a strong foundation for our shared future.

The Partnership has built stronger ties between our countries. It has served as a driver of often difficult reforms. It has also helped to concentrate minds in the EU and it has made this part of Europe a subject in its own right and not just a 'shared neighbourhood'. I am certain that this change is permanent. Our Summit meetings are proof of this growing mutual solidarity and support.

The continued success of our partnership is in our hands. It is essential for its credibility to start turning solemn declarations and agreements into practical reality. We must enhance our reform efforts.

For this work to be sustainable, we need to increase the engagement of citizens and civil society.

We must increase understanding and public support. To achieve this, we need to focus more on areas of immediate concern to citizens. They include the fight against corruption, the rule of law and human rights, protection of the natural environment and improved conditions for trade, investments and

work. All of this will also make societies more resilient to internal and external efforts to undermine security and sovereignty.

In our cooperation until now, we have largely failed to address the situation of more than half of the population. Sweden's experience has shown us that greater inclusion of women in the workforce and decision-making has positive effects, across the board, not least in terms of stronger economic performance. Increasing the participation of women is both that is economically smart and well as morally right, and it is a task we have to take on together.

Our participation here today is a confirmation of what our Joint Declaration says about the conviction that security, prosperity and democracy on our continent can only be achieved through cooperation. We are facing formidable challenges: climate change, poverty and social exclusion, threats to the security architecture of our continent.

We Europeans will be much better equipped to tackle these and other challenges if we cooperate and integrate more, not less. Today's meeting should reinforce that understanding. The door to much deeper relations between us must remain open.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Address to the plenary session of the Eastern Partnership Summit on 22 May

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Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga 22 maj 2015
Check against delivery.

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Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech at the Brookings Institution

Published 31 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

The Brookings Institution, Washington DC, USA 31
mars 2015 Check against delivery.

Thanks to Brookings for inviting me here. The Brookings Institution is exactly that: an institution. Always at the forefront of thinking, a temple of policy debate.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to reflect on a favourite subject of mine: how we can make globalisation work for everyone – and in a time of turmoil.

Let me start with a banal observation: interdependence is a fact of life. It is a human condition: a feature of humanity. But we can make choices about the nature of our interdependence. Should it be informed by solidarity and empowerment – or by domination and belittlement? Asking ourselves this question is how I believe we should approach globalisation – the most powerful process of interdependence to date. Globalisation involves choice. We can shape it.

2015 is a year of important meetings for globalisation. World leaders will be called upon to make crucial decisions about the future of our planet. I will focus these remarks now on some of the main political global challenges and opportunities that I see ahead of us, this year and beyond.

The first challenge concerns the bedrock of our global and international order: abiding by the rules. For a relatively small country like Sweden, right over might is essential. And for us, a recent example of what can go wrong can be found in Ukraine. I visited Ukraine earlier this month. Almost a year had passed since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. This was a clear breach of international law – against the UN Charter and against

the Helsinki Final Act. Since then, Russia has pursued its strategic objective, using what is known as hybrid warfare in Eastern Ukraine. That objective seems to be to deny Ukraine the right to make its own choices. But I am confident that Russia will, ultimately, fail to achieve this objective. The Ukrainians I met have made up their mind. They want to decide on their own future. They do not accept an order arbitrarily drawn up in terms of geopolitical spheres of interest.

Furthermore, Russia's aggression and conduct transcend Europe. This is, ultimately, a global concern. It has to do with the rule of law, of international law. Because through the illegal annexation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine, Russia is contesting the basic rules and norms of international co-existence. When that happens, we must stand firm. We have done so, with a strong and unified transatlantic response to Russia and the separatists, including sanctions. At the end of the day, abiding by the rules is a peaceful way of managing interests – and interdependence. Making international law and rules count is the best insurance policy against violent conflict such as we have seen in Ukraine.

A challenging and urgent task, connected to this, is to combat violent extremism. This includes the dramatic increase in foreign fighters joining ISIL in Iraq and Syria. We appreciate the efforts and leadership of the United States in this field, including the recent conference here in Washington.

Another area in which the job is far from done is disarmament and non-proliferation. Indeed, today is an important day. We are eagerly awaiting news from Lausanne on the nuclear talks with Iran – a diplomatic endeavour that Sweden wholeheartedly supports. The threat of nuclear weapons is indeed a stark reminder that life on Earth is fragile and finite. Sweden will work for the abolition of such weapons.

Which leads to my second globalisation challenge: realising that our space here on Earth is shared – and acting upon this insight.

Take growth – economic growth. It keeps every leader in the world busy. And rightly so: if you cannot deliver growth – and jobs – you will soon be out of office. But growth can only be sustained if it is ecologically and environmentally sound. The jobs of the future are green. Shouldering this responsibility is also crucial for security. If we don't, conflicts over scarcity will steadily increase, with serious humanitarian consequences. Dependency on fossil fuels, in Europe and elsewhere, makes us vulnerable. Renewables

are the smartest way to energy security. This is what the Climate Summit in Paris in December should be about. The sooner we invest in greening our economies and societies, the lower the long-term costs and the greater the benefits.

We stand at a crossroads in 2015. We have to make changes to keep the planet below the two-degree target. And there is a choice. Climate change is real. We need forward-looking, bold leadership to tackle it. The same holds true for the third globalisation challenge – and opportunity! – that I wish to raise today. This is about delivering free and fair trade.

This subject is close to my heart. I have a background in manufacturing. Between 2006 and 2012, I was chairman of the largest Swedish labour union for industrial workers. I represent a country where trade accounts for half of GDP. It ranks among the most competitive economies in the world. So you will not be surprised to hear that I am a staunch supporter of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, TTIP. It holds so much promise for the two largest economies in the world.

However, trade should not translate into a competition with ever lower salaries or lower labour, health and environmental standards. Competition should revolve around innovation, research and development – it should be about being better, not cheaper. The uncertainty or risk in this is exactly why many are wary of globalisation. It can be associated with a race to the bottom, which in turn offers fertile ground for easy answers, bigotry, isolationism and populism.

TTIP is not the solution to everything. But it is an opportunity to get trade agreements right: to start making trade free and fair. And to that, I would also like to add ‘open’. The bilateral trade talks that are now under way are not the endgame. Rather, they should contribute to further multilateral cooperation under the WTO.

The European Union and the United States should now seize the chance to set global standards, to make our economies fit for the 21st century. If we do not, others will get there before us!

In my own country, this is not just the Government’s view. Swedish business and labour organisations are also strong supporters of trade. And this is essential. Trade agreements, struck between governments, must uphold labour, environmental and health standards. But we need acceptance also from the social partners, from business and from workers. I think of this as a

global deal, or handshake, between stakeholders and social partners. Yesterday, at a session at the United Nations on decent work, I had an opportunity to expand on this idea. It's not a single contract. It's a concept to manage working conditions in a global economy. The philosophy is simple: employers' and workers' representatives meet to ensure fair conditions to the benefit of both – and of the society they work in. They still, of course, represent various interests. But cooperation between social partners can bring peace to the labour market, economic stability and shared prosperity. I am an optimist and reformist. I really believe we can make the world's three billion-strong labour force part of an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable global economy. In that way, we can all grow together.

A good place to start is China. On Sunday, I arrived here in the United States straight from Beijing. As I understand it, the Chinese economy is now entering a new phase. It is starting to consolidate, with an increasing share of growth stemming from consumption rather than exports. This development brings opportunities, including for the improvement of working conditions. Workers are becoming more cognisant of their rights and claiming them. Employers are more mindful of their social responsibilities. I noted this with great interest during my visit. But a great deal remains to be done.

And that leads me to the fourth and final challenge: making globalisation – and our world – more inclusive. Take the spiralling inequality, a global trend that affects us all. There are many reasons to combat this. First, of course, on moral and ethical grounds – the conviction that inequality is unjust. Another reason is that inequality works against social progress. It causes reduced democratic and civic participation, for example.

A third reason has attracted particular attention in global economic forums. Evidence from the OECD and others shows that inequality hampers growth. For example, it keeps many low-income households from pursuing education – which sets them on the opposite path to where the jobs of the future are.

Inequality is, to put it plainly, bad economics. This trend of inequality could – and should – be reversed. The ways to do so will vary according to circumstances. However, I must insist that there is one task that all nations, societies and economies have in common. And that is to target the greatest, most entrenched inequality of all: that between the sexes. To address what former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton so aptly describes as “the great unfinished business of the 21st century”.

I am proud that the Swedish Government is the first in the world to declare itself a feminist one. In practice, this means that gender equality is at the core of government business. From gender-responsive budgeting to feminist foreign policy.

Twenty years after the landmark Beijing Conference, the world is still embarrassingly far from gender equality on almost every count: political representation, economic empowerment and social norms. This is a monumental denial of rights, and also a waste of talent. This is not a concern only for some, but for everyone: women and men, girls and boys. That is why I have joined the global UN-led campaign HeForShe, and I encourage others to do the same. More men and boys must get involved.

Later this year, in New York, leaders have an opportunity to advance a global equality agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals to be set at the United Nations in September must catalyse and deliver irreversible, substantial and sustainable progress for gender equality. They should also put us firmly on the path to reducing social inequality.

Which brings me back to where I started this morning. What should be the nature of our interdependence in a globalised world?

My answer is: solidarity and empowerment – not domination and exploitation. We can choose rules over might; sustainable prosperity over fossilised shortsightedness; gender equality over structural discrimination; and decent work for all over a race to the bottom. We really can make globalisation a process of togetherness. In which we grow and trust each other, and in which everyone benefits. That is a choice that we have.

Thank you for listening.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Statement by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at The ECOSOC Session

Published 30 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

New York, USA 30 mars 2015 Check against delivery.

Mr President, Mr Vice-President, Mr Deputy Secretary-General,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be here today, together with all of you, for a segment with an impressive list of both topics and participants. I certainly look forward to our discussion. Let me start by stepping back in time. Reshma, a seamstress in a garment factory, saw the light of day again, after 17 days. Helped by rescue workers, she emerged from the rubble, having survived on dried goods and water. But more than 1 100 of her colleagues died in that factory in Dhaka, when it collapsed in April 2013.

This tragedy was not a unique event. Two million people die at work every year. It happens everywhere, including in Sweden. Every day, we see people exposed to terrible risks in their work, we see trade union members persecuted and killed, we see children forced to work in the most cynical and inhumane manner, we see migrants exploited under horrific conditions. This is done in the pursuit of profit. But a world that builds on the exploitation of people is neither ethical nor profitable. On the contrary. With decent work, respecting fundamental union rights, we can both increase productivity and promote inclusive growth. If we reduced deaths and accidents in the workplace by just a quarter, we would create resources corresponding to one per cent of the world's GDP. If we let more women into working life, GDP growth would keep rising. There are opportunities here that the world cannot afford to ignore. Social justice is both ethically right and economically smart.

It is time to make globalisation work for everyone. Globalisation has opened up the world, spread knowledge and technologies, and lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty over the past few decades. But true globalisation rests on the idea of sharing. We share a planet, we share a global economy, and we increasingly share a global labour market. For this reason, we also share the task of finally taking responsibility for global working life.

And the seeds of a solution are already there - when representatives of labour and capital meet to ensure fair conditions for employers and employees alike, to the benefit of both - and of the society they work in. What I hope can be developed is a new global concept, where various stakeholders can see the benefits of joining forces to promote joint solutions, while still representing their different interests. It is a concept where each actor also pays attention to and takes into consideration the motives and aims and restrictions of other parties.

A new concept of this kind would encourage cooperation between social partners that could bring peace in the labour market, promote competition, and enhance economic stability and shared prosperity. It is a concept that also builds on the social partners taking their respective responsibilities, as governments also would do, while at the same time recognising what is best for the common interest.

It means, for states, ratifying and respecting the ILO's core conventions, thereby recognising the right to organise, the right to negotiate and the right to strike. It means, for employers and companies all around the world, respecting these rights in practice, taking their social responsibility and being prepared to negotiate agreements locally, regionally or globally. It means, for trade unions, cooperating and bearing in mind their social responsibility when they negotiate, but also contributing to the overall development of the company or the organisation. And it means states recognising the social partners and social dialogue as essential parts of the democratic form of government, and encouraging concrete agreements through negotiations. This concept of shared responsibility between all stakeholders could lead to a real win-win-win situation. It is the core of what I would like to call a Global Deal.

And this does not require new institutions, merely new tasks in the strong international forums that we have already created. The ILO, with its tripartite structure, has a central role, but needs to be equipped to lead the work at global level. The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair

Globalisation provides a solid foundation for this work. I also see scope for important contributions from the OECD, the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank.

In this very building, an agenda is now being negotiated to meet today's and tomorrow's great challenges, to eradicate poverty while saving the only planet we have. What I'm referring to, of course, are the negotiations on the sustainable development goals (the post-2015 agenda) and how they are to be financed and implemented (Financing for Development).

The adoption of the new sustainable development goals and the new financial framework must not be seen as the end of a process. On the contrary, it is the starting signal for more intense, and absolutely essential, efforts to achieve increased sustainable development at global, regional and national levels. This will require us all to work together. It will require practical and concrete approaches. I believe that a Global Deal between the stakeholders will make an important and concrete contribution to the work on sustainable development in all three of its dimensions.

Bringing about cooperation between parties based on mutual respect and shared objectives is not always easy. On the contrary, it requires that all parties involved are willing and determined. It will not go quickly. Rather, it is an initiative that must be sustained throughout the coming decade. But the advantages of choosing this path must be obvious to everyone. Instead of paralysed workplaces, we will have more stable and growing economies. Instead of labour that is repressed, worn out, silenced, we will have people who believe in what they are doing and want to contribute to its success. Instead of a global economy that is stagnating for want of purchasing power, we will have more equal and free individuals who dare to invest and consume. And we will more rarely have to pull women like Reshma out of the ruins of collapsed factories; instead, we will let her and everyone else in our three billion strong labour force be part of an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable global economy that does not repress anyone. This is the target I want to set for a Global Deal. This is the initiative I would like you to be part of. It is a self-evident part of the world I want to engage in for future generations.

Thank you.



Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech at Boao Forum for Asia in Hainan, China

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Mr President, Mr Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the invitation to speak here today. Sweden's relations with the Asian region are strong. Sweden was the first Western country to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, and we are proud to celebrate the 65th anniversary of our relationship this year. We were also among the first Western countries to recognise Vietnam, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Most countries in the world have benefited from globalisation. The rapid growth here in Asia has brought enormous benefits - reduced poverty and rising living standards. Globalisation brings countries together. It promotes strengthened political, economic and commercial contacts, and also people-to-people exchanges. The distance between Asia and Europe has never been shorter than now. Because we are a global community, we also share global challenges. In the upcoming months, some of these will be addressed. We have the UN Summit on a new post-2015 sustainable development agenda, and the Paris Conference on Climate Change. I will make three points in this connection.

First: The post-2015 development agenda must be a joint effort. We will need the creativity and commitment of civil society, of a responsible and sustainable business sector, and – most importantly – of citizens. I have therefore asked my post-2015 team to consult widely with civil society and the business community on how they can contribute. Another key is resources. Official development assistance remains important, especially for

low-income countries. Sweden will continue to use 1 per cent of its GNI to ODA. We urge other developed countries to also honour their commitments.

Second: When I was in Beijing yesterday, I thought about the groundbreaking World Conference on Women, held there 20 years ago. To recognize gender equality as key to the world's future is long overdue. Overcoming gender inequality must be at the centre of the post-2015 goals, as a human right, but also to achieve sustainable development. Significant economic gains can be made when women are able to develop their full labour market potential. Raising the female labour force rate to male levels would, for instance, raise GDP in the United States by 5 per cent, in Japan by 9 per cent, in Sweden 10 per cent, and in Egypt by 34 per cent.

And third: There is great potential, everywhere, to cut emissions whilst improving economic performance – with positive effects for health, poverty reduction and energy security.

Many countries have taken important steps to curb emissions. Like China has already done, all countries ought to present national contributions to the climate conference in Paris. Sweden has a target of reducing emissions by 40 per cent by 2020. We aim for a new climate policy framework that stretches until 2050. Our experience is that very clear climate objectives help mobilise stakeholders such as businesses and cities. We have also seen good results from using economic instruments to reduce emissions, such as a carbon tax of 150 USD per tonne. Such instruments can reduce environmental impact, improve health, and promote innovation and green investments - resulting in green jobs. I am convinced that what we agree in Paris in December, will result in an ambitious commitment to our common goal: to keep the global temperature increase below two degrees.

These three issues are all interlinked – cooperation between all sectors in society; ensuring gender equality; and halting climate change. All are fundamental to ensure sustainable development. And all are discussed in depth here at the Boao Forum for Asia. Thank you all for making that possible.



Speech from Prime Minister's Office

A European Union of the People

Published 23 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

University of Gothenburg 23 mars 2015 Check against delivery.

Many of the grand statements throughout history have been poetic. But one of the most important sentences in post-war Europe was as bone dry as it was powerful: “The French Government proposes that Franco-German production of coal and steel as a whole be placed under a common High Authority, within the framework of an organisation open to the participation of the other countries of Europe.”

These words are from the Schuman Declaration, which was presented on 9 May 1950. The backdrop was war. The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and the First World War were both fuelled by conflict over the same lands and resources.

But when Europe stood among the smouldering ruins of the Second World War, beside the newly dug graves of millions upon millions, and as it witnessed the beginnings of renewed economic conflict – Europe chose a new path. West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer is reported to have said to his staff: “Das ist unser Durchbruch” – this is our breakthrough.

* * *

But the strength of the European Coal and Steel Community was not its rules and regulations. On the contrary, it did not achieve all of its goals. No, the breakthrough was not mainly economic – but political. Europe chose cooperation rather than conflict. And now, 65 years later, it is perhaps all too easy for Swedes to forget what this cooperation has created. In a country that has enjoyed peace for 200 years, we do not realise how truly strange and marvellous this European era of peace has been. When we travel by train down through Europe – on holiday, to study or to work – we perhaps do not remember the time when the carriages would be stopped at night by passport officials, when each country was like an isolated island, when distrust and doubt characterised European relations. What we now take for

granted would have seemed like utopia for the founders of the EU.

I remember the first time I visited the restaurant of the European Parliament and saw Germans, Greeks and Portuguese all eating together in this the melting pot of cooperation. Just as I can now sit in working meetings of the European Council and see leaders of countries – that were once sworn enemies – call each other David, Angela, Helle, Bohuslav and roll up their sleeves to work together. And this work has been fruitful. Just look at your own lives. Your dreams of studies and a career can now easily encompass an entire continent. Your supply of food and clothes is more secure, the air you breathe is cleaner, the societies you live in are freer, safer and more democratic, simply because we Europeans chose cooperation rather than conflict.

Therefore I am also proud to say: Yes, I am a European. I believe in the European Union. I believe in the strength of a cooperative community.

* * *

But precisely because I believe in the EU, I also know that the EU must change. The EU has bureaucratic, economic and democratic failings. But you are all well aware of the EU's challenges. What I want to talk about are the EU's opportunities. I became politically involved because I believe that the idea of the equal value of all people can only be realised through free and equal societies in which you and I have the same opportunities in life.

And to create such free and equal societies, cooperation and solidarity are required – between people, between countries. I view the EU as an important instrument, precisely for creating this type of cooperation, this type of international solidarity between people, so that freer and more equal societies are made possible. And the breakthrough that the EU needs today is an EU that gets closer to the people it was created to serve. An EU that focuses on employment, security and sustainability – and creates forms of cooperation that make change possible. It is only by so doing that we can feel that the EU provides added value. That the Union is for us, not we for the Union. It is only by so doing that we can resist the divisive populism and fascism that is seeking a foothold in Europe. It is only by so doing that we can create an EU of the People. I would like to talk about the reforms we want to focus on in order to achieve this by talking about an app, a telephone and a baby's bottle.

* * *

I would like to begin with the application that has spread to computers, telephones and TV systems around the world. There are probably even advanced fridges that can run the software. I'm talking about Spotify. Those

involved in launching Spotify must have had an admirable stubbornness. They had to negotiate with each country, one by one. And that took time. Five years after its release, Spotify was only available in half of all EU Member States. Spotify has done well. But what about all those who are still struggling? All the goods and services we haven't heard of, just because the people making them cannot reach a wide enough circle of customers? This is why we want to have a strong internal market; one that links our economies and creates the trade volumes required to enable companies to specialise and grow.

Spotify in particular also illustrates the need for a digital internal market, in which regulations are harmonised and privacy respected. And while we make it possible for private companies to invest and grow, politicians must do their fair share of the work.

We support the Commission's investment plan, in which we want to see research and innovation prioritised. But we also need to boost the measures against youth unemployment so that the European Investment Bank and the European Social Fund can create more study, trainee and work opportunities for young people. Everyone in your generation must be offered opportunities. You must be able to show what you can do. To test the limits of your knowledge. I know you are ready to take on Europe, and I know Europe needs your strength!

* * *

And we must stop shutting women out of the labour market! One third of all women of working age in the EU woke up this morning without a paid job to go to. In some countries, the number is as high as half. In some quarters, views on the role of women in the labour market seem to be as old as the EU itself. What is required is childcare, parental leave, equal pay for equal work, a more balanced division of power, and an end to the violence that destroys women's lives. Jobs and gender equality go hand in hand, and an EU of the People should stand up for both!

* * *

Strengthening the internal market, which is one of our greatest successes, must not mean introversion. On the contrary! The EU must be open to the rest of the world. We should continue to be the world's biggest aid partner, and at the same time stand up for global free trade. Sweden is a trade-dependent and trade-loving country. Free trade with rest of the world leads to growth and jobs across the country.

But, if the EU does not create new trade routes, the rest of the world will not wait for us. They will merely increase their trade with other regions. We therefore want to see ambitious, ethical and comprehensive trade agreements

with the United States and Japan, and a continued strengthening of the WTO's legitimacy in world trade. We must make it easier to trade, invest and grow throughout the EU, while at the same time standing up for employees' rights, the environment and democracy. I am part of a labour movement, which, together with the liberal political movement, has fought for more than 100 years for free trade as one of the world's main weapons against poverty. And when the icy winds of protectionism blow, we will continue to stand up for free trade, today and in the future.

* * *

That was quite a long tangent from just one app, so I would now like to move on to the telephone. When I was chair of the Metal Workers' Union of Sweden, I sometimes received phone calls informing me that workers had died. I was often also given a short description of how the accident had happened, and despite the modernisation of our workplaces, people can still die in the most horrific ways. And so you were faced with the fact that a person was now dead. And you think about the silence that will spread throughout the workplace. You think about how they are going to tell the family. You think: why did this have to happen again?

And this also affects Europeans who come to Sweden to work. Those known as 'posted workers' are involved in one fifth of the accidents that occur at Swedish workplaces, despite the fact that they represent a significantly smaller proportion of the labour force. We can't go on like this. There is no natural law stating that an open European labour market should make people's working conditions worse. We want to strengthen freedom of movement, but this is not at odds with standing up for workers' rights.

On the contrary – if we are to an EU of the People, we need the Union to be used to improve people's working lives. We want to create good order in the European labour market, in which we strengthen employees' rights, in which we stop social dumping and the exploitation of regulations, and in which we stand up for the principle of equal pay for equal work.

* * *

This brings me to my third point, about the baby's bottle. Although I am enjoying talking to you here today, I have to admit that my greatest joy in life is spending time with my family's grandchildren. Playing with them, reading to them, having a little chat. But this is also why I share the dread that parents must feel when they discover that what they have been putting into their child's mouth can be dangerous, hormone-disrupting even. But this was what happened when we understood the risks of Bisphenol A, which has been found in babies' bottles, baby food jars and plastic beakers. And this is what often happens in environment and climate issues. First you are

appalled. Then you get angry – and then you take action to create the sustainability that our children deserve. And we are now working to eliminate the environmental toxins that are a threat to people, not least through the chemicals regulation REACH, which Margot Wallström helped to develop. We also want to create an energy union that strives to achieve the EU's climate objectives, and we want to invest in energy efficiency measures and recycling to ensure that we do not live beyond the planet's limited resources. But the major, decisive work must of course take its cue from the international climate negotiations in Paris in December. In Paris, the EU must ensure that the world agrees on forceful climate objectives, together with a concrete action plan to achieve them. The world has to choose which path to take – and the EU must take the lead. We must phase out fossil fuels. We must create jobs by producing sustainable homes, industries and transport. And we must engage the world in an action programme that keeps us below the decisive two degrees of global warming. This, if anything, would show that the EU can be a citizens' EU.

And this, dear friends, is the only way we can look our children and grandchildren in the eye and say: We saw what was happening. We refused to allow it to happen. And we chose to act before it was too late.

* * *

Dear friends, I have just come from the European Council, where foreign affairs – and particularly the situation in Ukraine – were top of the agenda. The EU Common Foreign and Security Policy is an extremely important tool, enabling us to speak with one strong voice. The EU needs to stand up for human rights wherever they are threatened, support Ukraine in light of Russia's military aggression, strengthen its role in the Middle East and North Africa, normalise relations between Serbia and Kosovo, stay open to new members that meet the requirements, and jointly build a safer and more prosperous neighbourhood.

We also need to create greater security in all of our countries for those Jews and Muslims who are afraid to pray or openly show their faith, and we need to work across borders to fight terrorism and organised crime. We need to create security for the refugees risking their lives just a few kilometres off Europe's coast, and we need to get more EU Member States to take responsibility for receiving refugees. We need to improve the situation of the Roma and break the chains of poverty and discrimination that are forcing them to beg. It is a question of respect for the dignity of every human being, which we will never abandon.

* * *

While we strengthen our global commitment and our common security, we

also need to create more jobs and growth, ensure good working conditions and strengthen gender equality, international solidarity and environmental protection. These are the Swedish Government's priorities for the EU. Together we must create an EU that is better at delivering on its promises instead of constantly delivering new promises. We must create an EU that does not take more power for the sake of power, but that shows how it can use reforms to place power in people's hands to create a better life. And we must create an EU that shows its value in our everyday lives, not through grand statements but through real change.

I say 'we'. This is important. The EU is not 'them'. The EU is us. And it is we, in Sweden and Europe, who will determine the future of the EU. Many of you in this room will play decisive roles in this work, as you are studying to lead the institutions of Sweden and the EU in the future, perhaps even to be my successor, who knows? I say 'we' because we are the ones who have to do this. We are the ones who need to use the time ahead of us to shape an EU of the People, which creates a better everyday life for you – and a better world for us all. It is a difficult task indeed. But, as students, you know that the most difficult tasks are sometimes also the most rewarding.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Strengthening Ukraine's economy through EU integration and reforms

Published 11 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Kyiv School of Economics 11 mars 2015 Check against delivery.

First of all, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to visit Kyiv and the Kyiv School of Economics.

Sweden has been a supporter of this school for a long-time, and it's an honor to finally visit here together with my distinguished colleague Mr. Aivaras Abromavicius.

Being here in Kyiv, I remember and honour the people who lost their lives, in the Yanukovych regime's violent crackdown on protesters in Independence Square.

The Maidan movement started as a peaceful manifestation in support of Europe, justice and reforms. It was met with brutal violence from a corrupt and ruthless regime that wanted to cling to power at any cost. The violence led to the tragic deaths of more than one hundred people, but also to the fall of the regime. Maidan became a beacon of hope for change, and a better future for Ukraine.

That hope is still alive today. But we know that the vision of a prosperous and reformed Ukraine is perceived as a threat in other parts of Europe. Over the last year, Russia has illegally annexed Crimea and by arming and supplying so-called separatists, has subjected Ukraine to acts of aggression that have so far claimed the lives of more than 6 000 people. Almost 1.5 million people have been forced to flee from their homes. The responsibility for this lies with Russia.

Sweden and the EU have supported the diplomatic efforts to uphold Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty and to bring an end to the conflict. By supporting Ukraine, we keep the hope of change alive and show that aggression and the use of force will never pay off or be accepted in Europe in our time. Today, Maidan goes by the name of Euromaidan to honour the strong wish of the Ukrainian people to belong to Europe. Let me assure you that for Sweden there is no doubt that Ukraine is a part of Europe and has a clear place in Europe. We share a future. We share ideals, and hope.

That is why EU integration is the main focus for our cooperation with Ukraine. The Association Agreement including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area between Ukraine and the EU is the most far-reaching agreement that the EU has ever signed with a third country.

Once Ukraine has fulfilled all commitments under the agreement, the logical next step would be to prepare an application for full EU membership. That may still be some time in the future, and would require hard work and efforts by Ukraine. But let me assure you that Sweden stands fully behind Ukraine's vision of an ever closer relation with the European Union.

In Ukraine, you know better than anyone what needs to be done. Reforms will be needed to improve the rule of law and the business climate, enforce EU standards

and fight corruption at all levels. Such reforms require a strong political will and a determination to go against some vested interests. But the gain will be plentiful:

In the 20 years from 1992 to 2012 the GDP per capita in Latvia grew by 340 percent as they step by step became part of the European union. Ukraine, which had a higher GDP per capita than Latvia in 1992, grew only by some 40 per cent in the same period. In the area of trade and investments, all evidence from countries like Poland, the Baltic States and Serbia show the value of closer integration in the EU.

It's the largest integrated market in the world, with 500 million consumers and a combined GDP of 12 900 billion EUR (2012), representing one fifth of world GDP.

We realize that the challenging situation in Ukraine means that support is needed urgently.

From Sweden's perspective we have tried to find a balance between short-term stabilizing efforts and long-term support of reforms. Sweden's cooperation with Ukraine goes back a long time, and we are committed to remaining your partner.

Swedish has made a seven year commitment to allocate at least of 25 million euro in support of reform in Ukraine.

We have a continuous dialogue on where this support is most useful to you. You know better than anyone what reforms should be pursued, and our support is based on your needs and priorities.

I want to give you some examples of what we do, and would welcome your thoughts on other areas where support could be needed. I would like to bring up decentralisation, energy efficiency and gender equality.

First of all: Decentralisation.

In our view, decentralisation is the key for substantial change and a strong and developed democracy.

It would bring power closer to the people in Ukraine, and promote important reforms in many fields.

For example: Local authorities need to have more decision-making and budgetary powers in order to restructure the energy sector.

That brings us to my second point: Energy efficiency.

The need for energy efficiency goes further and beyond decentralisation.

The waste of energy is one of the heaviest burdens on the Ukrainian economy. Ukraine uses almost three times more energy per unit of GDP than the EU average. For the energy efficiency projects to be viable and efficient, it is essential that Ukraine launches a far-reaching reform of its entire energy sector, including tariffs.

And third: Gender equality.

Our focus is to support women's economic and social empowerment.

Combating violence against women is an essential part, as well as further strengthening of women's rights and continued efforts to eliminate obstacles to prevent the full advancement of women. The objective should be to integrate gender equality in all dimensions of society, which would also generate higher economic growth.

Gender equality and more women in the work force is a crucial contributor to a society's wealth and welfare, and has built Sweden's prosperity for many decades.

Finally, let me say this:

You, as students, are the future of this great nation.

You will be the ones who will carry these necessary reforms forward and contribute to a better society and a new future of Ukraine and Europe. EU integration entails, as you all know, comprehensive and sometimes difficult reforms.

But I am sure your country is ready and willing to take on this challenge, and Sweden stands ready to fully support you on this journey. We stand behind you in support of your right to make a free, sovereign choice on what kind of society you want to integrate. We do not impose anything on anyone. We do not tell you what is in your interest.

We respond to your requests and aspirations – including the aspirations you so clearly showed on Euromaidan a year ago.

That is and will remain our guiding principle, today and over the coming years, so that our countries can share a greater prosperity and freedom.

Thank you.



Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech at 'The Ring of Peace'

Published 27 February 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Raoul Wallenbergs torg, Stockholm, 27 februari 2015
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Dear friends, the Jewish tradition of Bat Mitzvah celebrates a girl's entry into the adult world.

It is a celebration of love, tradition and joy.

Of hope and expectations for the future.

A Bat Mitzvah was being celebrated when the synagogue in Copenhagen was attacked.

I think of the children in the synagogue who were forced to flee down to the cellar when Dan Uzan, who was on guard, was shot dead.

I think of the children in Paris who know that four people were killed in their kosher shop.

I think of the children in Sweden who are now forced to see armed guards when they go to school.

Friends, we can never ever accept this!

It is time for this to stop!

And we can all see what is happening in our society.

We see anti-Semitism, the despicable hatred against Jews, the taunts, the conspiracy theories, the attacks, people not daring to wear a kippah or Star of David.

We see Islamophobia, women in veils being harassed in the underground, people facing prejudice, racism and hatred.

We see Afrophobia and the terrible racial theories that live on.

We see homophobia, transphobia, attacks on anyone who wants to and dares to break the norms.

We see antiziganism, discrimination and violence against Roma, people pouring water on them, setting fire to their camps, spitting in the face of their fellow human beings.

Now it is up to us to choose which society we want to have.

Now it is up to us to stand up for freedom of religion and freedom of expression.

Now it is up to us to show that Sweden is the strongest bastion of solidarity; we will never allow hatred to rule our lives here!

Never!

We are now introducing major initiatives to create security for everyone in Sweden, regardless of who you are or where you come from.

We are working with the faith communities to increase security.

We have instructed the police to focus on hate crimes.

We are strengthening educational measures in schools and society as a whole.

But however much we invest, we will only be successful if we have everyone's personal engagement and commitment.

We need you, all of you who want to and dare to stand up for what you believe in.

All of you who are demonstrating that although we may have different faiths, we share the same values.

We believe in the strength of democracy, we are convinced of the equal worth of all people and the indivisibility of their human rights, we know that our open society is worth defending.

We say what it says in the appeal of the Muslim Council of Sweden, the Christian Council of Sweden, the Hindu Mandir Society, the Swedish Buddhist Cooperation Council, the Church of Sweden, the Swedish Bahá'í Community and the Official Council of Swedish Jewish Communities:

We refuse to hate! We refuse to hate!

We love this country and we refuse to hate the fellow human beings we share it with!

And I am so pleased and proud that you are here today.

You are taking the responsibility that is the responsibility of all of us as fellow human beings.

This is the way it should be.

Building bridges, between people, between religions, between generations.

This is how we can create a new wave of openness and solidarity that is so much bigger and so much more powerful than hatred, and that sweeps across our entire nation.

Sophie Scholl, the German girl who stood up to the Nazis and was murdered for doing so, once said:

“How can we expect fate to let a righteous cause prevail when there is hardly anyone who will give himself up undividedly to a righteous cause?”

Friends, today we stand up for a righteous cause, for freedom of religion, for democracy – and we will never capitulate!

Thank you.



Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech given at Raoul Wallenbergs torg on Holocaust Remembrance Day, 27 January 2015

Published 27 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Raoul Wallenbergs torg, Stockholm 27 januari 2015
Check against delivery.

I would like to begin by thanking you, Hannes, for your recitation. I saw the play *Our Class* before coming here today. It is a work of art that attempts to describe the indescribable. How people, neighbours, classmates can be pitted against each other, and the horrors that occur when we no longer acknowledge what is human in humanity.

The monologue belongs to Abram, who is a survivor. He emigrated to the United States before the day on which the Jewish population of his village were forced into a barn by their neighbours. The barn was then set on fire. This really happened, in a village in Poland. Initially, the story was hushed up. But we know the truth thanks to the testimonies of survivors. And when we gather on Holocaust Remembrance Day, it is to pass on these testimonies.

We must give a voice to the lost fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters – all of those loved ones listed so despairingly by Abram. The immediate and extended families, the villages, the towns. Where no one was left to bear witness. Those who survived are also getting older and older, and their legacy must

be carried forward by new generations.
So it is up to us.
We must never forget,
never deny,
never minimise this gaping wound in the history of humanity.

And today, we must also listen to the voices of those under threat.
We must hear the boots of the fascists who once again march in our midst.
We must see the terrorist attacks against Jews in Toulouse, Brussels and Paris, the persecution of the Roma in Hungary and Romania, the harassment of homosexuals in Russia – this unreasoning hatred of our fellow human beings that has spread throughout Europe.
And we must assume the task of doing everything in our power to fight it.

And Sweden is not exempt from these horrors.
It is time that we spoke plainly about what is happening.
It is time that we learn from history, and never allow hatred to gain a foothold in our society.
Some 5 500 hate crimes are reported in Sweden every year.
Threats and attacks that are antisemitic, racist, homophobic, islamophobic in nature.
Prejudice and conspiracy theories spread and are left unopposed.
Synagogues and mosques are vandalised.
Roma camps are burned down.
And just last week we once again heard testimonies of the persecution of Jews in Malmö.
People who no longer dare to wear the Star of David or a yarmulke.
Parents who do not feel safe sending their children to school.
Survivors like Hédi Fried who say: “Now I am scared again.”
As Prime Minister, as a Swede, as a human being: I refuse to tolerate this in silence.
Everyone should be safe to practise their faith, express their identity and exercise their culture in Sweden.
As a society, we cannot accept anything less.

This is why the police have now been instructed to prioritise hate crime, and they will soon present to the Government campaigns aimed at combating the threats and hatred that destroy people’s lives.
It is why we must stop the young men at risk of becoming radicalised, both using preventive action and through repressive measures and by criminalising their behaviour.

And it is why we must continue to cooperate with all vulnerable groups to jointly create the security for everyone in Sweden to be able to display their identity and culture – freely and openly.

The threats and the hatred are a disgrace to Sweden.

In our country, every person should be able to wear their origins with joy and pride.

And this is a task for which we must all take responsibility.

A few years ago I visited Yad Vashem, a monument and archive in Israel dedicated to remembering the Holocaust.

And more than anything else, I remember how I felt when I stepped into the Children's Memorial, where the names of the 1.5 million murdered Jewish children are recited.

Today, the Minister for Culture, the Crown Princess and the Speaker of the Riksdag are representing Sweden at a ceremony of remembrance at Auschwitz, which was liberated seventy years ago today.

But all of these places,

all of these memorials,

all of these things:

they do not bear knowledge within them.

It is we human beings who must do that.

Many concentration camps were demolished at the end of the war.

Furnaces were destroyed. Barracks were torn down. And parade grounds are now covered with grass.

It is we who walk on that grass today, we who are alive, who must tell the story of what happened.

This is a task to which Sweden is committed, through the declaration adopted by more than 50 countries at the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust in 2000.

Thus we are now redoubling our efforts to reach out to children and young people, to combat prejudice and spread knowledge about the Holocaust.

We will support the work of faith communities, organisations and schools to strengthen democratic awareness and counteract polarisation, threats and violence.

And the Living History Forum will continue the work that began with the 'Tell ye your children' project with a new major national educational project against antisemitism and racism.

As the inscription by the gas chambers at Auschwitz reads:

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

This is Sweden's duty.

But it is also our duty as human beings, to pass the survivors' stories on, and to respond to the cries for help of those under threat.

Raoul Wallenberg, after whom the square we stand in today is named, recognised this duty, and he is a great role model in our efforts.

He responded to the Nazis' industrial-scale murder in Budapest with his own large-scale rescue apparatus, producing Swedish protective passports that saved tens of thousands of Jews.

In a war in which fanatical ideology and national interests claimed millions of victims, his ideology was unyielding humanism, his interest the will to live.

You and I can continue Raoul's legacy.

And in all this darkness, I still find hope in the knowledge that society can be changed.

As the Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote:

“The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either – but right through every human heart, and through all human hearts.

This line shifts. Inside us, it oscillates with the years. And even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained.”

These lines come from *The Gulag Archipelago*.

And I know that hatred, contempt and prejudice are not a given in society. Just because they have shaped our history does not mean that they have to destroy our future.

So, on this day of remembrance, let us promise one another that we will work together for a more open Sweden.

Because we know that there is a bridgehead of good in every heart, that there is a light in every darkness, and that we have the tools in our hands to build a more free society for us all.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech

Speech at launch of UN Women "HeForShe IMPACT 10x10x10 Initiative"

Published 23 January 2015 Updated 27 February 2015

World Economic Forum, Davos 23 January 2015 Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister Check against delivery.

Excellencies, panellists, participants,

I know from experience the force of gender equality. My background is in the male-dominated manufacturing sector, and I have seen first-hand how businesses improve through equal participation of women in the workplace and in decision-making.

This is why gender equality should be core government business - because it is both morally right and economically wise. Many of the challenges our societies face require structural changes in gender relations. If we fail, our societies will remain chained by gender stereotypes and we will see development arrested.

The new universal agenda for sustainable development post-2015 provides a unique opportunity that we must seize. We must take real steps for the advancement of women and girls in all areas of society.

Firstly, the political participation and representation of women needs to increase at all levels: in local councils and national parliaments, but also in peace processes and climate negotiations. We are still embarrassingly far from equality in terms of representation.

Secondly, the economic empowerment of women must be promoted. Shutting women out of economic activity is probably the biggest waste of

opportunity and talent in our world.

We need to reform tax and benefit systems, ensure women's full participation in the labour market and enhance women's access to resources, including land and capital and financial services.

Thirdly, we must address the root cause of gender inequalities: unequal power relations.

Harmful practices and violence against women and girls are ultimately about subordination. So is denying women and girls the right to decide over their own bodies and sexuality.

We must have zero tolerance for violence against women, and safeguard the human right to control one's own body. I also strongly believe in the empowering force of education, as shown by the inspiring example of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai.

But change, particularly of entrenched social norms, requires strong leadership and firm political commitment - and the active involvement of us all.

That's why today's event is important. It underlines the fact that gender equality is not a concern for some, but everyone. Making the sustainable development goals gender equal - in design, purpose, execution and follow-up - will benefit all of us: women and girls, men and boys.

The Swedish feminist government is committed to working with others to achieve this. And I commit, by the power of my office and my personal conviction, to do my share.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech at launch of UN Women "HeForShe IMPACT 10x10x10 Initiative"

Published 23 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

World Economic Forum, Davos 23 januari 2015 Check
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Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Speech at the Swedish-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce

Published 03 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

São Paulo, Brazil 3 januari 2015 Check against delivery.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here today at the Swedish-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce. Brazil carries a special meaning for me. My many trips to this fascinating country have enriched me both professionally and personally.

Today, Brazil is one of the major emerging economies and a confident global player. Brazil is by far Sweden's largest export market in Latin America, and we are proud to be one of Brazil's strategic partners.

To me and to my Government, it is obvious that we should give Brazil the highest priority. We are committed to strengthening our strategic partnership and our bilateral economic and business relations. For these reasons, I have taken this (important) opportunity to visit Brazil.

Swedish industry has a long tradition and a strong presence in Brazil. Our trade relations go back to the late 19th century. Today, more than 70 000 people are employed in more than 200 Swedish subsidiaries and Sweden-related companies.

These are impressive numbers by any standard. And we can still refer to São Paulo as one of Sweden's biggest industrial cities. As President Lula said during his state visit to Sweden in 2007: "São Paulo really is Sweden's best factory after Sweden itself".

Traditionally, Swedish manufacturing companies have dominated our presence here in Brazil. Today, I am happy to see that our commercial ties

with Brazil are growing, as both our economies evolve.

A number of Swedish high-tech companies are now operating in Brazil, not least in the life sciences sector. And music streaming service provider Spotify and electronic payment provider iZettle are examples of Swedish service companies that are exploring the Brazilian market.

I want to thank Swedish business representatives in Brazil for your contributions to the rich and diversified bilateral relations that we enjoy today.

But, there are other Swedish companies that we are also very interested in – they are the ones that are not here yet. The size of the Brazilian market provides great opportunities for most Swedish businesses with an international focus.

However, especially our small and medium-sized enterprises may not be aware of these opportunities – or may hesitate to take such a big leap. Here, my Government has the ambition to do more.

My Government intends to develop an export strategy. This strategy will help to boost exports, increase Sweden's attractiveness for investment and exchange visits, raise the share of exporting firms and enhance the participation of Swedish companies in the global economy.

We have already started the process. But I want to emphasise that the strategy should be developed in close cooperation with the Swedish business community and Swedish companies.

Yesterday, I met with President Rousseff in Palacio Planalto. We had an excellent discussion on how to develop our bilateral strategic partnership in areas such as political dialogue, trade and investment, innovation and the environment.

We agreed that our relations are entering a new phase. One important reason is the recently signed contract between the Brazilian Air Force and Saab of Sweden covering the development and production of 36 Gripen NG fighter aircraft.

The Gripen contract is a joint strategic project, involving a significant share of technology transfer. Developing and producing Gripen here will reinforce Brazil's already strong position in the global aviation market.

It will also deepen and broaden our relations across the board, and will have

many positive spin-off effects in other areas, for many years to come.

Sweden has a long tradition of internationally successful industrial and technological companies – Saab is only one example. There are many reasons for Sweden's success.

One fundamental factor is the general understanding in Sweden, traditionally shared by industry and the trade unions, that technological progress and increased productivity are essential to ensure that Swedish industry remains competitive in world markets.

Today, Sweden is one of the most innovative countries in the world. Sweden's research and development expenditure (R&D) as a percentage of GDP is among the highest in the world. The largest share of R&D in Sweden is conducted in companies.

Innovation is key to our competitiveness and attractiveness. Our innovation capacity plays a major role in our ability to create jobs, achieve economic growth and provide welfare.

Innovation is very high on my Government's agenda. We will establish a National Innovation Council, which I will lead.

Our ambition is to make Sweden a world leader in developing innovative products, services and business models through strong engagement and joint efforts by all relevant stakeholders in business, academia, government and civil society.

We will seek a holistic approach that includes all relevant policy areas. Also, facilitating the development of environmentally sustainable technologies and innovations is one of the primary goals.

Historically, public sector and industry collaboration in Sweden has been an important driver of innovation. We would like to see this collaboration enhanced.

My Government has also announced its intention to develop a re-industrialisation strategy for Sweden – in close dialogue with the business sector.

The main aim of the strategy will be to create more favourable conditions for companies to locate more of their advanced industrial manufacturing and R&D in Sweden.

To achieve this, we will renew efforts to enhance key factors such as supply of know-how, skills development, research and innovation, and improved access to capital for industry.

The strategy forms an integral part of our Government's overall employment goal – to have the lowest unemployment rate in the EU by 2020.

(Yesterday I listened to president talking about *Patria educadora* in her inauguration speech) I understand that Brazil is also increasingly investing in education, research and innovation. I am pleased that Sweden is a partner to Brazil in these important areas.

For example, earlier this year our Embassy arranged the third and very successful Swedish-Brazilian innovation week in a number of cities throughout Brazil.

We are also one of the countries participating in the Science Without Borders programme, the scholarship programme launched by President Rousseff a few years back.

I believe that expanding cooperation with Brazil on research, development and innovation is a true win-win situation that will pay off both in the short and long run.

I also discussed trade with President Dilma yesterday. As we know, global trade patterns are constantly evolving, and today trade is largely conducted within global value chains, where different stages of the production process are located across the world.

Inputs are traded between countries, assembled somewhere, and the final product traded again.

Moreover, value chains highlight the need for services, sometimes called the 'glue' of global value chains. In fact, trade in services today accounts for a large share of world trade.

The growing fragmentation of production across borders highlights the need for countries to have an open, predictable and transparent trade and investment regime.

Today, tariffs, non-tariff barriers and other restrictive measures impact not only foreign suppliers, but also domestic producers. Restrictions on the movement of people performing services abroad also hamper trade. The world economy today needs every stimulus to spur global growth.

Removing barriers to trade through trade agreements is one such stimulus.

I want to promote free trade both multilaterally and through bilateral free trade agreements – But a free trade based on social justice and respect for democracy, where countries compete with good products and services – not bad working conditions and low salaries.

We can finally see some positive results in the WTO multilateral trade negotiations. And hopefully, we will soon be able to see some progress in the EU-Mercosul negotiations too.

While this requires political leadership both in Europe and in the Mercosul countries, it also needs the support of business communities.

Free trade between our regions would be of mutual benefit and boost growth, employment and innovation in all our countries.

This visit has once again confirmed the excellent relations that Sweden and Brazil enjoy. And I see potential for even stronger relations in the years to come. I invite you all to be part of the exciting journey we are embarking on.

Thank you.



Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Address at panel debate 25 years of the CRC: is the world a better place for children?

Published 20 November 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

New York, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 20 november 2014 Check against delivery.

Your Majesty, Excellencies, Partners and Friends,

Thank you for letting me share this moment of celebration with you.

The rights of the child are of great importance to Sweden and to the new Government that I lead. Immediately upon taking office, we began work to incorporate the Convention on the Rights of the Child into Swedish law. Our commitment is to seek all possible ways to improve children's enjoyment of their rights – locally, nationally and globally.

Is the world a better place for children today, 25 years after the adoption of the Convention?

Undoubtedly, much has changed for the better:

- The Convention is the most ratified human rights treaty in the world.
- Infant mortality is clearly declining.
- School enrolment is rising, not least for girls.

But in other areas, there is still cause for alarm:

- Only nine per cent of the world's children have legal protection against domestic violence.
- Tens of thousands of children under the age of 18 continue to serve in armed forces.

- There are over 160 million child labourers worldwide.
- 1.2 million children are trafficked each year - many for purposes of sexual exploitation.

These outrages are a call to act. Far too many children live under conditions that wipe out their smiles.

We must make the world safe for our children. It is our collective duty. This means that all forms of violence and abuse towards children must be eliminated.

We cannot wave the banner of humanity if we deceive the most defenceless and vulnerable among us, our children, by being violent towards them - or by tolerating such violence.

Thirty-five years ago, Sweden decided to ban domestic violence against children. Other countries have followed, but there are still more that haven't. Violent discipline against children is still a general practice in many countries – all over the world, my own continent included.

We need to work through law reform and the promotion of positive parenting. We also need to raise awareness, to change public attitudes and behaviour. To be successful in this new drive for child protection, governments need to join hands with civil society, religious leaders and media.

The right to education is necessary to make progress – and make it sustainable. Education is the most effective weapon we have in the fight against poverty. It is also a powerful tool to make societies more equal and to unlock the potential of all. We cannot spare any effort to make education universal, for girls and boys.

I believe that children have a right to hope, to a future full of promise. I see this as a right in itself – for our children to claim, and us to provide.

I grew up in a foster home. And I thrived. I know what it means to be offered a future, a hope, a promise. And I know what it entails to be denied it. That is why joining you today is so rewarding, personally and politically.

Of course, we have heard presentations of facts and data that contrast starkly with the principles of the Convention. But we have also taken good note of examples and solutions.

My own conclusion is this: the vision of a better world for children, which lies at the heart of the Convention, can indeed come true. We need to focus our minds and feel the call of duty to future generations. Get inspired and get on with delivering concrete improvements for them – so that every child smiles.

This is a commitment we should rally round. And that is how I'd like to celebrate this day.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

World's Children's Prize Ceremony 2014

Published 29 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

We have heard about the fantastic work of three Child Rights Heroes today, heroes who are fighting for a better world for children, and for us all.

Malala Yousafzai, John Wood and Indira Ranamagar – I would like to congratulate you on behalf of the Swedish Government, and the Swedish people.

Your work is truly inspiring, and a tribute to the spirit of mankind.

The World's Children's Prize programme has educated and empowered more than 36 million children, and taught them their rights and the promise of democracy.

The prize spreads a light of hope where rights are violated. It turns children into enthusiastic agents of change.

And to all the children who have led this ceremony, and to the millions of schoolchildren who have participated in the World's Children's Prize programme – I promise you this:

We will always be with you in our shared fight for a world where the rights of the child are universally respected.

Let us tirelessly continue our work, so that every child can be safe, educated – and free.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Prime Minister's Office

Remarks at High-Level Conference on Employment in Europe, Milan, 8 October 2014

Published 08 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

High-Level Conference on Employment in Europe, Milano 8 oktober 2014

Mr President, dear colleagues,
Thank you for the kind words of welcome.

I am very pleased to be here today, and to discuss the most pressing issue currently facing us: the lack of jobs.

I could think of no better event to make my first appearance among you as Prime Minister. And I am very much looking forward to working closely with all of you.

My Government, which came into office only last Friday, has made jobs and employment its top priorities.

We have set ourselves an ambitious goal: to have the lowest unemployment rate in the EU by 2020.

Let me say some words on how we plan to tackle this challenge.

Firstly, by investing in people.

The key to results in employment is education, skills acquisition and life-long learning.

My Government therefore intends to ensure that every young person completes secondary education and to improve the quality and range of higher education.

This will contribute to unlocking the potential and talent of our young

people, which is a major task facing us all.

My Government will also introduce a 90-day guarantee for unemployed young people.

Every young person will be offered a job, an internship, a trainee position or an education programme within a maximum 90 days of being unemployed. I am very proud to deliver this reform.

* * *

Secondly, we need competitive economies to create more jobs.

Trade is essential to drive growth, as is innovation.

My background is in manufacturing and I understand its importance in a modern economy.

I have therefore set up an Innovation Council under my direction, for cooperation and coordination in the area of innovation policy. My Government aims to increase the share of GDP devoted to research and development.

Growth must also be sustainable.

We should boldly embrace the smart greening of our economies and societies.

The jobs of the future lie in saving our planet.

We must look more to renewable energy sources.

Important discussions await us on this issue, but it is worth recalling the long-term implications for competitiveness and job creation.

* * *

Thirdly, we must be serious about the participation of women in the labour market.

Closing the gap between male and female employment rates would increase EU growth considerably – by more than 12 per cent by 2030, according to some estimates.

The current under-utilisation of women in the labour force represents an erosion of human capital.

This is something the EU cannot afford.

Sweden was pleased to join many other Member States, as well as the Italian Presidency, in writing a letter to the Commission on this subject.

It called for more attention to be given to gender equality in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The headline target of 75 per cent employment for women and men by 2020 will only be reached if there is a clear and stronger commitment to gender equality.

We hope this will inform the review of the strategy.

* * *

In closing, I believe that we have avenues and tools to address the challenge of youth unemployment.

The Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Semester provide opportunities to make progress on many of the issues raised by us today, particularly on growth-enhancing measures.

Nevertheless, one size seldom fits all.

Expansion of labour, decent work for all and structural reforms all require national action if they are to be effective and legitimate.

Sharing our experience, as we are doing today, is a great way to enhance our understanding and to increase the effect of our policies.

I am pleased to now be part of this effort.

Thank you.