



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement on the situation in Guatemala

Published 30 August 2017

**Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.**

The Swedish Government regrets the decision to expel the Commissioner for the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), Ivan Velásquez, which was taken by the country's President Jimmy Morales on Sunday. Under Commissioner Velásquez's strong and active leadership, the Commission has had a central role in efforts to counter corruption and strengthen the rule of law in Guatemalan society.

Sweden is the second largest donor to the CICIG, whose work is now held up as a model in the region and globally. Support to the CICIG is a central component of Swedish development cooperation with Guatemala, which partly aims to strengthen civil society in the country and promote a strengthened democracy and increased respect for human rights.

It is of the utmost importance that Guatemala's government protects the rule of law and fundamental democratic principles in this situation. We stand united with large sections of the international community in our intention to continue to support the democratic forces in Guatemala and to strengthen respect for human rights.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Security Council Briefing on Preventive Diplomacy and Transboundary Waters

Published 07 June 2017

National Statement on behalf of Sweden, Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister, at the Security Council briefing on Preventive Diplomacy and Transboundary Waters. Tuesday, 06 June 2017, New York.

Mr President,

Let me first express my condolences and that of the Swedish government and people on the loss of life following the vicious and cowardly attacks in Kabul and London. Our thoughts are first and foremost with the families of those who have lost loved ones and those who are now recovering from their injuries. We share the shock and outrage of the British and Afghan people and I assure you that Sweden stands with you at this time.

Mr President,

[Moving to the subject of today's discussion,] I would like to thank Bolivia for putting the issue of Preventive Diplomacy and Transboundary Waters on the agenda. Water is indeed one of the essential building blocks of human life; without it nothing can survive.

I also thank the Secretary-General, for his insightful and thought-provoking intervention today. You have vividly underlined for us both the challenges and opportunities presented by transboundary waters. You have also

underscored the vital importance of preventive diplomacy as a tool for averting conflict and fostering cooperation through water management.

Today's meeting coincides with another important meeting focusing on water, this time our seas and oceans. Sweden, together with Fiji, is proud to co-host the Oceans Conference, which, as you know, started yesterday. We believe this conference can be a game changer, leading to a reversal in the decline of the oceans to the benefit of people, planet and prosperity.

This is vital and urgent. The effects of climate change are real. They are being felt every day, not least by those who depend on rivers, lakes, seas and oceans to sustain their lives and livelihoods. For instance, in Sweden we are currently facing unprecedented low groundwater levels in some parts of the country, which in time could affect water supplies. It is imperative that we all respond to this challenge by raising the level of our global ambition to meet our global responsibility.

Mr President,

Sweden is deeply and fully committed to the prevention agenda being pursued by the Secretary-General and discussed by this Council in January. This commitment to a more holistic approach to prevention builds on an acknowledgment of the many varied and interlinked drivers of conflict. The issue of the management of transboundary waters is an important example.

A large proportion of the world's population depends on shared water resources for domestic, agricultural and industrial uses. How shared water is managed between communities has a profound effect on all aspects of human life as well as economic growth and sustainable development.

Considering its importance, it is not surprising that shared waters can also be a source of tension – fuelling conflict and threatening peace.

The negative effects of climate change have the potential to increase these tensions. To quote the Secretary-General: "Climate change is a threat in itself and a multiplier of many other threats – from poverty to displacement to conflict".

In response, we need to support countries' efforts to make informed and efficient decisions when responding to the effects of climate change, including on transboundary waters. The UN needs an institutional home for the climate change related security risks already affecting countries. Such a

home would ensure that the UN has the skills set needed to provide adequate risk assessments and to deliver comprehensive risk management strategies with regard to the impact of climate change. Together with increased capacity for more integrated, cross-pillar analysis, such work would also provide the early warning needed to support this Council's work to prevent conflicts emerging. This need was underlined in the Council's resolution on Lake Chad in March.

Mr President,

Improving the management of water resources so as to ensure water security must be a top priority at global, regional and national levels. We simply cannot afford not to responsibly and sustainably manage our waters. Issues of shared waters must, and can, be turned into opportunities for cooperation. Doing so can help prevent conflicts and deliver positive outcomes for all communities across borders. We have a number of tools to support these efforts.

Firstly, international law relating to water, which sets out key principles, amongst others, around prevention and avoiding transboundary harm, can play a significant role in preventing conflict.

The Århus Convention is an important instrument for ensuring the participation of the public and non-governmental organisations in environmental decision making. In this regard, it is equally important that the rights of indigenous peoples are recognised, taken into account and included in decisions regarding water resources.

Secondly, regional actors have a crucial role to play. Europe has a long history of managing shared waters. We have developed extensive systems for transboundary water governance, including an overreaching treaty framework. The European Union has lessons to share in this regard.

So too has Sweden, where we have made efforts to build experience in the area of water-diplomacy for the benefit of all countries. The Stockholm International Water Institute, and the UNESCO International Centre for Water Cooperation and Global Water Partnership, hosted by Sweden, hold extensive knowledge pertaining to transboundary water and actively engages in Water Management Dialogues.

Finally, we should enhance and deepen our efforts to work together around transboundary waters. Cooperation needs to be extended beyond managing a

shared resource, to areas such as increasing the quality of water and protecting the environment. Cooperation over shared waters can have far reaching positive impact and build trust far beyond the issue of managing a shared resource, further reducing the risk of conflict.

Mr President,

The waters that we share – whether rivers, lakes, seas or oceans –sustain life and support our common prosperity; however, they are more and more under threat.

No one country acting alone can respond; instead we must work together, as partners, across borders to secure our shared future and protect our planet for everyone.

Thank you



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement from Isabella Lövin regarding United States decision to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement

Published 01 June 2017

Through this decision, the United States – historically the largest emitter of greenhouse gases – chooses to isolate itself from a global agreement aimed at reducing emissions and addressing the impacts of climate change. Future generations and the world's poorest will be hardest hit by the effects of climate change.

The Paris climate agreement has received global support and the transition to a sustainable society has already begun. The rest of the world will not slow down to wait for the US. Those who opt out now will be left hopelessly behind once the world goes ahead and makes the transition.

Sweden remains committed to the Paris Agreement, to becoming one of the world's first fossil-free welfare nations, and to continue supporting actions in developing countries. We will continue to push the climate agenda forward. It is now even more important for progressive countries and regions to join together and show leadership – not least US actors, companies and states. The global level of ambition must be raised.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement in connection with the decision to stop US aid to organisations that support abortions abroad

Published 30 January 2017 Updated 30 January 2017

The Swedish Government is seriously concerned at President Trump's decision to reinstate the Mexico City policy, which prevents US aid funding organisations that work with issues related to abortion abroad. As a result, millions of women and girls may be forced to undergo unsafe abortions, risking their lives in the process. All women and girls should have the right to decide over their own bodies.

Sweden's feminist government is, and will remain, one of the strongest international voices for the universal right to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to safe and legal abortions. We are now in discussions with governments around the world to explore how, together, we can increase political and financial support for these issues. We are also talking to the parties in the Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament), where there is solid support for the Swedish line.

Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate



Statement from Ministry of the Environment

# Comment by Karolina Skog on the European Commission's proposal for endocrine disruptor criteria

Published 21 June 2016 Updated 21 June 2016

"My preliminary assessment is that the European Commission's proposal for scientific criteria to identify endocrine disruptors is inadequate. Although we welcome the fact that the Commission is finally taking action after significant pressure from Sweden, this proposal is insufficient to effectively regulate endocrine disruptors and prevent damage to the environment and health," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog in a comment.

"The Commission wants to impose very strict criteria for defining what can be deemed to be an endocrine disruptor, and I am concerned that the proposed criteria will not be able to prevent damage to the environment and to people's health, which is the actual intent of the legislation.

"In the worst case scenario, we will primarily be able to regulate after the fact any endocrine disruptors that have already proven to cause serious damage. This is not compatible with the legislator's intentions or the precautionary principle.

"At the Environmental Council meeting on Monday 20 June, I will therefore put questions to the Commission to obtain further clarity concerning the meaning and function of the proposal," says Ms Skog.

Sweden has long demanded that the European Commission must present

scientific criteria to define endocrine disruptors. Establishing scientifically based criteria is crucial to being able to regulate the use of endocrine disruptors, which are currently used in a considerable number of products. But to date, the Commission has failed to produce this scientific basis. Sweden therefore brought an action against the Commission in 2014, and in December 2015, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled in Sweden's favour.



Statement from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Today we celebrate the United Nations' 70th anniversary and Sweden's UN membership

Published 24 October 2015 Updated 24 October 2015

Today we celebrate United Nations Day. And we are doing so in a world that is more uncertain than for many years and in which the United Nations is needed more than ever. Global crises and challenges require common solutions.

Sweden is ready to assume its share of responsibility. This is why Sweden is strengthening its engagement in the UN and why we are seeking a seat on the Security Council for 2017–2018.

Sweden's UN policy contributes to peace, security, sustainable development and gender equality. It is part of a solidarity-based foreign policy and a means for responding to crises that affect us.

Sweden is one of the top contributors to the UN. We contribute personnel to peace operations, aid, climate financing and humanitarian assistance. Our contributions also include engagement, resources and ideas.

We also set clear requirements for a modern, effective, transparent and legitimate United Nations that is equipped to meet future challenges and take advantage of future opportunities.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Margot Wallström and Isabella Lövin on the earthquake in Nepal

Published 25 April 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Joint statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin on the earthquake in Nepal

"We feel deep sorrow about the thousands of people who have died, been injured or otherwise suffered from the powerful earthquake in Nepal and neighbouring countries.

Our thoughts and sympathies - and those of the entire Government - are with those who have lost loved ones, who are living in uncertainty about the fate of their families and friends, and whose homes have been destroyed.

The earthquake has caused great devastation and many people are still missing. Large-scale rescue operations and measures to assist the victims can be expected. Sweden will contribute through its core support to UN humanitarian bodies and is ready to respond to calls for additional assistance."