



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Keynote speech by Ms Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, to the High-Level Panel on Water Diplomacy during World Water Week on 28 August 2019

Published 28 August 2019

Check against delivery.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here today and discuss an issue of such fundamental importance to humanity: water.

I will start by quoting a favourite author of mine, Rolf Edberg:

“The eternal life cycle of water; it is the same water that I can drink from a small cold creek in the north of Sweden that once filled Cleopatras bath tub, been carried in clay vessels across deserts, that has rained down on the forests in the Amazons, passed through the cooling system of a nuclear reactor or sifted through the mouth of a hump whale or maybe fallen as snow flakes over my house on a dark winter evening. “

I would like to thank the Stockholm International Water Institute for organising this remarkably successful and internationally renowned event – World Water Week – over the past 29 years. And I would also like to thank all participants here today: researchers, experts, decision-makers and leaders in various sectors with connections to water. Your contribution to our

common knowledge and a future of sustainability is indispensable.

As many of you know, Sweden experienced one of its hottest summers in recorded history last year and suffered devastating forest fires.

We managed to bring the fires under control, thanks to the cooperation of national and international forces, but also thanks to the water in nearby lakes that responders could use to fight the fires.

Water saved our forests and our local communities.

Without water no society can survive. A large proportion of the world's population lives around river basins where water is shared by two or more countries.

The way in which water is shared and managed by communities has an impact on human life, economic growth and sustainable development. But, given its vital importance, water can also – as we all know – be a source of tension and conflict, threatening peace.

Climate change is the greatest challenge of our generation. Its impacts are already being felt around the world, with threats in many sensitive areas, including ecosystems, the environment, health, agriculture, food security, and peace and security.

Droughts and floods now occur more frequently than previously, forcing people to leave their homes. Some of the regions most affected by conflict also suffer from water scarcity, and climate change will exacerbate these problems.

To implement the goals set in the ambitious 2030 Agenda, we need to address the root causes of conflicts and poverty.

In 2017, during Sweden's term on the UN Security Council, a landmark resolution was adopted in relation to Lake Chad that emphasised the need for climate-related risk assessments and risk management strategies by governments and the UN. It was one of our key goals to make this connection clear also to the Security Council.

And it was the first resolution of its kind.

During my visit to the Sahel region in July last year, I personally met people who were already suffering from the severe impacts of climate change.

I met people displaced by drought and floods, people who were unable to feed their families because of extreme weather patterns. Such hardship drives tensions and mistrust, and prolongs conflict, making it much harder to adapt to the challenges of climate change.

To quote UN Secretary-General António Guterres: “Climate change is a direct threat in itself and a multiplier of many other threats – from poverty to displacement to conflict.”

Sweden’s commitment to the prevention agenda pursued by the Secretary-General – to a more holistic approach to prevention – builds on the acknowledgment of many varied and interlinked drivers of conflict.

The management of transboundary waters is an issue where conflict prevention and diplomatic efforts such as water/hydro-diplomacy can be carried out in a more holistic way.

I remember from when I was a European commissioner a conflict over a river and how diverging it would affect the surrounding countries. This created a very tense debate that showed how sensitive these questions are.

The EU has recently updated its Council conclusions on Water Diplomacy, and intends to enhance its diplomatic engagement on water as a tool for peace, security and stability.

Conflict is often an inevitable and always a transformative force in societies. The challenge is to find ways of managing and transforming conflict in peaceful and constructive ways.

The prevention of violent conflict is a key Swedish foreign policy priority, and was one of our main priorities during our membership of the Security Council, along with climate change, security, and the women, peace and security agenda. All of these converge when we discuss inclusive approaches to water diplomacy.

Women play critical roles in conflict prevention and natural resource management at local level. Yet their participation in political leadership, water management and formal peace processes remains disappointingly low.

It is crucial to remove obstacles to women’s participation in decision-making. Empowering women saves lives.

Networks of women mediators are a good example of how women can

contribute to conflict resolution. In 2015, I launched the Swedish Women's Mediation Network, which was inspired by a similar network in Africa.

Its members have supported dialogue and peace-building efforts in several conflict situations, focusing primarily on supporting local women in taking active roles in conflict resolution, including as part of SIWI's work in the Nile Basin.

Cooperation between countries is crucial, and has far-reaching benefits for societies, people, the environment and stability. It builds trust and reduces the risk of conflict.

There is great potential in strengthened cooperation on shared water resources in regions such as the Nile Basin, which has immense strategic value for the whole of North East Africa.

Increased cooperation is necessary, not least in light of the high population growth rate and the negative consequences of climate change that we are already seeing today.

Strengthened cooperation also brings significant prospects of positive outcomes on regional peace and stability, economic development, sustainability and environmental protection.

We need to cooperate closely with all stakeholders, and I believe that strong institutions are the best guarantors of such cooperation. Strong multilateral institutions at international, regional and sub-regional level are essential to managing differences, including over shared resources such as water.

Our position continues to be to support dialogue and strengthen the capacity of riparian states to cooperate and negotiate through intergovernmental structures, such as river basin organisations.

Sweden's foreign, security, and development policies go hand in hand. We have the world's first feminist foreign policy and feminist government and we are strong supporters of the women, peace and security agenda.

It is crucial to consider the gender-related effects of conflict, poverty and the scarcity of basic resources, such as water. My visit to the Sahel region clearly confirmed the need for consistency between foreign, security and development policy to achieve greater synergies and impact.

To contribute to help tackle the effects of climate change in the Sahel region

we decided to top up our assistance to climate- and security-related efforts there with approximately 40 million USD for the period 2018–2021.

Dear friends,

Climate change is a reality that affects us all, even here in the Northern Hemisphere. There are no one solution to these effects but instead they must be tackled collectively and with a wide range of political tools.

The international community must come together and step up our action to address current and future risks and challenges in an integrated manner, through sustainable and climate-resilient water management and inclusive cooperation.

Now is the time to act with science and knowledge and I know that all of you here today are willing and able to do so.

Because a world where water is not seen as a scarce and valuable resource is a world where no society can prosper. I look forward to fruitful and rewarding discussion here at this World Water Week.

Thank you for listening.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Margot Wallström at Taras Shevchenko National University

Published 03 June 2019

Kyiv, Ukraine. 31 May 2019. Check against delivery.

Don't envy, friend, a wealthy man:
A rich man's life is spent
Without a friend or faithful love --
Those things he has to rent.

Don't envy anyone my friend,
For if you look you'll find
That there's no heaven on the earth,
No more than in the sky.

Do you recognise it? Nje zavíduj bahátomu – of course, in your beautiful university, I had to cite Taras Shevchenko.

This is not only because I am a guest in Kyiv today. In fact, I often read from poems in my speeches, and there is a reason for it. Poetry, culture and music bring people together.

They help people to get to know and better understand each other. And isn't that what we need in foreign politics?

The topic of today is “The future of Ukraine in Europe and the Eastern Partnership”. To me Ukraine is already European and I am optimistic about the future of your country, because you – the vibrant young generation – are the ones who will shape it.

But of course, there are challenges. In this address, I would like to point to

three issues that must be solved if we want prosperity for Europe and for Ukraine: to overcome polarisation, to increase equality and to build trust in public institutions. I will talk more about Europe and Ukraine and less about the Eastern Partnership.

Firstly, looking at Europe today, we see a growing polarisation. Just take issues such as migration, climate change or gender equality as an example. There are really two opposing sides that both feel a kind of momentum.

Unfortunately, the public debate about these issues, especially on the internet, is often becoming poisoned by hatred and agitation.

In Ukraine, language and culture are being used to create artificial dividing lines in society. Also, the media landscape, where each candidate has their own TV channel, makes it difficult for people to evaluate parties and candidates.

We must overcome this polarisation, because it threatens to tear our societies apart. Our response should be to seek strength in diversity – to recognise that differences in backgrounds, opinions, worldviews, make us stronger together.

There must be forums where we can talk to each other in a respectful way. We are financing a project to strengthen public service in Ukraine. We hope that this will promote political discussions in Ukraine, and that it will reach all Ukrainians, regardless of their native language.

Secondly, we must deal with social inequality. The wealth of this world is unprecedented, and yet, in Europe, many people live under social and economic conditions that are unacceptable.

Sometimes people talk about inequality as if it were something modern, something good for business, for entrepreneurship. But let me tell you this – those who say so have not experienced poverty themselves. Social security and equality is about dignity, and it is about giving people the same opportunities to do what they want in life.

I know that the EU, the IMF and other donors are demanding that Ukraine carry out difficult reforms. Let me underline that the point of these

conditions is to make life better for ordinary Ukrainians.

When talking about giving people equal opportunities, I mean the whole population. Not just fifty per cent.

We are strong advocates for gender equality in Sweden. It is the right thing to do, because how can we talk about democracy and human rights, if we leave half the population aside?

And it is the smart thing to do, since all studies show that societies where women and men have the same rights, representation and resources are more prosperous, happier and more secure.

There has recently been a strengthened focus on gender equality within the Eastern Partnership, and we will push for more. In Ukraine, there has been good progress in the last few years. I hope the President and the next parliament will build on it.

The third issue is to build trust in public institutions. This is important in Ukraine, and it is something which is very close to the painful subject of corruption and rule of law.

How can you trust an institution if you suspect that its staff are filling their pockets and not doing their jobs?

Why pay taxes, if you don't have to, and if you suspect that your money is being misused in shady procurement schemes?

Why care about politics and reforms if you don't trust politicians?

To build trust takes effort and time. There must be a genuine willingness from the top do deal with it – and I hope that there is with this new administration – as well as a pressure from civil society and media. Looking at Ukraine, the conditions are there, and we will do all we can to help you with it.

This would be challenging enough for a country that was not exposed to external aggression. We condemn the Russian aggression and the illegal annexation of Crimea. We will maintain sanctions until Moscow changes its behaviour, and we stand with Ukraine in solidarity.

Besides the military aggression, Ukraine and other European countries are exposed to disinformation and hybrid activities. What I've just mentioned: polarisation, social inequality and mistrust, are precisely the factors that hybrid warfare targets and fuels. So, these are not just issues that are important because they make you feel good, they are important parts of building resilience and security.

To finish, let me repeat that we have these challenges in common, and we must tackle them jointly. By supporting and learning from each other and by strengthening the values that underpin the European cooperation. This – to tackle challenges together – is also the cornerstone of the Eastern Partnership, and indeed, of our Swedish-Polish visit to Ukraine.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Margot Wallström at the Stockholm Internet Forum 2019

Published 17 May 2019

Check against delivery

It is an honour to start off the conversation today at the 2019 Stockholm Internet Forum. I hope that the next few days will give you all a chance to discuss and form new partnerships.

Personally, I always find true inspiration when meeting such driven persons as all of you here today – you are the ones who drive democracy forward. I'm thinking not least of the civil society, NGOs, human rights defenders and all of you that make up the fundamental building blocks of what is democracy. Without your daily struggle democratic progress would not be possible.

This year's theme, shrinking democratic space online, is very timely to say the least.

I would like to address three issues today:

First, global trends

Second, threats and hate on the internet

and last, Sweden's role in meeting these challenges.

First, an unfortunate global trend that we see is that democracy is in decline,

Democratic principles and processes are being undermined, the rule of law scorned and human rights increasingly restricted and called into question.

Today, for the first time in over 40 years, more people are living in countries with authoritarian tendencies than in countries making democratic progress.

It is becoming more and more difficult for civil society, human rights defenders and media actors – democracy's voice bearers – to do their work. Those who speak out against unjust laws and government practices, challenge public opinion or those in power, and demand justice, equality, dignity and freedom, are being increasingly targeted. Most persons spend an increasing part of their lives online. The impact of the internet and social media has led to citizens being better informed and contributed towards a growing and more independent civil society in many places. Of course this also brings with it new challenges that I will return to later in this speech. Despite this, data shows that in 2018, global internet freedom declined for the eighth consecutive year.

Governments have censored information of public interest, state authorities have jailed more users for their online writing, and cyber-surveillance power has increased as bans on encryption and anonymity tools have become more common.

Freedom House reports that between June 2017 and May 2018, 71 % of all people with access to internet lived in countries where posting content on political, social, or religious issues could get you arrested.

In many contexts women have little if any access to public spaces, in these situations the internet is sometimes one of few areas accessible to women. But the shrinking democratic space is also affecting women's opportunities to access, participate and contribute through the internet and is thereby reinforcing the gender digital divide.

Second, I would like to address threats and hate on the internet,

The online climate for those exercising their right to freedom of expression online, such as human rights defenders and bloggers, is worsening. The online hatred and threats of violence are increasing in frequency and sophistication, with women and LGBT persons being particularly exposed. But increasingly also towards politicians or political activists. Especially women candidates who are now frequently verbally attacked online. This is

carried out not only by individuals, but also by state actors.

Hate, threats and violence against, and even killings of journalists in particular is a growing problem. According to Reporters Without Borders, 80 journalists were killed in the line of duty in 2018 – the deadliest year on record.

We can never accept threats and hatred being directed at journalists for merely doing their job. We can never accept that women journalists are often particularly subjected to threats and harassment just because they are women. We cannot stand idly by as organised online hate grows. When these voices are threatened, we must do everything in our power to protect them and empower them.

The Internet cannot be a place where hate campaigns and disinformation take over the flow on our social media. We together with social media actors have a common responsibility to make sure that our public debate is not ruined by extreme groups.

Thirdly, and lastly, I want to explain how the Swedish government is addressing these issues,

Despite all the challenges, there is a way forward.

We see a growing global understanding of the need to ensure privacy online. We see a growing political debate online, in countries where this was not possible offline.

Agenda 2030 and development goal 16 provide an excellent opportunity to counter the shrinking democratic space, online as well as offline.

The Freedom Online Coalition and its Advisory Network is one important actor in this joint effort, and I know that many of you are represented here today.

The importance of dialogue between stakeholders has never been more critical. This is why we argue that internet governance needs a multi-stakeholder system, where all stakeholders from governments to industry and civil society, are included.

As a response to the challenges democracy is facing globally, the Swedish government has also launched a drive for democracy. It will be reflected in

all areas of Swedish foreign policy, including in our development cooperation.

We intend to increase the democracy assistance and stand up for democracy's defenders and institutions, not least civil society. We will continue to support and protect human rights defenders, journalists, political activists, bloggers, academics and artists.

We will also support independent journalism and a pluralistic media environment, in order to strengthen democratic dialogue and counter disinformation and propaganda.

Sweden will continue to ensure a gender sensitive approach, striving for gender equality, through our feminist foreign policy and development cooperation. Democracy is not possible if half the population are not fully included.

Thanks to the internet, human rights are more widely known worldwide than ever before. The internet's capacity to bring people and politicians closer to one another must not be weakened, and we must stay on the task to bring everyone online.

Digitization gives us great opportunities. But the development also leads to risks and vulnerabilities. We must further strengthen both safety thinking and preventative protection. Human rights organizations, news agencies, companies, authorities and other organizations need to integrate information and cyber security as a natural part of their work. International cooperation on cyber security, both within the EU and in other international bodies, needs to be strengthened with the goal of a global, accessible, open and robust internet that is characterized by freedom and respect for human rights.

All around the world and every day human rights defenders, journalists, bloggers, actors, authors and other voices for democracy continue to beat the odds. As challenges mount we cannot forget to celebrate their successes. And we must continue supporting and defending them.

By doing this we can turn the tide and make sure that democracy and freedom of expression will carry us further into the 21st century, and that the internet does not succumb to hate and human rights abuse but instead becomes a place of debate and true dialogue.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Margot Wallström at the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in Rovaniemi, 7 May 2019

Published 07 May 2019

Excellencies, colleagues, Arctic friends,

I have listened carefully to the wise words expressed by all friends of the Arctic gathered around this table - Arctic states and Permanent Participants. All in the presence of excellent, hardworking Arctic Council experts and dedicated observers.

The message I hear is clear.

I hear a testimony about the importance of the Arctic Council. To help keep the Arctic a region of peace, stability and international cooperation.

I hear a testimony about the opportunities this cooperation creates to realize the great potential inherent in this region.

But first and foremost, I hear a testimony about a region of continued challenges and change. And yes – the scientific findings are robust: a climate crisis in the Arctic is not a future scenario – it is happening as we speak. It affects all the people who exist and work here, their everyday lives and prospects for the future.

In Fairbanks two years ago, I posed the question what Mother Earth would say if she had a seat at our table.

That she perhaps would remind us how the Arctic functions as our cooling system, perhaps how concerned she would be by the fact that things are changing so fast.

That only two decades from now, the Arctic Ocean could be largely free of ice in the summer.

That our planet has done all she can to dampen and absorb, to keep Greenland and the permafrost in Siberia intact. That she has sent us no invoices. But that this is about to change.

If anything, this has become clearer since we last met in Fairbanks.

The IPCC 1,5 degrees report speaks volumes.

On my way here, I read the Arctic Climate Change Update 2019, highlighting new findings. Annual air temperatures in 2014 to 2018 were all greater than any year since 1900. Sea ice volume in September declining by 75 percent since 1979.

This all demonstrates the importance of a fact and science based approach and the urgency of action.

Needless to say, making observations are not the same thing as taking action. Our current and future to-do-lists are daunting.

But something has happened. Perhaps a global tipping point of awareness and dedication has been passed with the emergence of an inspiring new generation of climate activists - the Greta Thunberg's of this world.

And the fact that climate change is manmade, should paradoxically give room for some optimism. It's in man's and women's hands to do something about it.

As always, the voices of indigenous people remind us that we are links in a chain. I hope that my grandson will grow up and still be able to see living polar bears.

Friends,

We all know the Arctic region is not an isolated land of ice.

It is not only wild nature and harsh landscapes.

It is a region very much defined by the people living there.

The Swedish Arctic is reindeer herding, important mining and top

universities.

It is breath-taking environments and popular tourist destinations, high-tech IT installations and space industry.

I invite you to come and see for yourselves. In October, Sweden is pleased to co-host - with the European Union - an Arctic Forum in our northern city of Umeå, back-to-back with the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Ministerial. I hope to see you there.

The North should develop and its people be able to lead good lives. Just as in any other part of our communities.

This underlines the need for sustainable development - economic, social and environmental.

With science-based policies and with the Paris agreement and the 2030 Agenda in place, we have a solid base from which to do so.

Our common goal, to save the Arctic, requires new scientific research, business innovation, shared priorities and a political will.

We need to take many determined steps towards a sustainable future.

And largely, over the years, I think the Arctic Council has succeeded in building a political environment that generates win-win solutions. So it's with regret I note that this year we did not manage to agree on a joint declaration.

The challenges in the Arctic will require an even closer cooperation. I pledge that Sweden will continue to support a strong Arctic Council.

Dear Timo, I want to thank you and your team for a job very well done and for your generous hospitality. And I want to support your Chairman's Statement from this meeting.]

And to Gudlaugur, good luck! And count on us. We're in this together!

Thank You!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Margot Wallström at R.M. Salas Memorial Lecture in New York

Published 02 May 2019

UNFPA, New York 30 April 2019 Check against delivery

Mr/Madam Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen – friends,

I am so honoured and happy to be here and to deliver the 15th Rafael M. Salas Memorial Lecture. It is also a great pleasure to do so this year, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of UNFPA. If I could I would mention all of you at UNFPA by name and thank you for all the important work that you are doing.

Rafael Salas was a pioneer in the field of population assistance. He succeeded in conveying a greater understanding of the crucial links between population and development to a broader audience, without ever losing sight of the people behind the statistics.

This year, we are also commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Programme of Action from the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994.

The UNFPA State of World Population Report 2019 outlines the journey we have been on since 1994 to ensure rights and choices for all. It shows that more needs to be done to close the gaps and achieve the goals agreed in Cairo.

I would like to take this opportunity to talk to you about gender equality,

then ending on sexual and reproductive health.

Let me start by saying this: these are difficult times.

We had a recent reminder of this just last week, when the UN adopted resolution 2467 on sexual violence in conflict.

The resolution is important and we have welcomed it. It advances the agenda of conflict-related sexual violence by focusing on the survivors, including children conceived from rape. A thanks and congratulations to the special representative, her team, Germany and others who fought and worked hard on this resolution.

However, sexual and reproductive health and rights were not included in the resolution. Such language was blocked by three permanent members of the UN security council, and you can read media reports about how that happened.

In other words: the international community could not agree on stating the need for basic sexual and reproductive health and rights of survivors of sexual violence in conflict. Shall we deny these victims emergency contraceptives? Safe abortions? The right to know about their bodies, to know about HIV and AIDS?

With all our knowledge, with everything we know and are capable of – is this where we want to be?

I will come back to why this is such a serious problem and why we need to do more to reverse the trend. But first, I would like to look at the broader context of the backsliding of democracy in the world. I will then say a few words about how Sweden works to advance gender equality through our feminist foreign policy. And finally, I will come back to the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and why we need to do more to promote it.

What happened last week in the Security Council around resolution 2467 was deeply disappointing. But I cannot say it came as a surprise.

No, these pushbacks against gender equality and women's rights come at the same time we see a decline of democracy around the world:

This year, for the first time in decades, more people live in countries with authoritarian tendencies than in countries making democratic progress.

We see this in the statistics on journalists killed in the line of duty. We see it in the hate speech on Twitter and Facebook. We see it in the undermining of democratic processes, institutions and judicial systems, in the erosion of public confidence in democratic values, and as the global elite grows richer and richer, and social inequality rises.

Wherever authoritarianism gains ground, women always seem to be the first to suffer the consequences.

For some reason, authoritarian leaders seem to care a lot about women – in the wrong way. They care about how they dress, how they behave, their sexuality. They oppose women's rights to decide about their own sexual and reproductive health. They threaten women's rights activists. They talk about gender roles that the rest of us thought belonged in the last century.

Why?

I put my theory as a question: are these powerful men afraid? Afraid of losing power, of losing a position, losing wealth. But maybe also afraid of losing love? They are well aware of the power that women hold: of giving life and love.

At the same time, there are parts of the world where democracy is on the rise, and where gender equality is being strengthened. It serves as encouragement to the brave women and men that dare to stand up and speak out.

Last week I was in Tunis, attending the international Forum on Gender Equality, a follow-up to the Stockholm Forum last year. Tunisia began its democratic transition eight years ago, and remarkable progress has been made on the rule of law, freedom of speech, and the role of women.

Another example from the same continent – one of Africa's largest countries, Ethiopia – recently appointed a government in which half of the ministers are women.

World finance institutions such as the World Bank increasingly highlight the role of gender equality in economic growth. I.e. limited educational opportunities for girls cost countries between \$15 trillion and \$30 trillion in lost lifetime productivity and earnings.

When you look at this, it appears that both sides of this polarisation are feeling growing strength and confidence – a kind of momentum.

These examples concern gender equality, but this is really part of a larger struggle, between democracy and authoritarianism; between openness and repression; between hope and fear: yes, one might even call it the struggle between good and evil.

This may sound dramatic, but complacency is dangerous. We need to be alert – those of us who believe in openness and democracy must join forces.

Excellencies,

Moving on to the practical side of gender equality, I would like to say a few words about our feminist foreign policy, and how we work globally.

I like to make the case that, to be relevant, policies must be concrete. Our work should seek to solve real problems in people's everyday lives, make improvements that can be felt directly.

By doing so, we also show sceptics and opponents of gender equality that there is nothing mysterious about it – that it is simply about removing obstacles that hinder women from having the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as men.

This is an important starting point for our feminist foreign policy. To structure this work, we use three Rs – rights, representation and resources.

This means looking at whether women have the same right to education, to work, to marry who they want, to divorce, to run businesses, to open bank accounts, and so on. Are women represented where decisions are made that affect them – in government, parliament, local assemblies, businesses and peace talks? Do women's and girls' interests receive the same resources – in budgets, in development cooperation?

We must always remind sceptics that gender equality is not a women's issue – it is a human rights issue, a democracy and a peace and security issue. It improves life not only for one half of the population, but for both halves of the population.

Gender equality leads to more sustainable peace. This is what the

international community concluded 20 years ago when the UN adopted resolution 1325. More women means more peace!

And it goes beyond that. Gender equality is a matter of democracy. Of human rights. Of social development.

Gender-equal societies are more prosperous. They are healthier, their economies stronger, their people better educated.

The reason for this is not that women are better than men (although we sometimes might like to think so...). But that we bring different experiences and different knowledge to the table.

And it is encouraging that our feminist foreign policy has received so much attention and gained a following. Canada also pursues a feminist approach to its foreign policy and France engages in feminist diplomacy. We see a strong interest in Spain, in Tunisia as I mentioned, and in many more places around the world.

I hope that one day, we can add the United States to that list.

Excellencies,

Let me move on to the third part of this lecture and return to the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights, one of today's most pressing issues.

Let me mention some facts from this year's State of World Population Report.

- 214 million women want to prevent a pregnancy, but are not using modern methods of contraception.
- Every fifth birth takes place without the attendance of skilled health personnel.
- Every day, more than 800 women die from preventable causes during pregnancy and childbirth.

A lot of progress have been made by the UNFPA but more needs to be done. According to another report, an average of nine US dollars per capita a year would be enough to pay for the contraceptives and health services needed to address these needs.

Nine dollars a year per person, and we would save hundreds of thousands of lives, improve health and well-being, and increase productivity and household income.

And yet, this basic human right to decide over one's own body, sexuality and reproduction is so controversial. For some reason, the female body has become a battleground.

For Sweden, one consequence of this has been a stepping-up of support to organisations working for sexual and reproductive health and rights, where other actors have retreated. That is why Sweden is such a proud contributor of core support to UNFPA.

Somehow it becomes even more disturbing – offensive even – when women who have been affected by sexual violence in war and conflict are denied these rights.

Having worked as the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, I can tell you that I still have nightmares about the horrors and fate suffered by victims of these crimes. The terrified 15-year old girl, gangraped and shot. Absolutely not ready to have a child of her own in a society where children born out of rape were called snake-babies.

It was especially encouraging that Dennis Mukwege and Nadia Murad were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last year for their work to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

Excellencies,

I want to mention Dennis Mukwege for one more reason: as a role model for men and boys. Because gender equality cannot be achieved without men. How can we achieve shared parental responsibility, economic opportunity, education and pay, without them?

And frankly, how can we ask women to participate and use their rights if they cannot even feel safe in their own homes? We must do all we can to stop violence against women.

I have something to say about fathers as well. You know, many successful women I have talked to seem to have had one thing in common while growing up: a supportive father who believed in his daughter.

That is not to diminish the role of mothers. But sometimes we forget how much it means to have a father who refuses to accept that his daughter does not have the same opportunities as a boy.

I would like to end this lecture by mentioning another man – Polish writer Tadeusz Rozewicz, who has written a poem about ‘Old women’ that I will soon read to you.

In this poem, Rozewicz, captures how, when boys and men are on the battlefields, it is women who keep life going.

And it makes me think: what would happen if women just stopped doing all this? If they stopped going to markets, cooking and taking care of children and households?

Rozewicz wrote:

I like old women;
Ugly women, mean women
They are the salt of the earth

Dictators clown around, come and go
Hands stained with human blood

Old women get up at dawn
buy meat, fruit, bread
clean, cook, stand on the street

Their sons discover America
perish at Thermopylae
die on the cross
conquer the cosmos

Old women are indestructible
they smile knowingly

And when they die
a tear rolls down a cheek
and joins a smile on the face of a young woman

Women carry. They carry children, water, firewood and bread. They carry the responsibilities of keeping a family together. Of bringing up children and making life work despite sorrow. They carry the painful experiences of

violence. Despite all burdens, they carry on.

And – coming back to where I started – so must we. I encourage all of you to carry on, despite these gloomy times. Despite setbacks, challenges and headwinds.

There are so many fantastic people that works every day to turn this around. Let us join forces, let us fight for what we believe to be right. Please join me in the action for gender equality.

I believe that the world belongs to those who work to make it better. Let that be all of us.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Margot Wallström at the NPT Preparatory Committee in New York

Published 02 May 2019

New York 30 April 2019 Check against delivery

Mr Chair,

Let me congratulate you on assuming the important task of chairing the third and final Prep Com of this Review Cycle. I can assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Swedish delegation.

Sweden associates itself with the general statement of the European Union, as well as the one delivered on behalf of the Nordic countries. My statement today adds a national perspective.

Mr Chair, dear delegates,

The backdrop to this gathering is the most challenging global security environment since the height of the Cold War. Its most striking feature is the severe lack of mutual trust. In a world with a global nuclear arsenal of some 15 000 warheads, each one capable of causing unspeakable human suffering, the absence of confidence-building is an acute problem.

As disarmament regimes are replaced by the modernisation of arsenals; key international treaties are left hollow or without proper implementation. The common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons has rarely felt more relevant. Yet it remains frustratingly remote, a frustration often heard from civil society that struggles, as they always have, to raise awareness on this important issue. A world where security is dependent on nuclear weapons remains a fragile one where a single human mistake can cause a humanitarian disaster. Or in the words of Dag Hammarskjöld:

”In this field, as we well know it, a standstill does not exist; if you do not go forward, you go backwards.”

So why are we here? We are here to turn this around, we are here because we are willing to carry this responsibility and start making real change towards building trust and ensuring disarmament. It is our job to find ways to turn the so-called doomsday clock back from its current setting of two minutes to midnight.

Mr Chair,

Reversing this negative trend will be highly challenging. Yet there can be few more urgent tasks. For the Swedish Government, it will be a top foreign and security policy priority for years to come. Three overarching considerations will guide Swedish policy:

Firstly, the crucial platform is the NPT.

For 50 years, the treaty has served global security very well – eminently underpinned by the IAEA, whose board Sweden is proud to have been nominated to chair in 2019-2020. But with the Review Conference in 2015 ending without consensus, and in view of developments since then, the future of the NPT cannot be taken for granted.

Nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states alike must now engage urgently, fully and pragmatically – also at a political level – to identify the common ground necessary for a successful outcome in 2020.

A good point of departure would be universal recognition that the three pillars of the treaty are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Progress will be difficult to achieve unless it is faithful to this logic at the heart of the NPT. To be clear: concrete disarmament commitments must be a central part of any consensus package.

To support such an endeavour, Sweden is hosting a ministerial-level meeting in Stockholm on 11 June. We have invited a number of countries with different security perspectives that can contribute in mobilising political support for an ambitious yet realistic agenda. From a Swedish perspective, this should include:

- a re-affirmation of the position of the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime;
- a re-affirmation of the continued validity of previous commitments made

- within the NPT framework – there can be no backtracking;
- an unequivocal expression against the notion of any nuclear use – “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought”
 - a package of measures, covering all three pillars of the treaty, which include progress in implementation of outstanding Article VI-related commitments; and, finally,
 - an improved NPT process which provides a framework for systematic follow-up in the years beyond 2020.

If NPT members can unite behind such a package, it would demonstrate that we are serious about breaking the vicious circle of recent years – that unlocking disarmament diplomacy is possible. That would be a very powerful political message, and my ambition is that the conference in Stockholm will contribute to this.

Secondly, we need to identify common ground, also on disarmament.

The traditional step-by-step approach contains several long-standing items, among them agreement on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, the entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and a global and legally binding agreement on negative security assurances.

The realisation of any of these would be a landmark achievement and their continued relevance should be recalled in 2020.

The NPT community cannot come empty-handed next year. There is a need for “actionable” steps – or stepping stones, a concept which was the subject of a side-event yesterday organised by Sweden in collaboration with Basic and further elaborated on in a working paper.

Areas to explore in the search for stepping stones should include:

- reducing the role of nuclear weapons in policies and doctrines, including by strengthening negative security assurances;
- reviving habits of cooperation, building on the fruitful interaction between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states on disarmament verification;
- ways of enhancing transparency on arsenals and fissile material stocks; and
- measures designed to reduce the risks of intentional or unintentional nuclear use.

All these areas are part of the NPT acquis, not least the outcome document from the 2000 Review Conference and the 2010 NPT Action Plan.

Thirdly and finally, we must build trust!

The purpose of the stepping stones, in addition to addressing real short-term concerns, would be to build the trust and confidence lacking today. Such an approach could help to unlock current diplomatic blockages, in the process making the more substantial disarmament steps already on the diplomatic agenda a more realistic future possibility.

Disarmament as a discipline should not be reduced to playing the role of a passive observer awaiting the arrival of better times.

One issue of profound importance will be whether the crisis plaguing strategic arms control can be overcome and a nuclear arms race avoided. The United States and Russia should assume the special responsibilities that comes with their possession of the overwhelmingly largest arsenals. They should take immediate steps to rebuild a constructive arms control relationship. A crucial first step would be to save the INF Treaty, however slim the chances, by Russia verifiably demonstrating its full compliance. Further, I urge the United States and Russia to agree on a five-year extension of the New START, a critical deliverable for the Review Conference. In the period leading up to 2026, negotiations should be conducted on a successor regime, encompassing not only strategic but also, crucially, non-strategic nuclear weapons.

Mr Chair,

In the coming two weeks, delegations must come together and constructively set the stage for the Review Conference. Everyone has a role to play in making that conference the success global security so clearly needs. Multilateralism needs to be at the center of our efforts. On this, and many other aspects the United Nations Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament serves as an inspiration. Sweden is especially proud to be champion on gender in the disarmament machinery.

I remain convinced that a world free of nuclear weapons can only be achieved by building trust, delivering on commitments and brave political leadership. Turning this vision into reality is our joint responsibility and in the end the reason we are gathered here.

Thank you!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Margot Wallström at Tunis Forum on Gender Equality

Published 25 April 2019

Tunis 24 April 2019 Check against delivery

Monsieur le Premier ministre, Madame la directrice générale, ministres, excellences, amis.

Je suis tellement heureuse d'être ici avec vous aujourd'hui. Je voudrais remercier le gouvernement tunisien, l'ONU Femmes et le PNUD pour avoir organisé cette conférence. Et à toutes et à tous ici présents – merci, merci beaucoup pour tout ce que vous faites. Votre travail – souvent dans des conditions difficiles – rend le monde meilleur.

Vous êtes nombreux ici à m'avoir rejoint à la conférence à Stockholm l'année dernière ! L'élan créé là-bas est toujours vivant, grâce à vous, et grâce à la Tunisie, qui a pris le relais.

This is a relay that will continue in France and at the Global Forum next year. These are links in a chain, strongly connected to the Beijing platform, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2020.

Tunisia is the right place for us to meet. This is a country where gender equality has made great progress. Almost half of your local politicians here are women. And your law on violence against women is commendable.

You deserve our homage also in a broader sense. Over the last eight years you have made remarkable progress in the development of democracy, the rule of law and freedom of speech. Tunisia is on the right path, and I encourage you to continue along this route.

There are more than 600 participants from 80 countries gathered here today. Students, entrepreneurs, activists, politicians, researchers, bloggers. Imagine

how many cultures, religions, traditions, societies are represented. In this diversity, we are all united in our work for gender equality. And, believe me, this is a time when such unity is badly needed.

I want to begin by describing the challenges facing gender equality and the struggle between good and evil that we experience today. After that, I will make the case for being concrete in our work, and point out three areas where we need to step up our work for gender equality.

Excellencies,

We meet in difficult times.

The latest example of this occurred yesterday, when the UN adopted resolution 2467 on sexual violence in conflict.

The resolution is important and we welcome it. It advances the agenda of conflict-related sexual violence by focusing on the survivors.

However, sexual and reproductive health and rights were not included in the resolution. You can all read media reports about how such language was blocked by some.

The international community could not agree on emphasising the need of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence for basic sexual and reproductive health and rights. Shall we deny these victims emergency contraceptives? Safe abortions? Sexual education? The right to know about HIV and AIDS?

I actually think that the United States should consider its membership in the Friends of WPS group.

That is where we are at the moment.

Women are always the first to suffer the consequences of authoritarianism, of a shrinking democratic space, of the questioning of human rights.

For some reason, these authoritarian leaders always start by caring about women. They care about how they dress, how they behave, their sexuality.

Just think of the opposition to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Of

threats to women's rights activists. This has all come in the wake of democratic backsliding, justified by a rhetoric of conservative values – talk of gender roles that we thought belonged in the last century.

And yet: why?

Sometimes, I think that these powerful men are afraid. They are afraid of losing power, of losing wealth, of losing love...

At the same time, we must not forget that in other parts of the world, there is a sense of momentum for gender equality.

Recently, one of Africa's largest countries, Ethiopia, appointed a government in which half of the ministers are women. I recently received news that a women mediators network in Asia has been initiated by the largest Muslim country in the world – Indonesia. World finance institutions such as the World Bank talk increasingly about the role of gender equality in economic growth.

In a way, what we are seeing is a growing polarisation, a situation in which two opposite camps are both feeling strong and confident.

I see this as part of a larger struggle, between trends of democracy and authoritarianism; between openness and repression; between hope and fear: yes, one might even call it a struggle between good and evil.

We need to recognise this division, and the fact that we have a responsibility; that it is up to us to fight for what we believe to be right.

I often make the case that we have to be concrete in what we do. Our work should aim at solving real problems in people's everyday lives; at creating improvements that are felt directly.

Partly because real change is what people want, after all.

But also, by doing so, we show the sceptics and opponents of gender equality that there is nothing mysterious about it. That it is simply about taking down obstacles that hinder women from having the same rights, duties and possibilities as men.

This is an important principle of our feminist foreign policy. To structure this

work, we use three Rs – rights, representation and resources.

This means looking at whether women have the same right to education, to work, to marry who they want, to divorce, to run businesses, to open bank accounts, for example. Are women represented where decisions are made that affect them – in government, parliament, local assemblies, businesses and organisations? Do women's and girls' interests receive the same resources – in budgets, in development cooperation?

We must always remind sceptics that gender equality is not a women's issue – it is a human rights issue and a peace and security issue. It improves life not only for one half, but for both halves of the population.

Gender equality leads to more sustainable peace. This is what the international community concluded 20 years ago when the UN adopted resolution 1325.

And it goes beyond that. Gender equality is a matter of democracy. Of human rights. Of social development.

Societies where men and women are equal are more prosperous. They are healthier, their economies are doing better, they are better educated.

The reason is not that women are better than men (although we sometimes might like to think so...) But that we have different experiences and different knowledge.

Now, let me point out three areas where our work can be stepped up.

Firstly, there is so much we can do to improve girls' and women's social and economic rights. I would encourage you to look at the World Bank report Women, Business and the Law for an excellent example of meticulous, systematic research on how women are discriminated against in economic activity in different countries. I actually think this report could be used as a tool, working our way through it, heading by heading, to eradicate discrimination against women.

In this area, the conditions for girls need particular attention. We should do more to support girls' right to education. And let me ask all of you to join me in the battle against child marriages. This practice has such a high price. It deprives girls of the right to be children, of their education, and of their right

to their own bodies. And imagine what an obstacle this is to development, how much a society loses, when so much potential is trapped.

Secondly, as I mentioned before, there is the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights. This is, perhaps, the area which is the subject of the most resistance from conservative forces. It is essential to counter this pressure by compensating with investments in maternal health, safe and legal abortions, access to contraception and sex education.

Thirdly: nothing about them without them. Women's participation – in democratic institutions, in justice systems, in business, in peace processes, in civil service. We should never accept that women have less than half the representation. If someone ever asks why, you might just ask them to look around. There's not much to lose by giving it a try, is there?

In all this work, we must do all we can to stop violence against women. Because how can we ask women to participate, to make use of rights and resources, if they are not safe even in their own homes?

Let me stress that gender equality cannot be achieved without men and boys. We all need to work together. Men and boys are central to contributing to an equal sharing of parental duties, influence, finances, education and pay.

I want to say something about fathers. Many successful women I have talked to seem to have one thing in common: a supportive father who believed in his daughter. That is not to diminish the role of mothers. But sometimes we forget how much it means to have a father who does not accept that his daughter does not have the same opportunities as a boy.

You might have seen the photo exhibition 'Swedish dads', which has now become 'Rwandian dads', 'Latvian dads' and 'Tunisian dads'. I know that this work has instigated debate and discussion in many countries – also here in Tunisia.

Excellencies,

Some of you might have heard of Greta Thunberg – a 16-year-old girl from Sweden who has become world-famous for her fight against climate change.

There is one quote that I would like to share – when adults have been saying that it gives them hope to see the activism of younger generations, she has

said “I don’t want your hope. I want you to panic. Then I want you to act”.

She is talking about the climate, another defining issue of our time. But maybe there is something for us to take with us, too – do we sometimes talk and debate too much, and act too little?

And yet, I cannot help but feel hopeful. Meeting with all of you, learning about your work, and your courage.

I would like to end this speech by citing a poem by the Polish writer Tadeusz Rozewicz, about ‘Old women’. What he captures is this – when boys and men are on the battlefields, it is women who keep life going. They are the ones who go to markets, cook and take care of households. Born in Poland in the 1920s, he surely knew what he was writing about...

I like old women;
Ugly women, mean women
They are the salt of the earth

Dictators clown around, come and go
Hands stained with human blood

Old women get up at dawn
buy meat, fruit, bread
clean, cook, stand on the street

Their sons discover America
perish at Thermopylae
die on the cross
conquer the cosmos

Old women are indestructible
they smile knowingly

And when they die
a tear rolls down a cheek
and joins a smile on the face of a young woman

I think this poem illustrates how women carry. They carry children, water, meat and bread, but they also carry the responsibilities of keeping a family together. Of bringing up children and making life work despite sorrow. They

carry the painful experience of violence. Despite all burdens, they carry on.

And so must we. Let us carry on the work for gender equality. Despite the setbacks, with the help of all good forces.

I am confident that the world belongs to those who work to make it better. And that means all of you. Bon courage!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech

Speech by Margot Wallström at Commemoration Ceremony Marking 25 Years since the Genocide in Rwanda

Published 12 April 2019

Stockholm 10 april 2019 Check against delivery

Ambassador, Speaker of the Parliament, Excellencies, Ladies and
Gentlemen,

I am humbled and honoured to take part in this ceremony to commemorate
the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, 25 years ago.

Special persons I have not met,
Dear friends I have not made,
Whose pictures I can still see,
But whose features will no more be,

The voices I have not heard,
The laughter I have not shared,
The treasure we have all lost,
The mother I loved the most,

I miss you, like a fish misses the sea.

In this poem, to “Rwandians I didn’t grow to see”, Thierry Gatete captures
some of the unspeakable. It has now been 25 years.

To me, this is an occasion to talk about three things: remembrance, reflection
and commitment.

Because these are days of remembrance. All over the world, we remember and honour the mothers, the fathers, the sons and daughters, the friends and relatives, who were murdered, because of their ethnicity.

We share the pain with those who survived. We pay our respect to those who opposed the genocide, or were killed trying to protect Tutsis.

We will never forget you.

Remembrance also means passing on the memory to the young: those who were not born when the Genocide occurred. Because it will be up to them, not to repeat the failures of the generations before them.

This is also a time for reflection. Long before 1994, the international community had pledged Never again. And yet, we failed to prevent the killings and stop the Genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda. How was it allowed to happen? Why did we not react, when we saw the signs?

The failure of the international community was our collective failure. The UN and the UN Security Council failed Rwanda. The world failed Rwanda.

One of the strongest testimonies of this comes from the general Roméo Dallaire, who at the time lead the UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda. In one of his books, he wrote that the

“international community, of which the UN is only a symbol, failed to move beyond self-interest for the sake of Rwanda. While most nations agreed that something should be done they all had an excuse why they should not be the ones to do it. As a result, the UN was denied the political will and material means to prevent the tragedy.”

In a time when the rules based international order is being under question, this is even more critical. The Genocide against Tutsi was, in a way, the uttermost consequence of a failure of the international system to act.

Also here, we must invite the young to reflect – on human rights, human dignity, about exclusion, xenophobia and hate speech. Again: it will be up them, to show that history does not inevitably repeat itself.

This is also a day for commitment. To fighting impunity, to the rule of law and to the respect for human rights.

The government has launched a drive for democracy, which I see as part of this commitment. It is about always defending democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It is about strengthening trust in political institutions and societies, defending freedom of expression and fighting for social justice.

All these are basic prerequisites for peace, reconciliation and prosperity. They are necessary for a sustainable development.

Excellencies,

The journey of Rwanda along this path of remembrance, reflection and commitment over the last 25 years has been remarkable.

Today, Rwanda is a transformed country, thanks to the determination of its people to rebuild society and to pursue national reconciliation. The Rwandans have transformed a legacy of darkness and despair into light and hope for the future.

Sweden's support in this process has been firm. We are a committed partner to Rwanda in the pursuit of accountability for perpetrators and justice for victims of the crimes. We supported the build-up of the Rwandan justice system. We support nationwide peace education for young Rwandans who were not born when the Genocide against Tutsi took place.

Sweden remains the main donor to the Kigali Genocide Memorial, where 250 000 victims are buried.

Our Prime Minister has announced that in 2020, Sweden will organise an international conference on genocide. The starting point is the memory of the Holocaust. The aim is to exchange experiences for safeguarding democracy and for combating racism, discrimination and exclusion. Rwanda's experience will be invaluable.

We must never forget the one hundred days of hell in Rwanda a quarter century ago. We will unite and renew our efforts to make sure genocide does not happen again. In remembering, reflecting and committing to a better future, we learn from history, and we honour the victims of Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs at “Capturing Technology. Rethinking Arms Control.” in Berlin

Published 18 March 2019

Berlin, 15 March 2019 Check against delivery

Ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you, Foreign Minister Maas, for providing a much-needed platform for discussing global security and emerging technologies, as well as rethinking arms control and nuclear disarmament.

I would also like thank all of you gathered here today. You are scientist and experts from a broad range of academia and think tanks and it’s truly inspiring to see all of this knowledge assembled here today.

Last year the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists announced that the doomsday clock has been adjusted by another 30 seconds. It is now two minutes to midnight. That is its highest alert status since 1953. This was to indicate that the global risk of a nuclear war could no longer be described as some distant dystopia. Reckless political rhetoric of nuclear-weapons use can once again be heard on the international scene.

Disarmament or non-proliferation cannot be achieved without including civil society and the general public.

Unfortunately, today we are seeing a trend towards weakening support for multilateralism and the return of nuclear weapons as a major political issue.

This development has several dimensions that we need to take into account,

including:

- the gradual dismantlement of the nuclear arms control system, which has served the world very well since the end of the Cold War;
- deadlocked multilateral frameworks, which have become victims of entrenched positions and a severe lack of mutual trust;
- the challenges facing the JCPOA, the situation on the Korean peninsula and the current tensions in South Asia;
- development of new capabilities, including low-yield warheads and delivery systems, which risk an increase in global arsenals for the first time since the mid-1980s; and
- irresponsible political rhetoric suggesting the possibility of using nuclear weapons.

Reversing these negative trends will be highly challenging, not least when they are compounded by the technological dimension we are discussing today. Yet – in view of the increasing global security risks – there can be few more urgent tasks.

This is also why Sweden will put non-proliferation and disarmament at the top of our foreign affairs agenda for the coming years.

Let me now turn to four specific topics on today's agenda: missile technology development, lethal autonomous weapons systems, cyber security and biotechnology.

Firstly, I am particularly concerned about the spread of new developments in missile technologies. Ballistic missile programmes are fuelling insecurities in the Middle East and Northeast Asia, and are posing a threat to international peace and security. At the same time, the trend towards the development of hypersonic missiles is creating new and serious security challenges.

As the current Chair, Sweden has facilitated discussions on how to strengthen the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, and I appreciate Germany's engagement on this issue. When debating how to regulate new missile technology, we must also consider how we can promote non-proliferation.

Secondly, on lethal autonomous weapons systems, Sweden is among those countries that have engaged actively in the discussions in Geneva and elsewhere, and I have commissioned a study by the Swedish International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) into the issue.

We do not yet see fully autonomous lethal weapons systems in the armouries of states. However, given the fast pace of technological development, this is a matter that needs to be prioritised.

Important principles include the full applicability of international humanitarian law to all kinds of weapons systems in armed conflict, including any possible future lethal autonomous weapons systems.

I would also like to highlight that states have an obligation under the Geneva Conventions to conduct legal and technical reviews of any new weapon they develop or acquire for their armed forces.

Given where we currently stand on lethal autonomous weapons systems, Sweden sees a great deal of merit in the proposal put forward by Germany and France to develop and adopt a political declaration. It would allow us to state, and commit to, the points and principles on lethal autonomous weapons systems on which we have common understanding.

Thirdly, on cyber security, let me initially stress that cyber security is not only about the defence of states and the resilience of critical infrastructure. It is also about our long term economic development, freedom of speech and information, as well as the security, integrity and rights of individuals. The security-oriented debate must not be misused to undermine the largely positive effects of a global, open and free cyberspace.

However, new technologies, including those with civilian and non-military applications, can create vulnerabilities and threats. Preventing and countering these threats will have to become an integral part of our foreign and security policies.

I am pleased to see the rapid development of policies and instruments at international level, particularly the EU's cyber-diplomatic toolbox and the OSCE confidence-building measures.

Finally, there is arguably no other area of technology where the stakes are as high as in the health sector – both in terms of the enormous potential for benefits to mankind and the terrible consequences of accidents or misuse for nefarious purposes. The pace of development in biotechnology in recent years has only been rivalled by that of computing power.

It is important for us to continue to assess nationally, and at EU and global level, how synthetic biology and related technologies could plausibly be

regulated in ways that enhance our common security.

The multilateral instruments protecting us against misuse include the prohibitions in the Biological Weapons Convention and the strengthened legislation and national controls that states are obligated to introduce under UN Security Council resolution against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, resolution 1540.

However, it is important that these instruments keep pace with relevant advances in biotechnology, and I am therefore particularly pleased that Germany took over Sweden's former role as Vice-Chair of the 1540 Committee at the beginning of this year.

Ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

Although many of these issues are highly complex and technical, they do share one thing. They are, at their core, political issues, and must be solved politically. Something that Foreign Minister Maas has rightly highlighted here – and in Munich – is that the multilateral system and our own engagement are key to finding the solutions we seek. The negative trend of less cooperation on arms control and disarmament needs to be reversed.

In conclusion, let me return to the topic of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which is a clear priority for the Swedish Government. We must all cooperate and do our utmost to reach a successful outcome at the NPT Review Conference in 2020. To this end, Sweden has launched a political initiative to pursue an ambitious and realistic approach that can reverse the present negative trend and move us forward.

Our common efforts to strengthen the disarmament regime cannot wait any longer. We must now ask ourselves 'what is the next step?' How can we successfully create platforms between nuclear and non-nuclear states? Who can we mobilise to engage in disarmament and weapons control issues? Do we really have all the verification tools we need?

These are questions that need to be posed at forums such as these and I'm sure today's discussions will deliver to that end.

Foreign Minister Maas,

I sincerely welcome your personal engagement on these issues. I look

forward to working together with you, Foreign Minister Blok and others to defend and promote multilateralism, disarmament and arms control.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Seminar on Feminist Foreign Policy

Published 08 March 2019

Stockholm, 8 March 2019 Check against delivery

Excellencies, ambassadors, feminists, dear friends,

When our embassy in Islamabad showed the photography exhibition ‘Swedish Dads’, they ignited a societal debate in Pakistan that influenced a decision which makes it possible for state-employed men to take ten days off when they become fathers.

In Shanghai, Buenos Aires and Bogotá, these photographs have been shown in local transport systems.

Johan Bävman’s photographs of Swedish Dads have been shown in 75 countries in total, and led to discussion and debate about gender roles and parenthood all over the world.

In many countries they have inspired local photo exhibitions such as Ugandan Dads, or Papas en Tunisie. The photos outside come from some of these local exhibitions.

I hope you had time to look at and be moved by them, as well as by the exhibition A Tribute for Those Fighting for Women’s Rights that were taken at our Gender Equality Forum last year.

I would also like to welcome everyone again to this commemoration of International Women’s Day, and the launch of a new joint diplomatic

initiative with France on the fight against trafficking for sexual exploitation.

I would like to firstly look back and highlight some of the results of our feminist foreign policy so far, and secondly say a few words about the diplomatic initiative against trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Our feminist foreign policy works. It inspires others, and it delivers concrete results. I want to say something about what we have achieved over the last four years.

We normally structure our work around three Rs: rights, representation and resources.

Starting with rights, we have had a strong focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights. This has been manifested through the UN, where we are the largest donor to UN Women, and where our core support to UNFPA is estimated to have prevented more than one million unsafe abortions since 2014.

Women's rights is also an important part of our 120 country reports on human rights, democracy and the rule of law that we regularly publish and update.

We have also worked actively to include the rights of women and girls in UN resolutions and statements. One example is our work to include language about sexual and reproductive health and rights in the UN resolution on child and forced marriages.

When it comes to representation, our work for peace has been important. In 2015 we initiated a women mediators network, which has been a model for similar networks on several continents. Our network has 15 members, who have been active in conflicts all over the world, including in Somalia, Colombia, Afghanistan and Yemen.

During our two years in the UN Security Council, we contributed to all peace keeping mandates now including provisions for women, peace and security. We achieved gender equality among the briefers of the Council, and we initiated sexual and gender based violence as a stand-alone criteria for sanctions.

We also launched the campaign Wikigap to increase the representation of

women on Wikipedia. Did you know that four times more articles on Wikipedia are about men than women, and that 90 percent of the editors are men? Last year, we arranged workshops in more than 60 countries, where 1 800 participants created more than 13 000 articles. These articles have been read more than 55 million times.

And there is resources, where we have strengthened the role of gender equality in the development banks, the climate funds and our own development aid. Our support to the World Bank's 'Women, Business and the Law' report has contributed to important statistics about discriminating legislation. We played a crucial role when the WTO adopted its first declaration on gender equality and trade in 2017.

If we combine all the activities and initiatives that the Foreign Service and more than 100 embassies have undertaken, we can count many thousands of concrete measures from our feminist foreign policy.

One important development over these four years has been the shift in culture in our Ministry. I would not say that there was ever a reluctance among our colleagues, but clearly a variation in knowledge and interest. Today all colleagues relate to this policy. Civil servants in Stockholm, diplomats, local staff, administrators. We don't have one ambassador for our feminist foreign policy – we have hundreds.

I have one particularly strong memory, which I believe many of you share with me – our international conference on gender equality in April last year. The conference was a success. Some 800 participants from more than 100 countries participated. It will be followed up in Tunisia in April this year and I look forward to taking part.

Secondly, I want to say a few words about the diplomatic drive against trafficking and prostitution that we are launching together with France.

Today, the foreign minister of France, Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, and I have agreed to develop a joint strategy for combatting human trafficking for sexual exploitation and prostitution.

The focus of this joint diplomatic drive will be the need to reduce the demand for prostitution, in Europe and globally.

We will do this by promoting legislation of the kind in force Sweden and

France, whereby the purchase – but not selling – of sex is illegal. It has proven to be very efficient in reducing the demand for prostitution, and in helping victims to get out of prostitution.

This will be supported by other measures. It can be bolstered by spreading knowledge about trafficking and prostitution; by stimulating debates and discussion about gender roles and gender equality; by supporting women's shelters and helping victims of trafficking to better lives, and by generously supporting sexual and reproductive health and rights.

We want to pursue this fight against trafficking with others. There are many civil society actors here today that I hope will join us. We also welcome more countries to join this initiative.

Now I look forward to hearing the panel, which will discuss this and other issues further, and I am especially happy to have the Ambassador of France with us on this panel.

Let me just end by again saying how happy I am to see you all here today. International Women's Day reminds us that our world is in as dire need of gender equality as ever. But our four years of a feminist foreign policy tell us that it is possible to do a lot if we aim high and integrate a gender perspective into everything we do. This gives me hope – and hope is the best possible medicine against any doomsday gloom that we might sometimes feel.

Thank you!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Government's Statement of Foreign Policy 2019

Published 13 February 2019 Updated 13 February 2019

On 13 February, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström presented the 2019 Statement of Foreign Policy in the Riksdag. Check against delivery.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sweden's security begins in Europe. EU cooperation gives us peace, stability and growth. It is also crucial in tackling the threat of climate change.

Yet the Europe we know is changing.

We can no longer take for granted that all EU Member States believe in the values that are the foundation of European cooperation.

Nationalists and extremists are challenging political systems across our continent, across the world.

Those of us who have faith in the future must now rally together to fight insecurity.

In a changing world, our task is to pursue a foreign policy that creates security in Sweden and around us.

To do this, foreign policy during this electoral period will have three priorities: the promotion of democracy, shared responsibility for peace and security, and active diplomacy.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Around the world, democracy is in decline. Today, more people are living in countries with authoritarian tendencies than in countries making democratic progress.

Journalists, elected representatives and human rights defenders are being harassed, persecuted and killed. Agitation and hate are poisoning public debate. Democratic processes are being undermined. Many people are losing confidence in the democratic system as the global elite becomes ever richer and social inequality grows.

In response to these developments, we are now launching a drive for democracy. We will do this together with the Riksdag, and will encourage other countries to join us.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Our democracy drive will be reflected in all areas of our foreign policy. It will involve providing support and sustenance wherever democracy can grow, and expressing criticism when it is eroded.

We will increase our democracy assistance and stand up for democracy's defenders and institutions.

We must involve more young people in the debate on democracy as the best solution to society's problems.

And we will require that all EU Member States respect democracy and the rule of law.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Fully functioning democracy is impossible without human rights, and Sweden has a crucial responsibility to promote these rights.

We will continue to produce country reports on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We will shortly publish updated reports on 29 European countries.

Persecution of religious minorities occurs in many parts of the world – this is unacceptable. We are strengthening efforts against anti-Semitism, and will organise an international conference on the Holocaust in 2020.

We will protest when freedom of expression is curbed, when journalists are silenced and when human rights defenders and LGBTI people are persecuted.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

There is a connection between growing social inequality and decreasing confidence in democracy. That is why we need more equality and fewer disparities within countries.

The world's resources must be spread in a spirit of solidarity. The goal of Sweden's aid policy is to reduce poverty. While other countries are cutting back, Sweden continues to allocate one per cent of GNI to aid. The focus areas are democracy and human rights, conflict prevention, climate, environment and gender equality. We will continue to build sustainable peace by linking humanitarian aid and long-term development cooperation.

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals can only be achieved through synergies between economic, environmental and social sustainability.

We must improve the social dialogue between states, employers and employee organisations. The International Labour Organisation, which celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2019, is one important actor in this. Now that the OECD has become the home of the Prime Minister's Global Deal initiative, it will be further developed and have an even greater impact. This is how we build fair societies.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

An important part of our democracy drive is to continue our efforts to ensure that women enjoy the same rights, resources and representation as men.

The Government will continue to pursue a feminist foreign policy – wholeheartedly, throughout the world. We see that a growing number of countries are being inspired and are following our lead.

Sweden is a leader when it comes to giving greater attention to women, peace and security in the UN, the EU and the OSCE. Our network of women mediators is being expanded, and similar networks are being created, including in the African Union. They are pursuing conflict resolution in a number of countries.

We will continue our extensive support to sexual and reproductive health and rights, for example by funding initiatives for legal abortions, contraceptives and sex education.

We will work against trafficking in human beings, combat violence against women and share our experience of the Swedish Sexual Purchases Act.

We will promote women's political engagement and economic empowerment.

The Government's international gender equality conference will be followed up in Tunisia this spring, and Sweden will provide organisational assistance.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Our second priority is shared responsibility for peace and security.

Climate change, nuclear weapons and terrorism know no national borders.

They must therefore be addressed by sharing responsibility for our collective security.

Climate is the defining issue of our time. Science predicts frightening consequences if we do not take action. We are still far from being able to meet the challenge.

Sweden will continue to show leadership in international climate efforts and will be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. We will seek forms of cooperation to tackle climate-related security risks.

The level of ambition in our climate efforts must be raised if the world is to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. Sweden is fulfilling its commitments on international climate financing and is continuing its engagement for the oceans and biodiversity. Through our development assistance, we are investing in renewable energy, energy efficiency and climate-sensitive agriculture. At the 2019 UN Climate Summit in September, Sweden will be proactive in showing the possibilities to combine climate action with economic growth.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. It requires an active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy combined with enhanced defence cooperation – particularly with Finland – and credible national defence capabilities.

Sweden's foreign and security policy builds on cohesion in the EU and increased cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic region and the Baltic Sea region, in the UN and the OSCE, and through partnership with NATO.

Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or a Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. We must therefore be able to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military.

Our security is dependent on the European security order being respected, and we will act through the EU, as well as in the OSCE and the Council of Europe, to maintain it.

The transatlantic link is of crucial importance to Europe. We will uphold our bilateral relations with the United States, and cooperate based on values and interests. We regret that the United States has chosen to withdraw from a number of international agreements.

Nordic cooperation is a priority for the Government and will be further strengthened. We will strive for tangible improvements for those of us who live, work and study here, for example by removing more border barriers. This will make our region more secure and sustainable.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The Government's policy towards Russia is based on two tracks:

On the basis of international law, we condemn the Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine, which resulted in more than 10 000 deaths, and the illegal annexation of Crimea. This is a breach of international law and challenges the European security order. We are critical of attacks such as that last year in the town of Salisbury in the UK. We are pushing for the EU sanctions against Russia to be maintained for as long as the reasons for their introduction remain. We support the reform efforts in Ukraine.

At the same time, we – like the EU – have contacts and dialogue with Russia and Russian society. We need to cooperate where we have common

interests. We support Russian civil society and encourage stronger people-to-people contacts. The Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Arctic Council are forums in which we have concrete cooperation.

Arctic issues are important to global security. During the year, Sweden will renew its Arctic Strategy and host the EU's first Arctic forum.

The important Eastern Partnership will celebrate its 10th anniversary this year. We support the participating countries' development towards stable democracies.

Shared responsibility for peace and security also means jointly addressing attempts to create division and instability in our societies. The Government is also working together with other countries to address non-military threats, such as terrorism or those of a cyber or hybrid nature.

Equality and democracy play important roles in building common security. A society characterised by social justice and confidence in its institutions is better equipped to cope with the security challenges of our time.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The European Union is our most important foreign policy arena. A strong and united EU is of crucial importance in a time of uncertainty around the world.

We must strengthen the Common Foreign and Security Policy. We will hone the EU's instruments, including diplomacy, military and civilian crisis interventions, and development assistance and trade. We are contributing to the Permanent Structured Cooperation, which strengthens operational capabilities and effectiveness in the area of defence. We have played a crucial role for the Civilian Common Security and Defence Policy Compact.

The Government will continue to work to ensure that all Member States respect and uphold the EU's common values.

The elections to the European Parliament in May will be important. We need a Europe for fair jobs, a more ambitious climate policy, gender equality and social equality. Inequalities must decrease, and prosperity increase.

It is also important that the EU has a common asylum system that provides legal certainty, is humane and sustainable, and in which all countries take

their responsibility.

We regret the United Kingdom's decision to leave the EU, and are working for an orderly withdrawal. This will provide the best conditions to ensure that the UK's future relationship with Sweden and the EU will be close and trusting.

There must be clear EU prospects for the countries of the Western Balkans, but this requires continued reforms that strengthen the countries' institutions and develop democracy – work that takes time, and which we support.

Developments in Turkey are very worrying. The EU must both cooperate with, and place demands on, Turkey.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Global problems require global solutions. Sweden is a friend of the UN, and sees the need for reform.

On 31 December, Sweden ended its two-year term on the United Nations Security Council, where we were deeply engaged in the world's most serious crises.

In a polarised Security Council, Sweden stood up for international law, human rights, gender equality and humanitarian responsibility. We put the connection between climate and security on the Council's agenda.

At the beginning of our term, Sweden was often a lone voice for women's participation in peace and security efforts. Today, more and more Council members see the necessity of including women and girls to achieve sustainable peace.

The UN's and other international peace operations fulfil an important function in war-torn areas, and Sweden's contribution is appreciated.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

For almost 80 years, humanity has lived under the threat of nuclear weapons. In recent decades, this threat has been limited through various agreements. This has contributed to a safer, more secure world.

Apart from the risk of human error causing a human disaster, we are facing a number of problems:

Firstly, tensions between major powers are increasing now that the United States and Russia have suspended the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty on disarmament following Russian non-compliance. Security in our neighbourhood is deteriorating. The nuclear-weapon states must take joint responsibility and make concrete disarmament commitments.

Secondly, the most central agreement – the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons – is endangered by nuclear-weapon states developing new capabilities and not complying with the agreement to disarm.

Thirdly, North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programmes are a serious threat to international peace and security.

Finally, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, is now at risk. Iran's nuclear weapons capability has been reduced considerably since this deal was signed. The EU is now taking concrete steps to protect the deal.

The inquiry report on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has been circulated for comment.

The Government's objective remains a world free of nuclear weapons. We will therefore start a new initiative and bring together a wide circle of countries in this work for shared responsibility for nuclear disarmament.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Our third priority is diplomacy. This means that we will seek dialogue and cooperation, even with countries whose values we do not fully share. We will prioritise our participation in multilateral organisations and stand ready to participate in peace processes.

Well-functioning international cooperation is the foundation of a rules-based international order founded on international law.

Sweden is now a venue for talks on disarmament and peaceful conflict resolution on the Korean Peninsula. With persistent diplomatic efforts, and good relations with all parties, we will continue to try to help remove a serious threat.

The political process for peace in Yemen took a decisive step with the

Stockholm Agreement in December 2018. We will continue our engagement. In a few weeks, we will host a humanitarian donor conference in Geneva for the third time. The suffering must be brought to an end.

When the Government launched an action plan for relations with Latin America and the Caribbean during the last electoral period, the trend of democracy-building had been positive for many years. Since then the situation has worsened.

Venezuela is one of the countries where democracy has been eroded over a very long period of time. The situation is desperate. The EU is now taking joint action, together with Latin American countries, to find a peaceful and democratic solution. Sweden is participating in the new contact group.

The Government is working for a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, based on international law. Sweden – like the rest of the EU – sees Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. We have long-standing, friendly engagement with Israel and Palestine. The Government contributes to democratic statebuilding in Palestine. We stand up for Israel's legitimate security needs.

Sweden's broad engagement in Afghanistan will continue, including by strengthening women's participation in peace processes.

Sweden supports the new Iraqi Government's reform efforts. Relations between the country's various ethnic and religious groups, such as Christians, as well as the status of the Kurds, are crucial for long-term peace and stability in Iraq.

Some 13 million people have been displaced in Syria. Sweden has given more than SEK 3 billion in humanitarian support since the outbreak of the war and supports the UN-led process to achieve sustainable peace.

I will never forget the appalling testimonies by Rohingya women on abuses in Myanmar. Sweden is pushing for accountability.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

We are strengthening our partnerships with African countries and with the African Union.

Our work in the Security Council is being followed up in the Horn of Africa. The protracted conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea has been replaced by a

historic peace. The Government has decided to double our development assistance to Somalia, where the situation is vulnerable. We will continue to work for positive developments in the region around the Red Sea. Our broad relations enhance our opportunities to contribute to reconciliation and development.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has undergone a historic transfer of power, but the country's challenges remain. Sweden is working for women's political participation and a strong civil society.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

India is playing an increasing role in the world and is an important partner for Sweden in trade and innovation.

China's stronger international position brings both opportunities and challenges. Trade with China creates both jobs and growth in Sweden. The democracy and human rights situation in China is very serious. The Government is working on developing a new China strategy.

But the winds of protectionism are blowing ever stronger. The trade conflict between the United States and China is a threat to the multilateral trade order.

Diplomacy is also promotion of our trade. Exports increased during the previous electoral period. The Government launched an export strategy that included a number of initiatives to strengthen the business sector's internationalisation and our economic relations with the rest of the world. This strategy will now be developed with a focus on economic, social and ecological sustainability.

Sweden stands up for free and fair trade. We defend the multilateral trade system, of which the WTO is a central part.

The Swedish Foreign Service is handling a number of consular cases. Some of them are politically difficult. Most people are helped in secrecy. We always act with their best interests at heart. The work to help Swedish citizens in distress abroad continues around the clock, every day of the year.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The worries of the world can sometimes make it seem like doomsday is close at hand.

But the world can be made safer and more secure – with more democracy, more solidarity, more cooperation, more sustainability.

Hope is not a feeling, but a way of acting.

Let's not forget that. Let's fight the doomsday feeling with a policy for hope and faith in the future – in Sweden and in the world.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Hanalys in Hanaholmen, Finland

Published 01 February 2019

(Check against delivery) Excellencies, distinguished guests,

The late Finnish author Tove Jansson once wrote: “All things are so very uncertain, and that’s exactly what makes me feel reassured.” As I begin my fifth year as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I have realised that this is the best way to relate to the surrounding world.

It is always a pleasure to see the beautiful surroundings and familiar faces of Hanaholmen. I am very pleased that my first trip of this electoral period is, as tradition has it, to Finland.

As neighbours and likeminded partners in the European Union, the United Nations and Nordic forums, the Finnish–Swedish relationship is stronger than ever. For small countries like ours, it is particularly important to have close friends. Both Finland and Sweden are militarily non-aligned and highly dependent on foreign trade. We are facing an uncertain and complex global environment that is tilting towards increased isolationism and where international norms and institutions are being called into question.

The Council of Europe has stated that Europe is facing its worst democracy crisis since the Cold War. Democracy will therefore be a focal point of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs during this electoral period.

The trend towards authoritarianism can be seen in our continent. Our open democracies are facing new and unprecedented challenges. Antidemocratic forces are seeking to sow uncertainty and division. In several parts of

Europe, the space for those who seek to hold power to account – civil society and independent media – continues to shrink. Disinformation and propaganda are being employed to effect political change.

In this context, it is crucial to continue working for a socially fair Europe. Social gaps feed into nationalist tendencies and jeopardise unity and cohesion. Sweden will always be a strong voice in defence of democracy.

* * *

We are at the beginning of an important year for the future development of the EU. The European Parliament elections, which will see a new Commission and new leaders in central positions, will have a crucial impact on the EU in 2019.

The leaders of the EU27 will need to continue their discussions on the future of our Union. Sweden will work actively for a Union that defends its fundamental values and is a strong voice for the protection of international norms and cooperation.

With regard to Brexit, the objective of the EU remains an orderly withdrawal. That is without doubt the best basis for a close future relationship.

At the same time, there is a clear risk of a disorderly withdrawal, and we need to be prepared for that too – to be able to deal with the immediate and most serious consequences, not least regarding citizens' rights.

The EU is Sweden's most important foreign and security policy arena. Strong and effective EU cooperation is crucial to our security and our prosperity – both in Sweden and in Europe. But Europe must take greater responsibility for its security. We need a more capable Union, not least for our security and defence policy, and we need a Union that collaborates closely with the UN and NATO.

A more capable Europe will also create better conditions for transatlantic cooperation, which remains central to Europe's security. In line with this, an open and pragmatic approach to third state participation is key to making EU security and defence cooperation as effective as possible.

This is of course also relevant in light of Brexit. We have strategic interests in maintaining close security and defence cooperation between the EU and the UK. The UK is not leaving Europe – it will remain an important partner

for our security.

There is mutual interest in continued UK contributions to EU crisis management operations and cooperation projects, such as on military mobility. This is a question of both our capacity to act, and of sticking together – as much as we can – in a more unpredictable world.

So, the EU must be open to partners. It must also mobilise a broader range of capabilities. This is why Sweden and Finland have championed a ‘civilian PESCO’, which was endorsed by the European Council in December. The Civilian Compact opens up new opportunities for the EU’s ability to act in the field, and we are keen to take this work forward together with our Finnish partners. For instance, we hope that the EU can contribute to the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement with civilian support in Yemen.

We look forward to continuing our close cooperation with Finland in these endeavours. Finland is assuming the EU Presidency at a very important juncture.

* * *

Together with our Nordic friends, we have spoken with one voice on matters related to security in the Baltic Sea Region, enlargement and the Eastern Partnership. Nordic cooperation strengthens the European Union. We also agree on the need to be able to respond to newer, more complex threats. Disinformation campaigns, cyber attacks, acquisition of strategic assets, influence operations, sabotage and so on are all included in the toolbox employed by antagonistic actors to further their interests, exploiting vulnerabilities in our open and democratic societies.

To address hybrid threats, a broader view of resilience is needed, as well as improved coordination within the EU and with NATO. We appreciate the leadership that Finland has shown, including through the establishment of the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats and in the context of the upcoming Finnish EU Presidency. You can count on our cooperation and support.

Climate and Security was a top priority for Sweden as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2017–2018.

The UNSC made considerable progress during these two years and, in several mandate decisions for UN Missions in Africa, has acknowledged the

link between climate change and security. There was also recognition that the UN needs to strengthen its capacity and establish an institutional home to provide climate-related risk analyses and strategies for the UN.

As a first step, we have supported the establishment of a mini-mechanism in the Department for Political Affairs.

The EU is also an important actor in this area. Not only in climate negotiations, but also in addressing climate-related security risks, making climate adaptation support sensitive to conflicts and ensuring that crisis management and peacebuilding efforts are aware of the impact of climate change in a geographical context.

We are working to ensure that the EU tackles the threat of climate change and stands firm on the Paris Agreement.

* * *

Gender equality and women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights are fundamental values of the European Union. But the EU's work on gender equality is under pressure, not least when it comes to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

The EU already has important tools for the promotion of gender equality. These include the EU Gender Action Plan and the comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security.

Globally, gender equality work is being challenged. Therefore, we constantly need to build and develop networks with actors at all levels. The cooperation between Finland and Sweden is fundamental in this work.

United we stand, divided we fall. That's why it is crucial to EU strength and credibility that we can safeguard our common values of freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights. These are the foundations of viable cooperation and mutual trust. Developments in some Member States are worrying. Together with the Commission and other Member States, we must continue our efforts to ensure that all Member States uphold respect for our common values. This endeavour must also extend to our neighbourhood. The continued EU integration of the countries in the Western Balkans, and the welcoming of these countries into our community, is the best way of promoting stability, prosperity and democratic

development in Europe.

Finally, I wish you every success in your important task of leading the European Union in the autumn. We stand ready to assist wherever we can and look forward to continuing our close cooperation.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Holocaust Remembrance Lecture 2019

Published 29 January 2019

(Check against delivery) Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends: I want to welcome you all to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and to the 2019 Holocaust Remembrance Lecture.

Let us first take a moment to remember and honour the many victims of the Holocaust, in silence. If you can, please rise. [...]

Thank you – and thank you for coming here and for joining us in showing the absolute necessity of remembering the Holocaust, which remains an unprecedented and atrocious crime against humanity - and a disastrous wound in the history of mankind.

The government of Sweden is committed to the fight against anti-Semitism and all other forms of racism, violent extremism and racially or religiously motivated discrimination and violence. The Prime Minister last week in his Statement of Government Policy named the fight against anti-Semitism a priority area for the government, and spoke of the International Holocaust Remembrance Conference we are hosting in the year 2020.

We have today the opportunity to listen to Professor Deborah Lipstadt give her thoughts on anti-Semitism and incitement to violence and hatred I want to thank her for accepting to come to Stockholm and to speak here.

It was yesterday 74 years since Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated. With Stockholm in a deep winter's freeze, we can barely fathom the last days in this extermination camp. The thought of survivors forced west on death

marches, huddling forward in the snow and sometimes barefoot, shakes us to the core.

The images and the testimonies from Auschwitz and other Nazi concentration camps are gut-wrenching. The world could see with their own eyes the unimaginable horrors of the Holocaust. These crimes were the result of rampant anti-Semitism in Europe in the 1930s and 40s. But of course, the Nazis did not invent anti-Semitism, nor did it go away with the end of World War II. Anti-Semitism draws on millennial-old stereotypes, myths and conspiracy theories – some of which unfortunately remain very much alive today. This must be fought with all our might and with the strongest resolve.

Indeed, we are now witnessing an increase in intolerance and hatred in Europe and the rest of the world – on the internet, in the streets, and around religious institutions. The incidents of violence and attacks against Jewish institutions around the world are too many to mention here. The government of Sweden condemns this violence unequivocally. Intolerance directed at minority groups such as Jews is also a threat to all of us, and to the democratic societies that we have historically fought hard to build.

Jewish life is part of Swedish life, and Jewish culture is an important thread in our European social and cultural fabric.

Everyone living in Sweden should be able to lead a life based on equality, safety and dignity – and without fear or threat when practising one's religion. The right of religious freedom or belief is a human right.

A range of measures are taken to protect Jewish life in Sweden, let me mention just a few of these:

- Education and better knowledge about history and the Holocaust in schools, including financial support to schools for visiting sites of the Holocaust.
- Enhancing security for religious institutions
- The government has recently given increased support to enhance the security of Jewish buildings. As I said earlier, the Prime Minister has also announced that Sweden in the year 2020 will host an international conference on the memory of the Holocaust. This is twenty years after the Stockholm Declaration, the founding document of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

Anti-Semitism is a global problem, and not limited to any national setting or regional context.

For centuries, Jews have been the target of unfair blame, wrongful accusations, senseless hatred and violence – simply because they are Jews. Anti-Semitism has deep and historical roots and it has taken many different forms.

But with the arrival of the internet, new borderless and anonymous environments have been created in which age-old conspiracy theories can take additional forms. Hence it is important to underline that Human Rights are as valid online as offline and shall be promoted, protected and ensured in both contexts.

Fighting anti-Semitism online is a huge challenge for the open and democratic world.

Here, governments need to cooperate with the media industry, civil society and specialists. Large social media companies like Facebook and Twitter carry a responsibility in these matters. Anti-Semitism are not only attacks on Jews but also a fundamental threat to our democracy as it challenges our fundamental human rights.

The EU Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online is an important step, but much remains to be done in terms of monitoring, implementation, accountability and enforcement.

Continued international cooperation is important. The EU, the United Nations and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance are vital in this work. I appointed in 2016 an ambassador for Human rights, Democracy and the Rule of law, who now heads the Swedish delegation to the IHRA. In 2016, I also appointed for the first time a Swedish Special Envoy for inter-religious and intercultural dialogue and to combat anti-Semitism and to protect religious minorities on a global level. Both are with us here today.

Bilateral consultations and cooperation with Israel, the United States and partners in Europe remain a priority.

The ongoing wars around the world, continued terrorist attacks underline all too clearly the need to address the human rights violations and abuses and the root causes of intolerance, hatred, violence and armed conflict.

It is clear that no single country can solve or combat these problems alone.

And it is clear to us that no set of countries or governments can solve these issues without working in close cooperation with civil society organisations.

An active civil society is key in this endeavour; education and dialogue are, without doubt, the most important cornerstones of a peaceful, inclusive and tolerant society.

Again, I want to really thank you for joining us in the conversation today, and with that I want to welcome Professor Deborah Lipstadt to hold the 2019 Holocaust Remembrance Lecture on anti-Semitism.



Speech

2019

Published 09 January 2019

Stockholm, Sweden, 9 January 2019. Check against delivery.

Vice Chancellor Enmark, Professor Wibben, dear friends,
Thank you for inviting me to speak today at this inaugural lecture. I know it is not your first time here, but welcome to Stockholm, professor Wibben. And warm congratulations on your appointment. And congratulations to the Swedish Defence University, for receiving a professor with such excellent qualifications in research on security and military studies, international theory, and feminist international relations.

I'm delighted that the idea of an Anna Lindh Professor at the Swedish Defence University has now become a reality. It was an idea that Robert Egnell and I came up with when we sat in my office discussing the best ways to advance the cause of women, peace and security. As many of you already know, one of my highest priorities during the past four years has been to pursue a feminist foreign policy.

I am going to keep this short, as I know that everyone, myself included, is eager to hear Professor Wibben's lecture. However, I would like to say a few words about Anna Lindh and her legacy. I would also like give an example of why I think a feminist foreign policy is so important: namely, the role played by women in the Colombian peace process.

Anna Lindh was a close friend of mine, and I still miss her immensely following her brutal murder in 2003. Unfortunately, her time in this world was all too short.

Anna once took her young sons with her to New York, where they visited the UN Headquarters. She showed them the General Assembly, they walked in the corridors and looked at art from all over the world, and they went to

the Security Council. Anna's sons really enjoyed the visit and were interested in everything they saw. But they soon noticed that wherever they went there were lots of men in dark suits. Anna's youngest son finally asked: "Are the women arriving later?"

Sometimes it takes a child to speak the truth, and this surely was one of those occasions. "Where are the women?" is a phrase I have used too many times in my political life. The lack of women in everything from decision-making to peace negotiations and economic life is still outrageous, and is something I know inspired much of Anna Lindh's work.

You are perhaps aware that when the formal peace talks between the Colombian Government and FARC began in Havana, Cuba, in November 2012, only one of the 20 negotiators around the table was a woman. A year later, civil society leaders organised the first-ever National Summit of Women and Peace and out of that summit came a clear demand for an inclusive peace process. Two years later, women made up 20 per cent of the Government's negotiating team and 43 per cent of the FARC delegates.

So, what happened? By organising themselves, these women contributed in crucial ways to the peace-making effort, including by broadening the agenda. Women addressed some of the primary grievances of affected communities, such as land restitution and the right to justice and reparations for victims. Women also negotiated local ceasefires, which improved the local security situation in towns and villages across the country.

Because of demands by women negotiators and civil society, FARC undertook several confidence-building measures, such as an apology process and the release of child soldiers. Finally, women built coalitions and rallied public support in favour of the peace talks. By repairing relations in communities affected by the conflict, women and civil society laid the groundwork for the peace-building efforts necessary for the agreement's long-term success.

The peace agreement in Colombia serves as a model of inclusion. Women were key to its success, and their continued involvement will be key to the implementation of the peace process and to consolidating peace.

This is just one of the many ways in which gender equality is not just a women's issue – it's a peace and security issue. Again, I am very happy and

proud that Sweden now has an academic centre for women, peace and security studies here at the Swedish Defence University. And I am convinced that this will contribute to advancing gender equality in peace processes and security policy, thus contributing to peace itself.

With that, I give the floor to Professor Annick Wibben.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by Margot Wallström at Yemen consultations

Published 13 December 2018

Rimbo, Sweden. 13 December 2018. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, dear Friends,

This is indeed a very special day for Yemen, for the United Nations and for us here in Sweden. I want to say first of all thank you all for travelling to this faraway, snowy place and for your earnest efforts these intense days.

Thank you Secretary General Antonio Guterres for joining us. Thank you Special Envoy Martin Griffiths. But first and foremost thank you to the delegations, the Government of Yemen delegation, led by Foreign Minister Khaled Alyemany and the Ansar Allah delegation, led by Mohammed Abdel Salam.

The support from the international community and the many key states involved has also been crucial. Thank you, Kuwait and Oman, for making these consultations possible.

If you remember when I welcomed you here a week ago, I emphasised the need for concessions, compromises and courage. During these past days, we have indeed been encouraged by your spirit of dialogue and constructive engagement. There is no doubt that this week has required great patience and created some trust.

A week ago, I also mentioned that the world is watching and would have expectations about concrete achievements. I am of course extremely happy to see that we have a Stockholm agreement today with important progress made on Hodeidah and exchange of prisoners as examples.

We also believe that more women mean more peace. I have met the Women's Technical Advisory Group and was impressed by their knowledge and skills. Thank you for the important role that you have played. I trust that more women will participate in upcoming talks. I am also pleased that civil society and other actors have been so engaged during these days.

When you soon leave Rimbo, I want you to know that you have many friends who follow your progress with great interest and engagement. The Yemen crisis requires continuous attention from the international community. Sweden will remain active in our support to the United Nations efforts for peace in Yemen. Next year late February we will co-host a United Nations conference on humanitarian assistance to Yemen for the third time. If further progress has been made - and I allow myself to be hopeful - that occasion could also be about assisting reconstruction.

To the delegations: Never lose sight of why you are here and who you represent. It is the people of Yemen – the men and women and not least the children. They suffer the most from this conflict.

The Yemeni people now want to see results. They want stability, prosperity and peace in their country. I encourage you to continue, as you have been doing here, to engage constructively and in good faith with the United Nations process to pave the way for stability and peace in Yemen. We hope that this positive spirit of Rimbo will prevail.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the IAEA Ministerial Conference

Published 29 November 2018

Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the at the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology: Addressing Current and Emerging Development Challenges, 28 November 2018 in Vienna. Check against delivery.

Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I will now make some remarks in my national capacity.

The state of our globe paints a gloomy picture; instability and conflict are increasingly fueled by climate change, and by lack of food or water. We are all too aware that these threats will increase as the effects of climate change grow. The IAEA makes an important contribution in addressing shared challenges through the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Agency disseminates benefits of nuclear science and technology such as detecting, controlling and preventing the spread of Malaria. By promoting research and capacity-building the IAEA supports Member States application of peaceful nuclear science and technology. This work also constitutes a tangible contribution to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, adding to the Agency's important role as a partner in both peace and development.

Sweden is very happy to have resumed a seat in the IAEA Board of Governors. We have a long-standing tradition of bolstering the Agency's

broad mandate. We provide extrabudgetary support to the Agency for water resource management in the Sahel, addressing ocean acidification and tackling marine plastics. Jointly managing water resources is a good example of an area of technical cooperation that aids in preventing conflict.

Let me take this opportunity to reemphasize the importance Sweden attaches to adopting a gender perspective, including women participation at all levels. I encourage the Agency to continue its mainstreaming work.

We must redouble our efforts for the successful implementation of Agenda 2030. I thank the Agency for arranging this conference which highlights one important part for achieving a sustainable future.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Security Council Briefing on Maintenance of international peace and security: non- proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

Published 26 September 2018

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström,
Wednesday, 26 September 2018. Check against
delivery.

Madam President,

After listening to all countries around this table, I hear support that multilateral and diplomatic solutions are urgently needed to address the challenges of today. International peace and security, and preventing conflict and terrorism, are rightly high on our agenda.

I therefore thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting on non-proliferation.

Madam President,

We have been asked to comment on four themes in this briefing: sanctions efficiency; capacity to implement; non-state actors; and weapons of mass destruction.

I think that the answer to all of these four issues is close multilateral cooperation.

The world would certainly be a much more dangerous place without the existing treaties and agreements of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Yet, this multilateral framework for non-proliferation and disarmament depends on our continuous commitment to collective solutions.

In many parts of the world, we see modernisation of nuclear weapons arsenals, increased missile capacities, the threat of chemical weapons use and a normalisation of the rhetoric surrounding all weapons of mass destruction. History has shown us too many times that such steps form a pathway to catastrophe.

The nuclear weapons states bear a particular responsibility for upholding and making good on the commitment inherent in the NPT of a nuclear-weapons-free world. To this end, the review conference in 2020 must pave the way for enhanced disarmament and non-proliferation commitments. Equally, Sweden reiterates the call on all States to sign and ratify the CTBT.

Madam President,

The NPT is the common tool towards disarmament and non-proliferation, but let me today also focus on three specific issues: the challenges to the Iran nuclear agreement; the DPRK's development of nuclear weapons; and the recurring use of chemical weapons.

Firstly, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Iran deal, is a historic achievement. It is a concrete example of effective diplomatic non-proliferation efforts. This agreement prevents nuclear proliferation in Iran, but also aims to avoid ripple effects in the region. As the IAEA confirms, Iran continues to fulfil its nuclear obligations under the agreement. As long as that is the case, the JCPOA effectively curtails Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons.

This is why Sweden, together with the rest of the EU, deeply regrets the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the agreement – a decision with far-reaching consequences that makes our world more unsafe. And frankly, what are the alternatives to this agreement?

In undercutting a concrete multilateral non-proliferation tool, it dangerously undermines our joint non-proliferation efforts elsewhere.

Together with our EU partners, we will try to mitigate the adverse effects of

the US policies. Sweden, and the rest of the EU, will continue to foster broad relations and dialogue with Iran, including on issues such as human rights. Iran's role in the region and missile activities are clearly a matter of concern. These concerns can and should, however, be addressed separately and not at the expense of the JCPOA. Security in the Middle East region can only be achieved through diplomatic solutions and enhanced cooperation, not through further polarisation and isolation.

Remember, we have tried this before; for decades isolation has been tried and it does not work.

Secondly, the DPRK's nuclear weapons programme has been a major threat to the global non-proliferation regime. Recent diplomatic efforts deserve our full and active support. The continued progress in the Inter-Korean Dialogue is very encouraging, and the summit between the United States and the DPRK in Singapore in June was indeed significant. All parties must now work to maintain momentum and take positive steps.

For the DPRK, this means that commitments must be translated into legally binding undertakings. The IAEA should be given a role early in the verification of the denuclearisation and disarmament process.

The Security Council and the international community must continue to stand united.

Thirdly, the use of chemical weapons is a serious violation of international law. Every violation undermines established norms and risks eroding the international taboo on these weapons. This is a very serious and worrisome development. The use of chemical weapons is morally abhorrent and can never be accepted.

In Syria, the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism has confirmed that chemical weapons were used repeatedly by the Syrian Arab Republic and by Da'esh. We supported the decision to task the OPCW to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. While a mechanism established by this Council would have been preferable, the issue was too important to be allowed to be blocked. This does however not free this Council from its responsibility to ensure that those responsible are held to account.

In Salisbury, a targeted murder was attempted using a nerve agent. Such assaults are absolutely unacceptable, and we call on Russia to fully

cooperate with the investigations.

Madam President,

We must never lose sight of why we are making the efforts to eliminate these horrific weapons. Until now we have not talked about the victims. I have myself met with survivors of nuclear weapons attacks, and I will never forget their stories. Victims of chemical weapons have shared similar accounts. It is important to listen to such personal experiences to understand what it is we are fighting for. It has strengthened my resolve to step up efforts for non-proliferation and disarmament.

Weapons of mass destruction are clearly a global threat that we must address together. Only through multilateral solutions, including from this Council, can we effectively prevent the use of these repugnant weapons. The multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament framework is also a key pillar of the international rules-based order. We owe this to the survivors and victims of past attacks, and we owe it to future generations.

Thank you, Madam President.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Managing complexity: Addressing societal security challenges in the Baltic Sea region

Published 12 June 2018

Stockholm, 11 June 2018. Check against delivery.

There is a strip of sea that glimmers grey at the sky's end,
it has a dark blue wall that looks like land,
it is there my longing rests, before it flies away home.

The poet Edith Södergran, 1916. Doesn't she capture something that many of us have in common: a slightly melancholic relation to the sea, our sea, the Baltic Sea?

Södergran was born in St Petersburg, lived in a Finnish city which is today part of Russia, spoke German and wrote her poetry in Swedish.

A true Baltic person, active during a time when our continent was torn asunder by tensions. World war, civil wars.

Remembering this is a good backdrop for my address today. Södergran reminds us of how closely linked our countries have always been. And her era reminds us of how fragile stability can be, if we do not cooperate to maintain it.

I will focus in this speech on our common security, and how we can act together to enhance it. After giving my view on the notion of common security, I will mention three points, or rather three levels, where I think we can do more to create security.

Dear friends,

The security situation in our region is more tense than it has been for a long time. The European security order is threatened, mainly by Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its aggression in Eastern Ukraine. In the Baltic Sea we are seeing more exercises and rearmament. We are also experiencing how activity in the hybrid and cyber domains – such as disinformation, trolls and hacking – pose new challenges for trust and cohesion in our societies.

The Swedish response to this new environment is threefold. We are strengthening our national defence, we are deepening our cooperation with others, and with our military non-alignment as point of departure, we carry out an active diplomacy and security policy.

The notion of security has many dimensions. During this conference, the focus will be on the broader aspects of security: about threats and challenges that don't care about borders or national flags.

These security threats – be they climate change, epidemics or the nuclear threat – affect us all, and we need to act together to face them.

The response that I want to promote is that of common security. Of building security together.

The Baltic Sea region is a good example of cooperation for common security. We have several organisations, including the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Nordic Council, where our countries meet and engage in practical cooperation.

And in times of tension, it is even more important that these organisations function as platforms for dialogue and cooperation.

Now let me point to three areas where I believe that strengthened cooperation between our countries would be beneficial for our common security.

Firstly, it makes sense to start with the individual. The world is, after all, made up of individuals and peace begins in the minds of people.

People-to-people contacts are the first building block for common security.

When we travel, make friends from other countries, learn new languages and get to know new cultures, we stop looking at others as 'them'. This kind of

understanding between people is a necessary condition for common security.

There is already a great deal of people-to-people exchange in our region. Erasmus programmes and other opportunities for exchange studies in our different countries. Funds for cultural exchange, sports. Both the CBSS and Barents Euro-Arctic Council have a clear youth focus, which I support fully.

I try to do my share: whenever I speak to youngsters in Sweden I say, "learn Russian", "read Icelandic authors", and so on.

But much more can be done. I think that the CBSS and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council should discuss how to promote the movement of young people between the member countries, perhaps even produce an action plan.

I think we should all look at how to make higher education even more accessible to young people in other countries around the Baltic Sea. And I often talk about the idea of creating a youth corps to give young people an opportunity to work as volunteers to meet different needs in society – such as environmental or social issues. Perhaps this could be done in a Baltic Sea states setting?

Secondly, if we zoom out a bit, there is the societal level. I would argue that the stability of our region is linked to the stability of our societies. We must give issues such as social inclusion, welfare, equality and gender equality a place in the discussion about security policy.

When we talk about resilience – isn't an equal society with high trust and low corruption more resilient in the face of any challenge?

Don't such stable and secure societies pose less of a threat to other countries?

There is cooperation on social issues, for instance in the work to fight trafficking and violence against children in the CBSS.

I would like to see more. An increased exchange of knowledge and experience, for instance, when it comes to the design of social security systems, the promotion of gender equality, and the integration of new groups and minorities into society.

Or more exchanges between researchers on welfare politics and security policy.

Thirdly, the planet.

This is where the notion of common security originally belongs. We are destined to live on this planet together. And, once again, we have no choice other than to survive together.

How many of you are grandparents? I became a grandmother a few years ago. And honestly, if I knew I'd like it so much, I would have wanted grandchildren before I had children.

When I became a grandmother, the future became even more important. And no issue is so crucial to the future of my grandchildren, for humankind, as the climate.

We see the changes already. The melting Taiga. The melting ice in the Arctic. How our Sami populations are affected by changing weather conditions. The last few weeks in Sweden have broken all weather records, and although it is hard to complain about a Mediterranean climate in Stockholm, the aftertaste was bitter.

Climate change issues are high on our regional agenda. Work is under way in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council to create climate action plans and reduce environment hot spots. In the Arctic Council, cooperation is under way among researchers. We have done a lot of work on the environment in the Baltic Sea.

But frankly, when it comes to the climate, this fateful issue, we owe it to our children and grandchildren to do all we can to mitigate the changes in temperature and the effects on us. We can only do this together.

Dear friends,

To make our peoples feel safe and secure is the core task of any government. In all we do, we should ask ourselves – how do we act to maximise our peoples' safety and security?

Safety and security – in Swedish the word 'trygghet' better captures this – reproduce themselves. If my neighbours feel safe and secure, I will be safer. Growing insecurity, on the other hand, creates a downward spiral. Perhaps that is what we are seeing in the world today.

Common security is not a zero sum game. It increases the more we build trust, the more we cooperate, the more safety we build as individuals, as societies, as humankind.

I sincerely hope that this conference will be one step further in achieving this.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the European Commission Representation in Paris – ‘What role for the EU in a worrisome world?’

Published 29 May 2018

18 May 2018

I am delighted to be in Paris today.

But I am also pleased in view of our important launch, at the OECD, of the flagship report of the Global Deal for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth. I am happy to note that Sweden and France are strengthening our cooperation to lead the way towards a globalisation that creates more and better jobs and makes inclusive growth a reality.

But this is not the topic of this lecture; instead I will talk to you about the role of the EU in a worrisome world.

Today the threats to our common European Union are everywhere. From populism and radicalism to climate change and inequality. The eight wealthiest people today own as much as 50 per cent of the world population. Multilateralism is threatened as militarism and polarisation dominate the global stage. The EU was constructed for another purpose, it was constructed to show that differences can be resolved in dialogue instead of on the battlefield. This is why we must now show unity, that the European Union is a partner to count on when times are tough, and that it does not shy away from global responsibility.

Critics never hesitate to point to flaws in the EU construction; I think we

would do well to remember that it is remarkable we have come this far. Over the past decades we have joined East and West and showed progress, growth and freedom of movement never thought possible in Europe. And we have only just got started. Sweden strongly believes in the European project – we believe in our ability, as a Union, to overcome divisions and move forward to address common challenges and create a better future for all our citizens.

We know that the strength of our Union lies in its soft power – this is the appeal also to our neighbours. The EU is a problem-solving machinery, a machinery that step-by-step tackles the problems that affect us as individual Member States, but that must be solved collectively as a Union.

Let me give you some brief examples:

The greatest challenge of our time is without doubt climate change. The US announcement to withdraw from the Paris Agreement means that the EU must defend it even more strongly. All our political tools must be used to strengthen its implementation around the world: development cooperation, trade, diplomacy and confidence-building measures.

The migration issue continues to create splits between Member States. We need to act together and in solidarity in the EU to handle the challenges caused by migration flows and to address the root causes. Sweden will continue working for a new asylum system which is sustainable and where all Member States take their share of responsibility.

We need to work for a social Europe for jobs, equality and growth. The Swedish Government is working hard to contribute to a more social Europe. The Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth in Gothenburg in November was a concrete contribution to the efforts to move these issues higher up the EU's agenda.

It is impossible not to mention Brexit, the most dramatic challenge our Union has seen in decades. The negotiations on Brexit have been characterised by unity and cohesion among the EU27. We believe that we all, the EU27 as well as the UK, will benefit from close future EU-UK relations.

At the same time, we see several signs of a positive development in our Union. The European Commission's spring 2018 economic forecast notes that growth rates for the EU reached a 10-year high and that growth is set to remain strong in 2018, while unemployment continues to fall.

Concrete decisions have been taken to improve the everyday lives of our citizens, such as the abolishing of roaming charges. We have negotiated free trade agreements with Canada, Japan and most recently with Mexico.

In this context I would also like to touch upon the worrying development regarding the American tariffs on steel and aluminum, a development that may have systemic consequences for our rules-based trading system. It is important that the EU continues to stand up for free trade and the multilateral trading system.

Our defence of free trade, multilateralism, democracy, human rights and the rule of law is what makes the EU a soft super power. These are the tools we must strengthen to engage with the rest of the world and show that differences are best solved together, in a respectful dialogue, around a table of equals.

I would like to share my views more specifically on three important areas of our cooperation today:

1. strengthening the EU as a security policy actor;
2. addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by developments in the Union's neighbourhood; and
3. developments in the Middle East.

EU cooperation is more important than ever for Europe's security. We face grave and complex security policy challenges – crises to our east and south, a security policy situation in our neighbourhood that has deteriorated, cyber attacks, climate change and terrorism.

Sweden attached a lot of importance to responding quickly and relevantly to the multiple terrorist attacks in Paris during the autumn of 2015, when France requested support in accordance with the solidarity clause.

Therefore, Europe must take greater responsibility for its own security, while maintaining the transatlantic link that remains central to European security. Sweden wants to strengthen the EU as a foreign and security policy actor comprehensively. The EU Global Strategy is our compass for what needs to be done to achieve long-term sustainable security.

I am also proud that Sweden is one of only a few EU Member States that have contributed to all 37 EU CSDP missions so far, both civilian and

military ones. That shows that we have a systemic interest in a strong CSDP.

France is a key partner for us, not least in Africa where our cooperation is long-standing and remains strong today, both in EU missions such as in the Central African Republic or UN missions such as MINUSMA in Mali.

But the EU is so much more than a military actor. Its greatest strength is its broad range of instruments. In my view, the progress made on defence cooperation last year must be followed this year by bold steps to strengthen our civilian crisis management capabilities as well. Look at the situation in Iraq, for example. We have just started a civilian EU mission to help reform the Iraqi police. This is what is needed for the ‘day after’ a conflict.

So, we are eager to deliver a substantial civilian capability development plan to establish how we can reduce the gap between what the EU currently has the ability to do and what a deteriorating security situation requires the EU to do. Already this year, this should be followed by a pact to strengthen civilian common security and defence policy – a kind of civilian PESCO.

Strengthening the EU as a global actor in the pursuit of peace and stability, an actor to be reckoned with, is in the interest of our countries as well as of the EU.

Let me now move on to speak about our neighbourhood. Of central importance to our unity, and to the EU’s strength and credibility as an actor, in our neighbourhood as well as globally, is that we can safeguard our fundamental values. Our common values of freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights are not negotiable, they are the foundation of the EU. They are also a precondition for our credibility vis-à-vis the rest of the world.

It is therefore deeply worrying that developments in some Member States create doubts as to whether our fundamental values are fully shared by all Member States. There must be consequences for this. We support the European Commission’s important work to uphold respect for our common values.

Yesterday, the EU and the Western Balkans met in Sofia at the first summit since the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003. Since then, much has changed in the Western Balkans, as well as in the EU, and our joint commitment to a European future for all Western Balkan countries is perhaps even more important today than it was 15 years ago. If we do not support strengthened

rule of law, democratisation and economic development in the Western Balkans it will come back to haunt us. We believe that a credible EU perspective remains the strongest driver of much-needed reforms and positive change in this region that will benefit us all.

Both our countries see Turkey as an important partner to the EU. Having said that, I am deeply concerned about negative developments, including constraints on freedom of expression, continued arrests and the prolonged state of emergency.

Another concern to us all is Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, together with the ongoing Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine. This is not only a matter of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It also represents a threat to the security order of the whole of Europe.

Developments in the Middle East

Today, many of the world's greatest threats to peace and stability lie in the Middle East. This is why it is very regrettable and deeply concerning that President Trump has decided to end US participation in the JCPOA. It increases instability within Iran and in an already volatile region. It also poses a threat to the global non-proliferation regime.

Sweden, together with the rest of the EU, continues to fully support the nuclear agreement and its implementation, and will work to preserve the JCPOA despite the US withdrawal. It is key that the EU Member States stand united, speak with one voice and act in a coherent manner.

The Israeli occupation of Palestine, and the way the stalled peace process is handled by the international community, are clear examples of why the EU must stand up for and protect international law. The violent developments in Gaza that we have witnessed over the last week are truly appalling and have rightly been criticised by the international community, including by the EU. These developments show even more clearly the need for all of us to take a clear stand on international law. France's leading role is commendable.

The EU has an important role to play in reviving the Middle East Peace Process. As the largest donor to Palestine, the largest trading partner to Israel, and as a concerned neighbour, the EU can and should play a role. Our two countries are very much like-minded regarding the Middle East Peace Process. I hope we will increase our cooperation even further here.

Increased cooperation is also needed for Syria. Seven years of conflict teaches us that there can be no military solution, contrary to the actions we witness from the Syrian regime and its allies, Russia and Iran. Therefore, the EU together with partners, particularly the US, needs to remain steadfast and engaged in supporting the UN-led political process – the only way to achieve sustainable peace.

This afternoon I will attend the meeting addressing these issues.

As the leading humanitarian donor to this crisis, the EU also needs to continue to press for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2401 – demanding an end to the violence and safe, sustained and unhindered humanitarian access to everyone in need across Syria.

We are living in a worrisome world and it is down to us to defend our basic values. As Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Löfven put it recently: "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."

Strong and well-functioning EU cooperation is crucial to our security and our prosperity in Sweden, in France and in Europe. A strong EU acting in support of established international norms, cooperation and institutions is needed, more than ever, on the global scene.

I look forward to continuing close cooperation with France and our other partners in the EU to face our shared responsibility to build an even better and stronger EU.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Address by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development on 7–9 May

Published 16 May 2018

On behalf of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, I am delighted to welcome you all to the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development. I would like to extend a special welcome to Somali Minister of Justice, Hassan Hussein Haji, and Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister, Adela Raz. We are very happy and grateful to have you with us, and to be able to benefit from your valuable knowledge and experience.

It is also a pleasure to see the familiar faces of our many bilateral, multilateral and civil society partners. Thank you for taking part in this event;

I also want to welcome my friend and colleague H.E. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the UN General Assembly. I would like to congratulate you on the very successful High-Level Meeting on Sustaining Peace in New York two weeks ago. Your leadership, together with the reform commitments of the UN General-Secretary António Guterres, is central to addressing the challenges facing the world today. We are looking forward to your keynote address and participation in the panel.

I would also like to thank the competent and professional staff of SIPRI for an important partnership in exploring the linkages between peace and development. We appreciate the thought leadership that you provide, and we look forward to important discussions over the next few days.

How do we make peace? This is a question as old as humanity itself.

Philosophers, politicians and diplomats have asked this question for centuries, yet the answer still eludes us. Perhaps we have been asking the wrong question. Instead of asking how to make peace, we should focus on the building blocks for conflict prevention. That is why this forum is so important.

Together we have the tools. We have the knowledge. We have the will. We also have power to effect change, to change the direction the world is taking. There are many things that need to be done, and I would like to point out three.

First: Address the root causes of conflict

We need to take a serious look at the root causes and drivers of conflict. Economic and social inequality, corruption, gender inequality, lack of access to education and information, lack of respect for human rights, sexual and gender-based violence, cross-border armed groups, refugees, land rights, trade in arms, drugs and minerals, and climate change are some of the often interwoven internal and external causes of conflict.

Addressing root causes and how they affect the population differently creates conditions conducive to peace.

We need more conflict analysis – and with a gender perspective. I recently participated both in the Stockholm Forum for Gender Equality and the High-Level Meeting on Sustaining Peace in New York. It is clear to me that these agendas are interrelated. To address root causes we need to involve the entire the population.

We also need to build on positive experiences of peace and peacebuilding. We need to support research that identifies mechanisms that support peace. We need to work with civil society and local communities. We need to look at what binds communities and societies together. In short, we need to build on what works and seek to understand why it works.

Second: Take steps to create lasting peace.

Violent conflict erupts between communities or countries, or between leaders – not in a vacuum. Conflicts are supported or opposed by different members of communities, countries and parties. It is our duty as an international community to identify those who obstruct and those who support negotiations, peacebuilding and reconciliation, and to strengthen

important actors.

Women's participation is essential to creating lasting peace. New research from European universities supports the idea of a robust relationship between women signatories and the durability of peace. Peace agreements signed by women have a significantly higher rate of success after 10 years, and researchers argue that interaction between women civil society groups and women signatories contributes to better agreements. This, in turn, contributes to longer-lasting peace. Then there is the obvious: making up half of the population, women should be involved in peacebuilding.

I will continue to promote and support inclusive peace processes, through women's mediation networks, support to civil society, international political advocacy, and by promoting the incorporation of a gender perspective.

Third: Use diplomacy.

Sweden is a small country. But small countries can make a big impact. It is important to speak out and stand up for what we believe in. We need to speak with each other instead of at or about each other. To foster conversations – and real listening.

We were proud to host the UN Security Council at Dag Hammarskjöld's farm, Backåkra, in April. We believe that meeting outside our usual meeting rooms brings about new ways of thinking, speaking and interacting.

Or as Dag Hammarskjöld himself put it: "The silence breaks through the armour of the mind."

That is why this SIPRI Forum is so important. A place where women and men of all ages can meet across sectors, experience and agendas. On behalf of the Swedish Government, I wish you forward-looking discussions, interesting panels and enjoyable coffee breaks.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Keynote address by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality, 16 April 2018

Published 18 April 2018

Stockholm, April 16th 2018. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ministers, parliamentarians, activists, ladies and gentlemen, friends,

I stand on the sacrifices
Of a million women before me
Thinking
What can I do to make this mountain taller
So the women after me can see farther...

These are the words of Indian-Canadian poet Rupi Kaur, a young woman with millions of followers.

I thought these lines were suitable for an occasion like this, because in one way, all of you here are the mountain that Rupi writes about. We, our work and our sacrifices are the stones, the cliffs, the rocks, that make that mountain taller, for those who come after us to climb.

It is an honour to stand before you today. For those who arrived this morning, a warm welcome to Stockholm and to the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality.

* * *

Three and a half years ago, we launched our feminist foreign policy. In fact, we invented the feminist foreign policy. We were the first in the world.

The reason was simple. The world would be a better place if women and men enjoyed the same rights, and had the same representation and resources.

It would certainly be a better place to live for half of the world's population: 3.5 billion people.

And if that is not enough to convince some people – it would become a better place for the other 3.5 billion people as well.

Because let's not forget the overwhelming evidence that gender equality is not only fair, but also of benefit to society. It has a positive impact on economic growth, health, education and peace.

So, in one way, gender equality seems to be the simplest thing there is. And at the same time, it can be the hardest thing in the world. Just think of the resistance and reluctance of some of those who would have to share their money, their power, their positions. Or of the excuses when you ask "Where are the women?"

That was the backdrop of our feminist foreign policy.

I will not go into too much detail about this policy. These three days will be full of information for you. But I would like, once again, to mention our analytical framework. I have spoken about it many times already, but "repetition is the mother of learning", as Aristotle said.

These are the three Rs: rights, representation and resources.

What this means is that anywhere we look, anywhere we work, we start by asking three questions.

Do women have the same **rights** as men? This could concern the right to go to school, the right to open a bank account or the right to marry the person you love.

Are women **represented** in decision-making processes? Are women present when decisions are made that concern them and their future – or in the leadership of international organisations, in governments and parliaments?

Do women get the same **resources** as men do? How do we budget? What and whose interests are served by the way we allocate our resources?

It often starts with another R: **reality check**. What does the situation look like? What are the statistics and facts?

Over time, yet another R has become relevant: results. The Rs seem to be reproducing themselves here...

I would like to take this opportunity to say something about what we have achieved, what I am proud of. The list is long, but here are just a few examples.

Through our policies, we have prevented hundreds of thousands of unsafe abortions in East Africa.

We have taken initiatives against violence, including sexual violence against women.

We have increased women's participation in peace processes and initiated networks of women peace mediators.

We have worked through our embassies to spread our prostitution legislation, which bans the buying – not the selling – of sexual services. The victims of prostitution should not be made criminals. More countries, including France and Ireland, are adopting this principle because of the effects that the law has had, for instance, on reducing the demand for prostitution.

Recently, we ran a global campaign to increase the visibility of women in Wikipedia, where four out of five articles about people are about men. Our initiative has so far generated more than 2 500 new articles about women.

And then there is this conference, which is also an example of our feminist foreign policy in action. I am proud to see people from all over the world establishing new contacts, sharing examples and stories, building friendships.

My good friend and predecessor Anna Lindh, who tragically lost her life, once shared a funny story with me.

She had taken her sons to the United Nations General Assembly. And during

the meeting, when all the delegates and world leaders were gathered in the hall, her youngest son looked around and asked:

"Where are the girls? Will they come later?"

The clarity with which children see the world...

I wonder what a child of that age would say about this conference. Not that there aren't any girls here at least!

I spent a long day here yesterday – I don't know what time I got home – chatting to participants from all over the world. Let me just mention a few thoughts that came to my mind.

I think it was Charlotte Isaksson who said, during a panel on women and security, "Just imagine having this discussion 15 or 20 years ago – back then it didn't exist at all". This makes you think. For all the challenges and problems there might be, there has been tremendous progress over the last few decades. Let us remember that, and build on that positive feeling.

Another thing, and I mentioned this yesterday, is that I am more and more convinced of the importance of concreteness. It has become even clearer during my conversations with people at this conference.

We – politicians, activists, academics – must not lose touch with the real world, with the real problems of real people. Let me again highlight the World Bank's report on Women, Business and the Law. Please do read it.

Excellencies,

I sometimes say that the world is awful and wonderful at the same time.

It is awful because of the limitless cruelty of the human mind. Because of starvation and poverty, war, violence.

Wonderful, because of the limitless empathy that is shown in the hardest of times. Because of those whose belief in what is right makes them defy fear and danger.

And I am confident that history belongs to those who work to make the world a little bit more wonderful.

I am confident that gender equality is one of the defining issues by which future generations will judge our performance as leaders, activists and citizens.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Child Forum at Fryshuset

Published 23 March 2018

Stockholm, 22 March 2018. Check against delivery.

Hello everyone!

What an honour to be with you here today. I'm speaking to all of you children in particular. I have looked forward to hearing about your experiences and ideas. I know that you have been working hard for this Child Forum. It is going to be fantastic to share this day with you.

I would also like to welcome our guests here today: the United Nations Secretary General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba, Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire and, of course, all other participants at this Child Forum.

Children should never have to experience war. Children have every right to be children, to choose their own interests, to go to school, have friends and play. But the world does not look like that. More than 250 million children around the world are affected by war and conflict. The children you just saw in the film are just a few of them. Wars and conflicts also displace many children and their families. Approximately half of all displaced people are children.

Children continue to be used as child soldiers in wars and conflicts. Children can be subjected to sexual violence and can also be deprived of their liberty. We see how schools, hospitals and housing areas are bombed and destroyed. Some of you have perhaps come into contact with war and conflict on the news, some may have your own experiences and others may have parents, friends or neighbours who have fled their homes because of war.

War is a catastrophe for people and societies, and children are often affected worst. This is why we have chosen to work with children and armed conflict in particular.

Sweden has long worked on children's rights, both at home, in the UN and EU. I know that this work can seem very slow, considering how many children are affected. But quite a lot is being done. We are cooperating within the UN, with child rights organisations and with individuals to safeguard rights and increase protection for children.

A positive example is the 120 000 or so child soldiers who have been released. It is important that they are allowed to return to their families and communities, that the children receive the support and help they need to make up for their lost childhood.

In the United Nations Security Council, a special group is working on children and armed conflict. During its time on the Security Council, 2017–2018, Sweden is chair of this group. Last year alone, this working group, under Sweden's leadership, successfully drafted concrete recommendations for five countries in conflict – Colombia, Somalia, Sudan, the Philippines and Nigeria.

Sweden also led a visit of Security Council members to Sudan to discuss how the Government there can best prevent children from being recruited as child soldiers.

We have gathered here today to listen to you. Your thoughts and your experiences are valuable for us and our work here in Sweden, and across the world. For more than a month now, you have learned about what Sweden is doing around the world, in the UN, and about children and armed conflict.

You have had contact with children in war-torn areas. So it is time to listen to your experiences, your needs and your dreams so that we politicians can make the right decisions. You children have a lot of wise words to say to us adults. Your voices must be heard.

You have looked at four areas in which Sweden is working to protect children in armed conflicts:

- work in the UN;
- children's right to have their voices heard;
- children's right to education; and

- children's right to health, including mental health.

And also here at home at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs we are working all the time on the basis of these four areas. In the autumn, Sweden organised children consultations, like the one you have today, in Beirut, Lebanon, and in Bogotá, Colombia. The focus then was refugee children and children in peace negotiations.

I will take your proposals with me to the UN Security Council when I travel to New York in July during the Swedish presidency. But, as you know, it can take time to change the world and we must therefore start by sowing the seeds of change. I like to say that in politics you not only need to have a lot of courage, but quite a lot of patience.

We will continue to fight for children's rights, not least for children who are affected by conflict.

We adults have a responsibility to protect you, so that you can protect us in the future.

Thank you for your kind attention.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at UNRWA conference in Rome

Published 15 March 2018

Speech by Ms Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs, 15 March 2018 in Rome, at the Conference "Preserving dignity and Sharing Responsibility – Mobilizing Collective Action for UNRWA". UNRWA is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Mr Secretary-General, Guterres
High Representative Mogherini,
Minister Shoukry,
Minister Safadi,
Commissioner-General Krähenbühl,
Director-General Da Silva
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have gathered here today because over the last few years, we have witnessed how UNRWA and its vital humanitarian work have been jeopardised time and again due to insufficient funding. We have seen how some countries take great financial responsibility for the organisation while others do not. We are here because this is an organisation we care deeply about and that carries a mission of great importance and that is a lifeline for millions of Palestinian refugees, an organisation that has undergone challenging transformations over the past year in order to enhance efficiency and reduce costs. A work that needs to continue.

This commitment means that the funding of UNRWA is our shared responsibility, both for the countries in the region as well as for the rest of the world. Despite the disappointment of this unprecedented funding crisis, the international community's strong commitment to UNRWA demonstrated in this room today fills me with hope.

I have co-chaired similar meetings on UNRWA's financial situation to ensure that more than half a million children would receive their basic education, to safeguard access to health care for 3.4 million people, and to uphold the rights and dignity of more than 5 million Palestine refugees.

I am deeply concerned about the situation that UNRWA and Palestine refugees are facing today. In the last 70 years we have been witnessing an ever-worsening situation on the ground: the increasing pace of settlement expansion and continued violence and demolitions are destroying the hope of a viable and sustainable two-state solution.

We need to remember that UNRWA is of strategic importance to all of us, exerting a stabilising influence on a region severely affected by conflict and extremism. By providing education, health care, countering hateful propaganda and upholding human dignity.

For those considering the financing of UNRWA too costly I ask of you to consider the costs of doing nothing. Because there are consequences if we fail the young generation of Palestinians. Consequences that could lead to regional instability, security threats and radicalization. We must instead do our part to bring hope to the young generation.

Despite all the efforts of host countries, donors and others, UNRWA is facing an unprecedented shortfall of USD 446 million. This is simply unacceptable. Through the mandate given to UNRWA by the General Assembly, we have all committed to supporting the Agency until a negotiated, lasting and just solution to the Palestine refugee situation is reached.

I am very pleased to see that Sweden is not alone in its long-standing and firm commitment to this goal. I would like to thank Jordan and Egypt for co-chairing this meeting with us. I am also very grateful for the strong commitment and leadership of the Secretary-General, for the support of the High Representative, and to all of you who have come here today.

In response to UNRWA's call for donors to front-load their donations,

Sweden contributed USD 58.5 million in January this year. Finding long-term solutions and predictable and sustainable funding of UNRWA is more important than ever. To help ensure this, Sweden will enter into a multiyear agreement with UNRWA this year.

However, alternative funding solutions alone will not save UNRWA. Commissioner-General, we commend your efforts and hard work to enhance efficiency, but also recognise that more work is required. In this process, you can count on our support.

A sustainable solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, including the final status issues, must be at the core of all our efforts, and will serve to bring new hope to the young generation of the region. Let all of us here today make this collective action for financing UNRWA a success.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at #WikiGapSthlm at KTH Royal Institute of Technology

Published 14 March 2018

Stockholm, 8 March 2018. Check against delivery.

Wikipedia is the world's largest encyclopaedia. It is the website we automatically go to when we need information on virtually any topic.

But there's a problem. Like the rest of the world, Wikipedia is far from gender equal.

There are four times more articles about men than there are about women. Four times.

Nine out of ten articles are written by men.

When women become invisible, whether in politics, the arts, or in science – our area of focus today – the potential of half of the population goes untapped.

This imbalance is not especially surprising – it is simply a reflection of a fact we already know: that everywhere in society women are ignored when it comes to rights, resources, representation, and when it comes to our role in history.

As a woman in politics and diplomacy, I am reminded of this every day. And I am convinced that there is not one woman in this room who has not experienced the same thing.

I believe in concrete action. I believe in overcoming obstacles, not just

talking about them. And I believe that WikiGap – this campaign that we are running all around the world today – is a perfect example of how concrete action can create change in the world.

Look at the map behind me. These are all the countries where we and our embassies today are hosting WikiGap events with Wikimedia and local partners. We can truly say that we are part of something global.

Today in New York, gender equality volunteers are writing about women and leadership. In Colombia, the theme is the role of women in peace processes. In Lusaka, it is the role of women in Zambian society. Zagreb, Moscow, Abu Dhabi. And we are at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, where the focus is on women in technology.

In more than 50 countries, Wikipedia articles are being written about significant women of the past and present.

Wow!

Let me say a few words about how this project began. Last year we organised our first Wikipedia edit-a-thon at our embassy in New Delhi. That marked the start of the global WikiGap initiative we are taking part in today.

For the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, it began with Feminism in India, a digital feminist platform, informing us about a report that found that only three per cent of Indian Wikipedia writers were women. Three per cent.

Feminism in India decided to do something about it and try to reduce this imbalance. It now organises monthly events aimed at increasing both the number of articles about women and the number of women writers and editors. The Swedish Embassy in New Delhi was a co-organiser of the most successful event to date, namely #IndianWomenInScience.

This served to inspire our embassies in Pretoria and Washington, and they have since run similar events. And so here we are today, in 50 more locations.

Just over three years ago, I launched Sweden's feminist foreign policy. The need for such a policy is obvious:

All around the world, women are ignored when it comes to rights, resources and representation.

I would like to touch very briefly on those three words that begin with 'R'.
Rights.

This can be about something as obvious as the right to resist forced marriage, or the right to education, the right to open a bank account or run a business.

Representation is about ensuring that women have a voice – in board rooms, governments and parliaments. They must be represented where decisions about them and their future are made.

Resources is about how budget funds are allocated. Do they go towards meeting the needs of women and girls?

It is a challenge to transform these abstract ideas into concrete results. But if we don't succeed, we risk losing our relevance.

Our focus has always been on achieving results. In Eastern Africa, we have prevented 745 000 unsafe abortions. We have strengthened women's participation in peace processes and launched networks of women mediators. We have inspired countries to adopt laws that criminalise the purchase – not the sale – of sexual services, and we have trained women political candidates and helped them advance.

And now we have the WikiGap campaign. We will be able to measure, in numbers, what impact it has had, and this impact will instantly become real to anyone using the internet.

In mid-April, I will be hosting a major international gender equality conference: the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality. Its aim is to provide an opportunity for sharing experiences and inspiring civil society and political leaders from all over the world. Our efforts here today will be highlighted at that conference as a practical example of how gender equality can be promoted, and I am sure that many will be inspired to take similar initiatives.

To the students who are here, I would particularly like to say this: the future belongs to you. This entails both an enormous opportunity and a burden. Unfortunately, you will have to deal with all the mistakes that politicians of my generation have made. But you will also be able to shape the world to be the place you want it to be.

There is little evidence that Gandhi actually said, "Be the change you wish to see."

It was most likely a woman. But whoever it was, I believe those words sum up the essence of what we are doing today – here and around the world.

Thank you for being part of this initiative. I wish you the very best of luck – today and in the future.

Thank you!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the workshop for humanitarian sanctions experts

Published 08 March 2018

Stockholm, 8 March 2018. Check against delivery.

Dear experts, friends,

Welcome to Stockholm and this workshop for humanitarian and international humanitarian law experts of the United Nations sanctions committees' panels.

One year ago, almost to the day, Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp were found brutally murdered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The loss has been deeply felt. In Sweden, Zaida was important to many people. Before becoming an international civil servant, she had been a youth leader of one of the political parties now in government, the Greens. Indeed, she was always on a mission to change the world for the better; to make it more just, equal and dignified. She was energetic, with contagious enthusiasm and an unwavering commitment to her ideals and service.

The investigation into the murder of Zaida and Michael has not yet been completed. Sweden supports the work of the follow-on mechanism appointed by the Secretary-General to assist Congolese investigative authorities.

I am aware that further international investigation may be necessary. And if so, I will call for it and work to ensure it is carried out. No stone should be left unturned in this work.

This is important not only for the sake of achieving justice for Zaida and

Michael. It also matters because they worked for the UN, as members of a group mandated by the Security Council.

Your safety must be ensured. As an organisation, the UN needs to draw conclusions from what went wrong. The recommendations contained in the report of the UN Board of Inquiry must be followed-up.

I believe that we need a criterion for listing persons and entities that have attacked UN personnel and experts. Sweden took the initiative to include such a specific criterion in the sanctions regimes for the DRC and Mali.

Dear experts, friends,

From my experience as foreign minister as well as a previous SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary-General) on Sexual Violence in Conflict, I know that sanctions can be an effective tool for peace and security. But there is quite a lot we could do to enhance their effectiveness. Let me examine four aspects.

Firstly, sanctions must be part of a wider strategy.

Acting under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, the Security Council has a range of enforcement options that do not involve the use of armed force. Sanctions come in many forms, in pursuit of a variety of objectives. The Council has applied sanctions to support peaceful transitions, deter non-constitutional changes, constrain terrorism, protect human rights and promote non-proliferation.

However, sanctions do not operate, succeed or fail in a vacuum. Sweden firmly believes that sanctions are most effective when applied as part of a comprehensive strategy – a strategy that also encompasses tools such as political dialogue or mediation and, importantly, addresses the root causes of conflict.

Contrary to the assumption that sanctions are punitive, many regimes are designed to support governments and regions working towards peaceful transition. The Libya and Mali sanctions regimes are examples of this approach.

Secondly, we must ensure fair and clear procedures for both imposing and lifting sanctions. We need to ensure due process in the use of sanctions.

Sweden has long been engaged in this work, both at UN and EU level.

During our current tenure on the Security Council, we seek further improvements to due process.

I would be the first to admit that we face challenges. But there are positive developments to build on, such as the Office of the Ombudsperson.

Thirdly, we need to avoid the possible adverse, indirect impacts of sanctions on the humanitarian situation in the countries concerned or in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Reports on the reduced ability of humanitarian organisations to respond to humanitarian needs, such as in the case of the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea, are of great concern. Sweden is therefore actively engaged in upholding the humanitarian exemptions.

We hosted a seminar in Brussels in October 2017 with the panel of experts of the 1718 Committee on DPRK. More than a hundred experts from EU Member States and institutions shared information, practices and experiences to improve implementation of the DPRK sanctions regime – which is much needed – without jeopardising humanitarian efforts.

Furthermore, Sweden has successfully worked for a listing criterion in the Mali sanctions regime regarding obstruction of humanitarian assistance.

Fourthly, we must update the scope and objective of sanctions as our understanding of conflicts becomes more sophisticated and comprehensive.

This is particularly evident in terms of the women, peace and security agenda. When applied to the sanctions instrument it has, for instance, led to the introduction of sexual and gender-based violence as a listing criterion.

Sweden called for such a separate listing criterion in the sanctions regime on Central African Republic. We also encouraged the Security Council to request that the SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary-General) on Sexual Violence in Conflict continue to share information with the sanctions committee on CAR. The Council also requested the inclusion of gender expertise in the corresponding panel of experts.

Dear experts, friends,

Sweden is strongly committed to the work of UN sanctions committees. As an elected member of the Security Council, we chair the sanctions committees on Libya and Mali, and actively participate in all the others.

We are therefore honoured to host this workshop. I wish you two productive days of sharing experiences, lessons learned and key information in the company of renowned Swedish experts on topics such as the investigation of international crimes. We will try to ensure that initiatives such as this will be considered a standard within the UN and encourage other Member States to follow this example. In that vein, similar workshops could be of benefit to you and other experts, and also help with implementation of sanctions.

And lastly: did you think I would forget to mention what day it is? Of course not!

Today is the 8th of March, International Women's Day. We celebrate gains, find strength in each other and resolve to take on the many tasks ahead to achieve gender equality – and indeed make our world more dignified and just. That is what the Swedish feminist foreign policy is all about.

In other words, it provides a good setting for today's discussion.

Once again, welcome!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Remarks at the UN Conference on Disarmament, Geneva

Published 27 February 2018

27 February 2018, Geneva Check against delivery

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, madam President,

Allow me first to thank the Secretary-General for his statement yesterday and for his strong commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and to the CD. I would also like to thank Under Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her strong engagement and persistence in urging us to make progress. My gratitude also goes to the Ambassador of Sri Lanka Ravinatha Aryasinha for his hard and successful efforts to establish subsidiary bodies of the CD.

Madam President,

As a politician coming of age in the 1980's, I have vivid, chilling memories of the ever-present threat of a possible nuclear Armageddon. The end of the Cold War brought the world back from the brink – for good, it was universally hoped.

Yet, much to my regret, we are currently witnessing a renaissance for nuclear weapons. The doomsday clock of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists was recently adjusted and it is now 2 minutes to midnight. This is a clear indication that risk of nuclear use is rising, either by accident or as result of confrontation. People, civil society organizations and governments are deeply concerned.

Their concerns were clearly expressed by the Secretary-General yesterday. The international situation is challenging. DPRK has been accelerating its nuclear weapons and missile program. The JCPOA, which has our strong support, is going through a challenging time. The same goes for the INF, a treaty of great importance, not least to the European continent. The New

START Treaty is being implemented, which is crucial, but what will happen after 2021? There are indications that the nuclear threshold is being lowered. Meanwhile, enormous resources are devoted to modernizing nuclear arsenals, expanding their lifespan by decades.

The United Nations Security Council has the primary responsibility to uphold international peace and security. As a current member of the Council we take that responsibility with the highest degree of seriousness. The Council shoulders its responsibility in many instances, but is clearly acting below the expectations of the international community when it comes to issues such as disarmament or non-proliferation.

The permanent members of the UN Security Council, also being the five recognized nuclear weapon states, must take the lead in upholding international peace and security.

This responsibility is also clear when it comes to disarmament and non-proliferation. Without constructive engagements and contributions from the nuclear weapon states there will be little progress. It is repeatedly stated that disarmament and disarmament negotiations are not possible in the present security climate. But rather than a pretext for inaction, it should spur us to break new ground. After all, it is in harsher times that efforts to break the dead-lock is most needed and brings the greatest rewards.

Madam President,

2017 was another lost year for multilateral disarmament negotiations in the CD despite the dire need for progress. It is in these times of hardship that we must multiply our efforts and show that the conference on disarmament, as a platform for diplomacy, can achieve results that bring us closer to our common goal of disarmament.

During the past weeks intensive consultations have been conducted under the able leadership of the Ambassador of Sri Lanka. During these consultations we sensed that there was an emerging will, underpinned by a spirit of compromise, to get the CD back on track. That sense proved correct. The CD eventually managed to adopt a decision that paves the way for structured discussions.

Now Sweden has assumed the presidency of the CD. Given the high priority that my government and I personally accord to disarmament and non-proliferation, we will make every effort to continue to make progress. But it

is only possible with the assistance and goodwill of all of you.

Madam President,

Let me outline three main priorities for the Swedish CD Presidency: Firstly, our immediate focus will be to take forward, together with other P6 states, the recent decision to launch structured discussions. To this end, constructive consultations are currently being pursued. I urge members to maintain a flexible approach so that coordinators and schedule for the subsidiary groups can be agreed swiftly, hopefully later this week.

Secondly, Sweden's clear ambition remains to make progress towards agreement on a program of work. We will conduct extensive consultations to this end, in parallel to efforts on operationalizing the working groups and build on the momentum from recent weeks. In this context, let us resolve not to make the perfect the enemy of the good. Historically, the CD has conducted highly meaningful work other than negotiations.

Thirdly, and related to my previous point, we must never lose sight of the fact that the core purpose for which this body was created was to negotiate multilateral disarmament agreements. That should always be our beacon. Over the years, several issues have been put forward as ripe for negotiations, not least a Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty. Another highly relevant issue is negative security assurances, which the NPT Review Conference in 2010 tasked the CD to take on.

Madam President,

To Sweden, as to most members of the CD, NPT is the cornerstone for global disarmament and non-proliferation. The Treaty has been resilient over the years, the number of nuclear weapon states are fewer than once feared and the treaty is with a few exceptions universal. That demands progress in all three pillars. My delegation, and myself, stand ready to contribute with concrete proposals and to work with all delegations committed to progress.

Since last year's meeting of the CD, negotiations took place in another forum, the United Nations, on a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. I see this treaty as a result of several disappointments and frustration in the field of disarmament, not least the failure from the nuclear weapon states to show concrete progress. But we must not let different views on that treaty prevent us from making progress here in the CD and at the NPT Review Conference.

Distinguished colleagues,

There are serious tensions in many parts of the world. Some of them involve states with nuclear capabilities. These states have the main responsibility to reduce tensions and avoid confrontation. But all of us have an obligation to contribute to the best of our ability. Let us make sure that we do our part to move the Doomsday Clock and the world back to safety.

Thank you!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech in the UN Human Rights Council

Published 27 February 2018

Geneva, 27 February 2018 Check against delivery

Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, friends,

It is an honor to once again be able to address the Human Rights Council.

A year has passed since I last stood before you at this high-level segment. The world has seen progress on several fronts, yet in other areas things remain the same, not least in terms of the lack of respect for human rights, democratic values and the rule of law.

One grave example of this is the situation in Myanmar. I was deeply moved by the stories I heard from the women in the camps of Bangladesh when I visited them in November. The testimonies of the horrific acts committed in Myanmar are numerous and can only be termed as crimes against humanity.

The people I met had not only been subjected to violence and abuses themselves, they also had to witness the suffering of their children and their family members. All the while, impunity reigned free.

This cannot be accepted. The international community must act to bring those accountable to justice and ensure a safe return for the refugees whose human rights must be respected.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank The High Commissioner, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein for his powerful speech yesterday. Your strong voice for human rights will be missed and I would like to thank you for everything you have done to bring human rights concerns to our attention.

One of the worst humanitarian crisis is of course the ongoing conflict in

Syria. I welcome the adoption of UNSC resolution last Saturday on cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access in Syria. But now the resolution must be fully and immediately implemented. Humanitarian aid must be allowed to help the most vulnerable. All parties, and especially the Syrian regime, must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Mr. President,

Today I would like to speak on three important topics.

Firstly, the global human rights legal framework was born out of the barbarous acts that outraged the conscience of humanity 70 years ago. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is part of international law. It is also an important milestone for the human family.

The international legal system - founded on human rights, democracy and the rule of law - must constantly be defended. Not least now, when many political leaders question the validity and universality of human rights and of individuals as the sole bearers of rights.

The responsibility to meet these challenges with resolve lies with us all – and the Council must play its rightful role in this regard.

Mr. President.

Secondly, when human rights are challenged, when democracy is under pressure and the rule of law is undermined, we need the most courageous among us: the human rights defenders, trade unionists, journalists, bloggers and media workers, artists and publishers - all who dare to speak up on behalf of those who have no voice. For there can be no democracy without a vibrant and pluralistic civil society.

It is these brave women and men who help us as states live up to our international obligations and ensure that we are held accountable.

Yet impunity for crimes against human rights defenders is mounting, and women are particularly at risk. According to UNESCO, 800 journalists have been murdered in the past decade alone, and 90 per cent of these murders remain unsolved. This impunity is unacceptable.

Sweden will continue to champion all those who defend the universality of human rights and their ability to act free from threats, violence, harassment and reprisals.

Mr. President

Thirdly, human rights are a central element of international law and are essential to the development and maintenance of international peace and security, and sustainable development. The three pillars of the UN are equally important, as there can be neither sustained peace nor true development without the full and equal enjoyment of human rights by all.

In this regard I would like to highlight the need to strengthen the link between Geneva and New York – the Human Rights Council and the Security Council. Human rights violations and abuses are often root causes of conflicts and can act as early warnings of impending disasters.

As Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Elie Wiesel so eloquently put it: "Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must — at that moment — become the centre of the universe." It is precisely because of this that the bodies of the UN must work together, not in parallel isolation.

The Human Rights Council should play an important role in preventing conflicts by adequately addressing situations before they escalate and the Security Council should make better use of the steady stream of information flowing from Geneva and rely more regularly on OHCHR to brief the Council.

Mr. President, finally

The autumn last year was characterized by an unparalleled movement. It can be summed up in two words: me too.

Throughout the world, women are neglected in terms of resources, representation and rights.

This is the simple reason why we are pursuing a feminist foreign policy – with full force, around the world.

Four years have passed since Sweden adopted a feminist foreign policy. Many looked upon this idea with scepticism– as if ensuring the human rights of 50 percent of the population was a controversial concept. And our feminist foreign policy has borne fruit.

Between 2015 and 2016 Sweden increased its development assistance to organizations focusing on women and girl's enjoyment of human rights.

Sweden is now the largest core donor to UN Women. Furthermore, several thousands of midwives receive training each year, enabling millions of women to give birth with the help of trained personnel.

These are no small examples and they are only a handful of the things that my Government has done to advance the entire range of human rights for women and girls.

Seventy years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted it is about time that our daughters, sisters and mothers have the opportunity to enjoy the same human rights as our sons, brothers and fathers.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Government's Statement of Foreign Policy 2018

Published 14 February 2018

On 14 February, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström presented the 2018 Statement of Foreign Policy in the Riksdag. Check against delivery.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year marks 100 years since the Riksdag decided to make the right to vote universal and equal for both women and men.

It is a fitting occasion to remember those who give our democracy its lifeblood: those who carry it forward. The people. Politicians and civil servants. Journalists. Civil society. Those of us in this chamber.

I say this because the merchants of gloom are now peddling the view that the coming election campaign is going to be dirty.

I say to them: it doesn't have to be that way. It is entirely up to us.

All of us, in this chamber, can choose to conduct political activities with dignity. We can choose to debate with respect – for each other, and for the truth.

Democracy is at the core of Sweden's foreign policy. Its task is to create security when the rest of the world is troubled. Foreign policy manages the changes that occur all around us:

climate change, which threatens our security,

countries that are isolating themselves from the world,

and people who are displaced.

Our task can be summarised as follows:

The primary goal of Sweden's foreign policy is to protect our country's security and that of our people.

We do this in partnership with others, through an active foreign policy in which diplomacy, dialogue and cooperation are our most important tools. Our commitment to free trade, equality, gender equality and our extensive aid are important parts of this policy.

* * *

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. It requires an active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy combined with enhanced defence cooperation, particularly with Finland, and credible national defence capabilities.

Sweden's foreign and security policy builds on cohesion in the EU and on increased cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic region and the Baltic Sea region, in the UN and the OSCE, with NATO and through a strong transatlantic link.

Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. We must therefore be able to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military.

Our security is dependent on the European security order being respected, and we will act through the EU, as well as in the OSCE and the Council of Europe, to uphold it.

* * *

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's security begins in our neighbourhood. Our region must be able to withstand stresses and counter attempts to create division and instability. The Government is working actively to counter such threats, whether they

are from terrorism, or are cyber, hybrid or military threats.

Our relations with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are important. This year, we are marking 100 years since they declared independence.

In 2018, Sweden has a particular responsibility for cooperation between the Baltic Rim countries. We hold the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Chair of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, and we are leading the Nordic foreign policy cooperation and the Nordic-Baltic cooperation. We want to make our region more secure and sustainable, for example through youth exchanges, innovation and digital transformation, climate-smart cities, as well as combating human trafficking.

Russia is participating in several of these formats. Sweden and the EU are seeking dialogue and cooperation with Russia in areas of mutual interest – for example climate change, trade and disaster response operations. Such contacts also contribute to our security.

Russia bears the responsibility for the conflict in eastern Ukraine, which has resulted in more than 10 000 deaths. We condemn the Russian aggression, including the illegal annexation of Crimea. These flagrant violations of international law are the most serious threat to the European security order since the end of the Cold War. The EU's sanctions must be upheld as long as the reasons for their introduction remain. Domestic political developments in Russia are also negative.

* * *

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The EU exists for Europe's citizens. If we forget this, we risk losing the people's confidence. Social issues, fair jobs and good working conditions must therefore play a larger role in the EU. This was also the theme of the EU summit in Gothenburg last autumn.

EU cooperation gives us peace, security and growth. Sweden is an active member of the EU and we are concerned over the growing intolerance and declining respect for the rule of law in some Member States.

The EU is our most important foreign policy arena. We are working for an EU that is active in the world – with regard to foreign and security policy, and with a policy for free and fair trade. The EU must have an ambitious

climate policy and stand up for climate agreements that have been entered into. It is also important that the EU has a common asylum system that provides legal certainty, is humane and sustainable, and where all countries take their responsibility.

The Common Security and Defence Policy is now being developed. We are contributing to PESCO, the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation on security and defence, whose aim is to strengthen operational capabilities and effectiveness in the area of defence. Together with Finland and Germany, we are leading the development of the EU's civilian capacity to prevent and manage conflicts.

We regret the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union, and hope it is implemented in an orderly fashion, and that the EU and the UK continue to have a close relationship.

The prospect of EU accession must be clear for the countries of the Western Balkans, but this requires continued reforms – efforts we support. We also support the ambitions of the Eastern Partnership countries to develop closer ties with the EU and implement necessary reforms.

Developments in Turkey, including recurrent conflicts with Kurdish groups, are deeply worrying, as are the attacks in Afrin in northern Syria. The EU must work with, but also put pressure on, Turkey. The EU should not close the door to membership.

* * *

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Global challenges require global cooperation. Sweden defends a rules-based international order and we support the UN Secretary-General's reform plans for the United Nations.

Sweden has completed the first year of its two-year membership of the UN Security Council, where we have participated in efforts to prevent war and conflict.

We are making a difference. Right now we are negotiating a resolution on a ceasefire in Syria to continue to ensure humanitarian assistance to the millions of people in need. We have a leading role on issues concerning children in armed conflicts. We have considerably strengthened the UN's work on women, peace and security.

At Sweden's initiative, a unanimous Council condemned the violence against the Rohingya people in Myanmar, and we are working for a solution to the crisis and for those who are guilty of crimes against humanity to be brought to justice.

A burning issue on the Council's agenda is North Korea's nuclear weapons ambitions. The country's nuclear weapons and missile programmes are a serious threat to global peace and security. We are pushing for a peaceful solution and the implementation of the sanctions imposed on the country.

* * *

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The Doomsday Clock, which shows the risk of a global catastrophe such as nuclear war, was recently set forward to two minutes to midnight.

Today, almost all nuclear-weapon states are modernising their stockpiles. Concerns remain over the important nuclear deal with Iran. This Government is working on disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons by bridging the divide on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and strengthening its disarmament dimension. We will also move forward with measures for risk reduction and increased transparency.

The nuclear-weapon states, in particular the United States and Russia, have a particular responsibility. It is alarming that the use of tactical nuclear weapons is being discussed as a possibility. We urge them both to negotiate further reductions of nuclear weapons arsenals and comply with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

A new disarmament initiative is the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. An inquiry will examine the consequences of any Swedish signing and ratification.

* * *

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The autumn was characterised by an unparalleled movement. It can be summed up in two words: me too.

Throughout the world, women are neglected in terms of resources,

representation and rights.

This is the simple reason why we are pursuing a feminist foreign policy – with full force, around the world.

In Saudi Arabia and Iran, we are educating women to enhance their economic empowerment. In Rwanda, we have initiated a public debate on the role of fathers. Members of our women's mediation network are working with Syria, Afghanistan, Colombia and Ukraine.

Sweden is one of the largest donors in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights, through contraceptives, maternity care and safe abortions. We are working to stop female genital mutilation.

These are some examples of our feminist foreign policy in action. And other countries are following suit.

We are building more alliances, strengthening more women's rights advocates, and improving the lives of more people.

On Wikipedia, there are four times more articles about men than there are about women. On International Women's Day, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and some 50 embassies are hosting edit-a-thons to increase the number of articles about women.

In April, the Government, in cooperation with the Swedish Institute and in dialogue with the Riksdag, is holding the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality – a major international gender equality conference bringing together grassroots and high-level delegates from around the world. The goal is to share results, learn from each other and inspire political leaders.

* * *

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Democracy, human rights and the rule of law are being challenged around the world. This means that people have less influence over their communities and less power to shape their own lives. Security in the world is in decline.

This picture has been confirmed by the 135 country reports published by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs last year on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. These reports provide the basis for our dialogue with the countries concerned. We have also appointed a human rights ambassador and presented a written communication to the Riksdag on these issues.

Sweden stands up to all forms of racism and hate. In our work throughout the world, we support human rights defenders, LGBTI activists, journalists and other people in vulnerable situations. We will never accept attacks based on ethnicity or religion.

Trade union rights are a matter of democracy. The Prime Minister has launched the Global Deal to promote good relations in the labour market. To date, more than 75 actors have joined, including 18 countries. This year we will establish a long-term structure for this work.

* * *

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden has bilateral relations with almost every country in the world. Through dialogue, both with close friends and with those whose values we do not share, we make Sweden safer.

Relations with the United States are very important for Sweden's foreign and security policy, and for our growth. We will therefore continue to develop them on the basis of common interests and values.

Latin America is making progress. We want to continue strengthening our relations with the countries of the region, and therefore we are now presenting an action plan for cooperation with Latin America.

While the peace processes in Colombia have inspired hope, the situation in Venezuela is very serious.

Developments in Asia are opening up new opportunities. We are increasing political and economic exchange with India and Japan. We are a strong driving force behind the EU trade agenda with Asia and Oceania.

Our relations with China are extensive. The country's role in the world is growing, and with this comes greater responsibility, including protection of human rights.

We are continuing our long-term commitment in a sorely tested Afghanistan. Through our support we are strengthening state- and peacebuilding, and women's participation.

The list of conflicts in the Middle East is long. The suffering they have caused is immeasurable.

We support an inclusive process in Syria for a political solution in which women participate in the negotiations and the decision-making. We are one of the largest humanitarian donors in the Syria crisis.

Sweden is working for reconciliation and stabilisation in Iraq now that Daesh has been defeated. This also applies to relations between Baghdad and the autonomous Kurdish region. We are contributing in the areas of military training, security sector reform and aid.

We are a driving force on the UN Security Council for finding a long-term political solution in Yemen and alleviating the acute humanitarian crisis. Increasing tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran are fuelling instability in the Middle East. Political dialogue between the two countries is needed.

The Government is working for a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, based on international law. In this regard, Sweden – like the rest of the EU – sees Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. We have a long-standing friendly engagement in Palestine. We are contributing to its democratic statebuilding and providing support to refugees through UNRWA. We are a friend to Israel and stand up for its legitimate security needs.

Developments in Africa are multifarious. Some countries are experiencing strong growth. The African Union is being strengthened and regional cooperation is increasing. At the same time, war and humanitarian crises continue to force people to flee.

Conflicts and climate change are worsening the security situation in the Sahel region. Instability is a breeding ground for radicalisation. We believe in cooperation and are participating in UN and EU missions in Mali, supporting the building of the Sahel countries' own security force and increasing aid to the region.

We are seeing positive signs in Somalia, yet at the same time the Horn of Africa is suffering from protracted conflicts and tensions. We are increasing aid and working actively to prevent conflicts and strengthen vulnerable groups.

The transfer of power in Zimbabwe is a historic opportunity. The new government must keep its promises of political and economic reform. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the political and humanitarian crisis is acute. We are working for a peaceful and democratic transfer of

power and are particularly highlighting the importance of women's participation.

Last year, UN experts Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp were murdered while on assignment in DR Congo. We are working tirelessly to ensure that these murders are investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice.

* * *

Mr/Madam Speaker,

By promoting sustainable development and poverty reduction, we are promoting security in the world. Sweden will therefore be a leader in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

We are one of few countries that give one per cent of gross national income in aid, and we are working to ensure that more countries reach the UN target of 0.7 per cent of GNI in aid.

Tax revenue is fundamental to building a functioning society. In May the Government will host an international conference on building tax capacity in developing countries.

Climate change has become one of our greatest security challenges. Extreme weather conditions are forcing people to flee, and a lack of natural resources increases the risk of conflict and war. The gap between current commitments and the required emissions reductions under the Paris Agreement is 'alarmingly large', according to research.

Sweden is taking responsibility. We have the world's most ambitious Climate Act and provide major contributions to developing countries' measures on climate, environment and oceans.

* * *

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's foreign trade provides us with 1.4 million jobs. Trade contributes to the security of our people.

The benefits of free trade and freedom of movement are at times called into question, and protectionism is on the rise. We are not taking that path. We will stand up for free trade while also promoting social protection and an ambitious environment policy.

Through its export strategy, the Government supports opportunities for Swedish companies to increase exports and reach new markets. We want more good investments in Sweden.

The Government's intention is for Sweden to take part in the World Expo in Dubai in 2020.

* * *

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The staff of the Swedish Foreign Service work tirelessly and around the clock to provide support to Swedes in emergency or crisis situations abroad. Most of them are helped quietly.

We are dealing with some very difficult cases, and some names are well known to everyone in this chamber. We always act in their best interests.

This year we will launch a consular initiative in the area of family conflicts, focusing on child and forced marriage.

A modern Swedish Foreign Service should reflect modern Sweden. We will take further initiatives to ensure that people of different backgrounds are recruited to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

* * *

Mr/Madam Speaker,

On the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, Astrid Lindgren wrote the following in her diary:

...this earth could be a lovely place to live.

Isn't this, in the end, what all people want? To have the security to shape and live their lives.

Let's not settle for less. Let's act with courage and patience. Let's address the world's concerns with a policy for security and confidence in the future. In Sweden and in the world.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at the MFA Day of International Law

Published 02 February 2018

Stockholm, 1 februari 2018. Check against delivery.

Colleagues, friends,

I would like to wish you welcome to International Law Day at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2018.

I am happy to see so many people here today. This international law day is an annual event. It is an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of international law to Swedish foreign policy. But also to engage with experts in this field – from civil society and academia. It is an opportunity for principle and practice to meet.

This afternoon we have two panels discussing two different topics.

The first topic is Sweden and international law in the UN Security Council. I am happy to welcome a distinguished guest, Dr Helen Durham, Director for International Law and Policy at the International Committee of the Red Cross. Over many years of close cooperation, Dr Durham has helped to shape our thinking and our action in support of international humanitarian law. The work we have done together on a gender perspective on IHL has been particularly important.

The second topic is how protection of medical care can be strengthened in armed conflicts.

The first panel will be held in English and the second in Swedish.

There are many crises and security threats in the world today.

Since the end of the Cold War it has perhaps never been as difficult for the UN Security Council to live up to its task – maintaining international peace and security.

The Security Council is central to the rules-based international system. But this system is increasingly questioned and challenged.

Let me be clear: for Sweden, it is of fundamental importance to protect this system. The rules-based system is essential for the safety of the world, but also for the safety of Sweden.

...

We are now halfway through our two-year membership of the Security Council.

Sweden's tenure on the Council is firmly rooted in the priority we give to international law, human rights, gender equality and a humanitarian perspective.

We have worked hard to establish ourselves as a credible and influential member with a principled stance on international law. Achieving results requires sound and active diplomacy combined with political courage.

I would like to give some examples of how Sweden has stood up for and promoted international law, human rights and gender equality.

My first point concerns the promotion of human rights and international humanitarian law.

The Security Council's mandate is to maintain international peace and security. This mandate must be based on ensuring respect for international law, including IHL, and human rights. This is a cornerstone in achieving peace.

Early warning mechanisms and relevant and independent information from the field are crucial in order for the Security Council to work effectively. This means assessing risks and addressing, preventing and responding to conflicts and threats to international peace and security.

This is why Sweden is working to improve information-sharing between UN bodies and the Security Council. We maintain close contacts with the ICRC and other humanitarian actors to ensure that relevant information on IHL is available to the Council.

Delivering on a priority to integrate international law into Sweden's work on the Security Council means integrating an international law perspective in the Ministry's day-to-day work on Security Council issues. Our international lawyers are part of deliberations on every text and every item on the Security Council agenda.

Let me give you some concrete examples:

One of the best examples of the importance of law in conflict prevention concerns the Gambia.

As President of the Security Council in January 2017, we were extensively involved in the Council's contribution to peaceful developments in the Gambia's post-election crisis one year ago.

The situation was as follows. A newly elected president who was prevented from entering the Gambia, a former president who refused to resign and regional troops on their way in to support the newly elected president. A potentially volatile situation for the Security Council to handle which raised important legal issues, such as the rules governing military intervention and the right to invite foreign forces.

A unanimous Security Council adopted a resolution that expressed support for the democratically elected President as well as full political support for the regional and sub-regional efforts to ensure a peaceful change of power.

A possible outbreak of violence was prevented. One year later, we hardly remember how close the situation came to evolving in the wrong direction.

Yemen is currently the scene of one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. Sweden is working to foster more forceful engagement on the part of the Council to secure humanitarian access and de-escalate the situation.

We were instrumental in formulating a Presidential Statement in June 2017 which demanded that the parties respect international humanitarian law and protect civilians, civilian objects and medical care, and do not recruit or use children as soldiers.

In November, I visited both Myanmar and Bangladesh, where I met some of the members of the Rohingya community who had fled from Myanmar. Many of them now live in an extremely dire and vulnerable situation. The humanitarian situation is acute.

There have been many different descriptions of the atrocities in Myanmar. From Sweden's point of view, I have been clear that the situation gives every indication of crimes against humanity – the violence in Rakhine state is systematic, widespread and coordinated.

In the Security Council, Sweden has initiated several meetings on Myanmar, and we actively contributed to a presidential statement on the situation as well as to establishing that the Council needs to continue to monitor the issue closely.

The violations in Myanmar must be investigated and those responsible must be held accountable. Impunity is not an option.

My second example is Sweden's work on women, peace and security. This is central to Sweden's feminist foreign policy.

UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security states the key role of women in international peace and security.

It has been a top priority for Sweden to advance the role and participation of women in peace and mediation efforts.

Sweden has systematically strengthened the Council's resolutions and statements by including references to women's participation in decision-making. In 2017, all (100%) of presidential statements adopted in crisis situations by the Council made reference to women, peace and security.

We also need to do more to combat sexual and gender-based violence. We must recognise that sexual and gender-based violence in conflict is a security challenge and a threat to development. Sexual violence in conflict is a tactic of war. It is a threat to security and durable peace that requires an operational security and justice response.

In the Security Council, Sweden has contributed to efforts to strengthen the prevention of, and accountability for, sexual and gender-based violence. For example, a separate listing criterion for sexual and gender-based violence was introduced in the Central African Republic sanctions regime last year.

By raising its voice in the Security Council against all kind of sexual exploitation and abuse in a UN context and strongly supporting the Secretary-General in his initiatives to fight such acts, Sweden has also contributed to making the Security Council take a clearer stance against sexual abuses committed by UN staff.

Together with others on the Council, Sweden has also given priority to work on strengthening the protection of civilians and the protection of health care. Here we see violations of the most basic rules of IHL. The ICRC rightly pointed to the use of an ambulance in the horrific attack in Kabul last Saturday as an example of this. Our second panel will focus in more detail on this. This is a priority for us in the coming year.

Turning to an area where the Council faces serious challenges, I would like to comment on accountability, which is my third and final example of the work Sweden is doing. This is perhaps one of the most difficult issues to obtain support for in the Security Council.

The obvious case in point is Syria: so far, systematic violations of humanitarian law and chemical weapons attacks in Syria and Iraq have largely been committed with impunity. As far as Syria is concerned – despite general agreement on the importance of accountability – a number of serious attempts to move forward have been thwarted. This is highly regrettable.

The EU continues to believe that the situation in Syria should be referred to the ICC. Until that is possible, we should prepare the ground for accountability in the future.

While the Security Council has been blocked, we have managed to move forward in other parts of the UN system. The UN Human Rights Council has established a Commission of Inquiry for Syria, and the UN General Assembly has established the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism on International Crimes Committed in Syria.

Information collected by these organs could be used in other states and by international tribunals and courts, as we have seen here in Sweden. A number of individuals have been convicted of war crimes in Swedish courts based on our application of universal jurisdiction.

To conclude:

2018 will be a demanding year: the Korean Peninsula, the Middle East region, the Horn of Africa, the increasingly noticeable effects of climate change – the list is long. But we are addressing these challenges.

We enter our second year on the Council with determination, and with the aim of achieving concrete results. But also for helping the Council to fulfil its mandate to maintain international peace and security. In these troublesome

times it is even more important to protect our global norms and institutions.

When the world becomes insecure, it is not possible to detach and withdraw from the international arena. The Swedish Government will continue its international work for a safer world – based on international law and with more cooperation. This will also make Sweden safer. We continue the struggle for sustainable peace and security in tempestuous times.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Margot Wallström at conference against impunity for the use of chemical weapons

Published 26 January 2018

Paris, 23 January 2018. Check against delivery.

Foreign Minister Le Drian; Director-General Üzümcü; Excellencies; Dear Colleagues,

- Let me begin by thanking you, Minister Le Drian, for taking this timely initiative, and for inviting Sweden to the inaugural meeting of the "International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons". Ensuring accountability for those responsible for serious crimes under international law is a priority for Sweden, not least as a member of the UN Security Council and the OPCW Executive Council, dealing with the issue of chemical weapons.
- This year, we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, the most significant peace treaty of which was signed not far away from where we are sitting today. The end of World War I, and the ensuing ban against the use of chemical weapons in war, raised the hope of an end to the horrors of chemical warfare. This hope seemed born out 75 years later, when Paris stood host to the signing conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
- A farewell to chemical arms should have been one of the achievements to be celebrated as part of the Great War centennial. Sadly, that was not to be. Just when we thought that chemical warfare could be relegated to the history books, its spectre has reared its ugly head once more.
- The UN investigation led by Dr. Åke Sellström following the nerve gas attack at Eastern Ghouta in 2013 precipitated the Syrian accession to the

Chemical Weapons Convention. Since then, however, the Syrian government has been implicated in numerous cases of alleged use of chemical weapons against its own people, including four cases substantiated by the Joint Investigative Mechanism. This includes the horrendous sarin attack at Khan Sheikhoun last April.

- Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to terrorists and other non-state actors has been an international concern for some years, as expressed in UN Security Council resolution 1540. Yet, today we are faced with the very real and serious threat of chemical weapons in the hands of a terrorist group that has demonstrated a total disregard to common decency and a will to commit and encourage atrocities against innocent civilians.

Mr. President,

- So far, chemical weapons attacks in Syria and Iraq have largely been committed with impunity. As far as Syria is concerned – despite general agreement on the importance of accountability – a number of earnest attempts to move forward have been thwarted. The repeated use of veto powers in the UN Security Council to prevent moves towards accountability for chemical weapons use in Syria is highly regrettable.

- The OPCW/UN Joint Investigative Mechanism was a new and innovative tool designed to bring to justice the perpetrators and sponsors behind confirmed chemical weapons attacks in Syria. Sweden was pleased to provide political, technical and financial support to its important work. However, in a highly politicized environment, the Council was not able to act on its reports and ultimately to extend its mandate. Sweden – like several of the countries represented here today - took active parts in efforts to find a way forward that would ensure the extension of the JIM, regrettably to no avail. This, however, cannot be the end of the story. We must intensify our efforts to set up a new mechanism for attribution as more reports from the OPCW Fact-Finding Missions become available.

- Meanwhile, the Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism on International Crimes Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic are collecting information required once the international community is ready to move forward on accountability. Such reliable and validated information is indispensable, and let me once again welcome the initiative by Minister Le Drian in founding this partnership focused on information exchange and documentation. We trust that this will be an important and useful way to support and complement the multilateral processes. Ultimately, we must learn the lessons

of history and ensure that, 100 years after the end of World War I, there can be no impunity for the use of chemical weapons.

Thank you, Mr. President.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Introductory remarks at the 2018 Holocaust Remembrance Lecture by Margot Wallström

Published 26 January 2018

Stockholm, 26 January 2018. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends:

I want to welcome you all to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and to the 2018 Holocaust Memorial Lecture. Let us first take a moment to remember the many victims, in silence. [...]

Thank you for coming here and for joining us in showing the importance of remembering the Holocaust, which remains an iconic, atrocious crime - and a disastrous wound in the history of mankind.

We have today the opportunity to listen to Professor Yehuda Bauer give his thoughts on the Holocaust, and on one of his most important life-long themes: preventing genocide from ever happening again.

I want to thank Professor Bauer for coming to Stockholm – and for accepting to speak to us. We are all eager to hear your thoughts - and engage in a conversation with you.

This week – and especially tomorrow, on January 27 – we remember the Holocaust more intensely than on other days of the year. January 27 was, as you all know, the day when Auschwitz was liberated in 1945, seventy-three years ago.

The images and the testimonies from Auschwitz and other Nazi concentration camps are gut-wrenching. The world could – and can still - see with their own eyes the unprecedented and unimaginable horrors of the

Holocaust.: a dark period of human kind when Jews, Roma, LGBT-persons and persons with disabilities were victims of genocide, mass murder and persecution.

"Never again" is a phrase that has often been mentioned with reference to the Holocaust, but the collective international delivery on that resolve still must happen. Crimes against humanity did not stop with the Holocaust: as Professor Bauer writes in one of his books, "Genocide is among us". Professor Bauer will speak about the mechanisms causing atrocious mass crimes around the world in the post-World War II-era: from Africa to Asia, the Balkans and beyond. One is forced to realize that in the 73 years since the Holocaust, the world has not learned enough.

The same attitudes, movements, hatred and conspiracy theories that once caused the Holocaust are still visible in the society.

Indeed, we are now witnessing an increase in intolerance and hatred in Sweden, around Europe and the rest of the world – on the internet, in the streets, and around religious institutions. Very recently, we have seen appalling criminal acts against the Synagogue in Göteborg, and continued threats against other religious institutions and individuals. This intolerance is directed at minority groups such as Jews, but it is a threat to all of us, and to the democratic societies that we Europeans have historically fought hard to build.

Sweden is a pluralistic and democratic country – and we are determined to protect these core values of our culture and society. We strive in all fields to create a just, more equal, democratic and peaceful world - where dialogue and exchange of ideas rule, and where war, terrorism, and violence are renounced. The rights of women, minorities and young people need to be strengthened around the world.

Jewish life is part of Swedish life, and Jewish culture is an important thread in our European social and cultural fabric.

Everyone living in Sweden should be able to lead a life based on equality, safety and dignity – and without fear or threat when practising one's peaceful religion. The right of religious freedom and belief is a fundamental human right.

The Swedish government's condemnation of the threats and violence against religious institutions and against people expressing their peaceful belief or

faith is unequivocal and clear: we will not tolerate this.

A range of actions are taken to protect Jewish life in Sweden, with particular focus on education, media literacy, knowledge about history and the Holocaust, and on strengthening democracy, building civil society, enhancing security for religious institutions – to name the most important. The government has recently given increased support to enhance the security of Jewish buildings. Financial support to schools for visiting sites of the Holocaust to educate about this genocide has been allocated.

Moreover, the Government in 2016 adopted a new national plan to combat racism and hate crimes, which also addresses the anti-Semitism that the Jewish community is subjected to.

A year ago, the Prime Minister announced that Sweden in the year 2020 will host an international conference on the memory of the Holocaust. It is important that international cooperation is increased.

Anti-Semitism is a global problem, and not limited to any national setting or regional context.

For centuries, Jews have been the target of unfair blame, wrongful accusations, senseless hatred and violence – simply because they are Jews.

Anti-Semitism has deep and historical roots and it has taken many different forms. The Nazis cannot claim authorship of the anti-Semitism that caused the Holocaust.

This 'hatred of the other' has always had both local and transnational characteristics.

But with the advent of the internet, new borderless environments have been created in which age-old conspiracy theories can take additional forms. It is important to underline that Human Rights are as valid online as they are offline.

Fighting anti-Semitism online is a huge challenge for the open and democratic world.

Here, governments need to cooperate with the media industry, civil society and specialists.

The EU Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online is an

important step, but much remains to be done in terms of monitoring, implementation, accountability and enforcement.

Continued international cooperation is important. The EU, the United Nations and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance are vital in this work. I appointed in 2016 an ambassador for Human rights, who now heads the Swedish delegation to the IHRA. In 2016, I also appointed for the first time a Swedish Special Envoy to combat anti-Semitism and Islamophobia on a global level.

Bilateral consultations and cooperation with Israel, the United States and partners in Europe remain a priority.

Anti-Semitism must also be viewed within a larger context of hate and intolerance, online and offline.

We see how anti-Semitism flourishes in the same environment as violent extremism – in spaces where democratic values are replaced by violence.

The ongoing wars around the world, continued terrorist attacks against cities in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe, and the ongoing refugee crisis underline all too clearly the need to address the root causes of intolerance, hatred, violence and armed conflict.

Through international cooperation – in the EU and the United Nations, with education, legal measures, and enhanced security – we must devote our efforts to long-term confidence-building, conflict resolution and a culture of dialogue with respect for human rights in all contexts.

It is clear that no single country can solve or combat these problems alone.

And it is clear to us that no set of countries or governments can solve these issues without working in close cooperation with civil society organisations.

An active civil society is key in this endeavour; education and dialogue are, without doubt, the most important cornerstones of a peaceful and tolerant society.

Again, I want to really thank you for joining us in the conversation today, and with that I want to welcome Professor Yehuda Bauer to the floor to give the 2018 Holocaust Memorial Lecture.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at Folk och Försvar (Society and Defence) Annual National Conference 2018

Published 17 January 2018

Sälen, Sweden, 14 January 2018. Check against delivery.

Your Majesties,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

"When thy next neighbour's house is all on fire,
'Tis thy concern to make his flames expire."

These are the words of the Roman poet Horace from two thousand years ago. The same applies today, even if the security challenges have become global and much more complex.

Climate change, communicable diseases and water shortages are real threats today in the same way as traditional threats from military conflicts, terrorism and cyber attacks, or the serious threat to our security in the form of nuclear weapons. Our neighbourhood has become global and foreign policy is becoming domestic policy, as we have clearly seen in the war in Syria.

I have been asked to speak about the security policy challenges in a globalised world. This is an important aspect, since broad foreign and security policy is needed more than ever.

The task for policy, the Government and myself is to protect the safety of citizens. The aim must be for every person to feel secure individually, in their family, and also in their society, their country and the world. Building security together with others is – and has long been – central to Swedish security policy. It characterises our approach both to our neighbourhood and in relation to conflicts in the global arena. Breaking the false logic of confrontation, deterrents and zero-sum games with the aim of creating shared advantages for everyone involved is the essence of common security.

Our deepened bilateral and multilateral cooperation with countries and organisations in our neighbourhood and globally is therefore a linchpin of our security policy. In the EU, cooperation is increasing on a broad front; in the Nordic region and the Baltic Sea region, together with Finland, in the UN and with NATO and via a strengthened transatlantic link. Sweden's voice is also being heard in the OSCE and the Council of Europe when our common security is undermined by the murder of journalists, the manipulation of elections or the erosion of the rule of law.

The Government is building Sweden's security in all areas. From increased national defence capability to international operations. Our long-term security policy doctrine of non-participation in military alliances is the starting point.

Today, I would like to talk about three areas I believe are central for understanding current security policy global challenges.

1. What are the global challenges?
2. What trends do we foresee?
3. What concrete measures can be taken to tackle them?

Global challenges

For the past few years, we have found ourselves in a very changeable security policy situation. We are seeing this at all levels – global, transatlantic and European, and in our own neighbourhood. You could perhaps say that the post-Cold War era ended in 2014. We still don't have a name for the new era, but many people are talking about a world that is out of balance.

We are in a time of upheaval, when institutions, values and norms that have formed the basis of the rules-based multilateral international order are

questioned or undermined from various quarters.

The path we follow must be based on Sweden's basic, long-term interests and values. Our foreign policy is uncompromising in its defence of the rules-based multilateral order.

It has always been very important for small- and medium-sized countries to have their rights and choices respected. In addition, Sweden is – and will continue to be – an open country, closely connected with the rest of the world in all areas. We therefore also have a great need for a well-functioning international order with clear rules.

The core of the international order is the United Nations Security Council and the United Nations Charter. Sweden acts daily to ensure that the Security Council takes its responsibility for international peace and security, and the UN Charter is upheld.

The 70 years that the UN has been in existence unfortunately show how time and again these rules have been ignored and have in many cases even failed in their purpose. But a world without rules, based on the right of the strongest, would have been much less secure.

Sweden is now halfway through its two-year term on the Security Council.

Since beginning our work in January 2017, we have established Sweden as a credible and influential member. Achieving results requires sensitive and active diplomacy, combined with political courage.

We stand up for our values, international law, human rights, gender equality and a humanitarian perspective.

The Government's work on the Security Council for the prevention of conflict is of the utmost importance for our own security. Local crises quickly escalate into regional conflicts and risk ending in intractable wars between both states and non-state warring parties.

This is something that in our globalised world can also have consequences for Swedish security in the form of increased risk of terrorist attacks.

In our neighbourhood, we are seeing the Russian actions in Ukraine challenging the European security order in a way that we have not seen since it was established 25 years ago.

Even though Ukraine is no longer a member of the UN Security Council, Sweden will act to keep Ukraine on the Security Council agenda. A discussion is now under way concerning a possible UN peacekeeping

operation in Ukraine. This is something that Ukraine has also requested. Such a mission must restore Ukraine's territorial sovereignty and operate throughout the conflict area, including the border with Russia. Should this succeed, it would be a crucial step towards a political solution.

Instability in the Middle East is another clear example. The most discussed conflict has been Syria, where the repeated use of vetoes has obstructed the road to a diplomatic solution.

In Yemen, the humanitarian situation is still very serious and millions of people are now entirely dependent on humanitarian aid to survive. Sweden has been pushing for humanitarian resolutions to be adopted in the Security Council on both Yemen and Syria.

The situation of the Rohingya people in Myanmar is beyond appalling. The scale and systematic nature of the abuses we have seen reported show that they may constitute crimes against humanity. Therefore, the Security Council's continued involvement in the situation is crucial, which Sweden has repeatedly highlighted.

In all three of these examples, Sweden has actively pushed to improve access for the UN and humanitarian organisations and demanded that international law must be respected.

But Sweden's contribution to peace and security extends beyond the Security Council and permeates all international cooperation.

Take global warming, the greatest long-term threat to humanity's survival: Sweden has an ambitious goal of becoming one of the world's first fossil-free welfare nations and we are providing the most aid per capita to developing countries via multilateral climate funds.

Take poverty reduction: Sweden is one of the countries that gives most to development cooperation. We are world leaders in humanitarian aid, which mitigates the effects of war, conflicts and crises.

Take international crisis management: Sweden makes a key troop contribution to the UN mission in Mali. We show solidarity by participating in the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. We are one of the few countries that have contributed to all of the EU's crisis management operations. Sweden is world-leading in civilian crisis management.

Take trade: within the EU and globally, Sweden is one for the strongest

advocates of defending free trade. History shows the risks that a vicious circle of protectionist and isolationist measures also have on international peace and security.

Take the Government's initiative for a feminist foreign policy. Research shows that gender-equal societies are more peaceful. During Sweden's first year on the Security Council, women were mentioned in all Security Council statements on crisis situations; the corresponding figure for 2016 was 69 per cent.

Here I would also like to remind you of the Anna Lindh professorship that is to be set up at the Swedish Defence University this year; a professorship to conduct research into the role of women in conflicts and peace processes, a much-neglected field.

Furthermore, North Korea's illegal nuclear weapons programme is probably the most serious threat to global security. Sanctions against the country have been tightened via a series of resolutions.

Sweden is now emphasising that all UN members must take their responsibility and implement the sanctions. But sanctions are not enough; diplomatic contacts must be employed to achieve a peaceful solution.

The crisis on the Korean peninsula and our continued support for the nuclear deal with Iran – but also other developments around the world – demonstrate the necessity of concrete progress on the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The risk of nuclear weapons actually being used is currently assessed as greater than it has been for a very long time. Passivity is not an option.

The crucial challenge will be to end the polarisation that characterises international cooperation on these issues. This requires strong and determined political engagement.

One primary task will be to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its role as the central framework in this area ahead of the important review conference in 2020.

To make the review conference a success, Sweden wants to immediately push for negotiations that produce results. Therefore we will take initiatives to counteract the prevailing polarisation on disarmament.

Together with both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states, we

intend to actively contribute to proposals that support the NPT and nuclear disarmament. Risk reduction, transparency, disarmament of tactical nuclear weapons and negative security assurance are particularly important issues.

We will fully utilise all the multilateral forums available to us, including the UN Security Council, the IAEA and the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

I would like to reiterate what the Prime Minister said in his speech. We must never lose focus of the goal of a world free from these terrible weapons of mass destruction. All options must be explored in this work, and we are not afraid of taking the lead.

All of this is part of a whole. It is an investment in conflict prevention and, ultimately, our own security. And it is an investment in upholding and developing the international order we are so dependent on.

The alternative is a development towards an 'I'm all right, Jack' system – everyone is out for themselves and the right of the strongest applies. This would be a dystopian scenario both for security in our part of the world and for global developments.

For this reason, we will never bend in our defence of the rules-based international order and the European security order, whose core is every country's right to independently make its own security policy choices – a right we defend for our own and other's sake.

What trends do we foresee?

For Sweden, an EU that acts resolutely in the area of security policy, stands together and takes joint action on the basis of mutual solidarity and shared values is indispensable.

This is something we should never take for granted. Last year, the foundations were shaken following the Brexit vote and ahead of the Dutch and French elections.

We have to be honest and admit that Europe's challenges are far from over; the threats to EU cohesion are very real.

But the EU has also strengthened our security in recent years in crucial ways. For example through the negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme – and by upholding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that was

negotiated.

By leading the historic dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo and preventing a conflict that threatened to break out in Macedonia last year. Through its united and clear response to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and destabilisation of eastern Ukraine.

Europe must take greater responsibility for its own security. The Government wants to continue strengthening the EU as a foreign and security policy actor on a broad front. The EU Global Strategy is the compass for this. We must be at the core of the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Sweden will therefore actively contribute to the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in the area of defence. PESCO will make it easier for the EU to achieve a higher level of ambition in external crisis management.

Essentially, this is about strengthening the EU's freedom of action and credibility in the area of security policy. It is important that the EU has the actual capability to implement all of the measures we say we can, and for which we see a security-policy need.

It is equally important to strengthen the EU's civilian capabilities to prevent and address conflicts. It must be the role of the EU to be a world leader in peacebuilding.

No other actor will be able to take on this responsibility. Sweden is leading these efforts together with Finland and Germany. There are five areas where I would like to see clear progress in 2018.

First: the EU's rapid response ability must be further strengthened. Sweden is prepared to put at the EU's disposal a specialist team of civilian capabilities from throughout the judicial chain.

Second: Sweden is prepared this year, through the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, to begin providing a strategic stock of necessary materiel and equipment that will get new missions off to a quick start.

Third: a substantial civilian capability development plan to establish how we can reduce the gap between what the EU currently has the ability to do and what a deteriorating security situation requires the EU to do. Already this

year, this should be followed by a pact to strengthen civilian common security and defence policy – a kind of civilian PESCO.

Fourth: over the course of the year we want to expand the EU's civilian stabilisation force in Iraq, which came about as a result of a Swedish initiative to support the country now that Daesh has been militarily defeated. The mission will continue to work in close cooperation with the UN.

Fifth: enhanced cooperation with partner countries. It is of strategic importance that the EU and the United Kingdom continue to maintain close and deep cooperation in the area of security and defence policy in future. But I also see new opportunities to strengthen cooperation with other partners, such as Norway and the countries in the Eastern Partnership.

This is necessary if the EU is to be an international actor to be reckoned with – which is in Sweden's security policy interest.

Concrete examples of confidence-building measures

As a final area, I would like to talk about the importance of confidence-building missions and measures to build security.

One of Sweden's national security interests is to promote stability and security in our neighbourhood. Upholding the European security order protects the basic principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty, as well as independent security policy choices.

Through confidence-building measures for greater transparency and predictability, we help reduce the risk of military conflicts. We also help to improve the conditions for constructive dialogue between countries and organisations.

The OSCE's broad security concept, in which democracy, human rights and the rule of law are integral elements, is crucial in this regard.

During the preparations for the combined-arms exercise Aurora 2017, we informed both the OSCE and NATO about the exercise. We issued an invitation for voluntary inspection in accordance with the Vienna Document to all coastal states around the Baltic, including Russia.

A third example is that we have provided additional resources for 2018 for peace and security-building in our neighbourhood and in Europe.

In 2017, Sweden took over the Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. These are

arenas where we maintain continuous contact and dialogue with Russia and where concrete cooperation projects are implemented. This regional cooperation – which also includes Russia – helps to build confidence. It strengthens the ties between countries and peoples in the Baltic Sea region and thus contributes to stability and security in a broad sense. This people-to-people contact is important.

Sweden will also chair N5 and NB8 in 2018. These are important supplements to other cooperation, such as the UN, EU, OSCE and NATO.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To return to my starting point – it certainly is our concern when our neighbour's house is on fire.

As our world becomes less secure, isolating ourselves or withdrawing from the international arena is not the way to go. The Government will continue its international efforts to achieve a more secure world.

We are doing this on the UN Security Council, where our second year of membership has just begun; we are doing it with a stronger foreign policy together with the EU; we are doing it in our clear policy for conflict prevention – we are doing it through more, not less, cooperation.

This is what ultimately strengthens Sweden's security.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Remarks at UN Security Council meeting on North Korea

Published 15 December 2017

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs, New York, 15 December 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr President,

The situation on the Korean Peninsula is the greatest threat to international peace and security facing the world today. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programme, illustrates a blatant disregard for its international obligations. The DPRK has repeatedly violated international law, including numerous Security Council resolutions. Its actions are also contrary to the existing global norm against nuclear testing, embodied in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and global non-proliferation norms.

This Council has repeatedly been called together this year to address the illegal testing of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by the DPRK. At each meeting, Council members have unanimously condemned these provocations in the strongest terms.

The world does not accept the DPRK's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, and it is essential that we continue to stand united.

Mr. President,

I would like to thank you for convening today's important meeting. I particularly welcome the presence of the representatives of the Republic of Korea and of the DPRK here today. Let this meeting be a step towards dialogue.

I want to take this opportunity to convey the following five messages to the

DPRK;

First, cease all provocations;

Second, engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue;

Third, abide by the Security Council's resolutions and fulfil your international obligations;

Fourth, abandon your nuclear weapons and missile programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner; and

Fifth, return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the IAEA safeguards.

Mr President,

The adoption of resolution 2375 earlier this year toughened the targeted sanctions against the DPRK. It now constitutes the most rigorous sanctions regime ever enforced under the United Nations system.

For these sanctions to have the desired effect, it is critical that we urgently ensure their universal and comprehensive implementation. To this end, we need additional capacity at all levels, including improved monitoring and targeted capacity-building. We are actively engaged, through the European Union, in support of such efforts.

This week, the Council has held discussions on both the acute human rights situation and the precarious humanitarian conditions in the DPRK. The humanitarian situation for ordinary North Koreans remains of serious concern. The responsibility for the wellbeing of the North Korean people falls, without doubt, on the Government of the DPRK.

At the same time, it is of utmost importance that the humanitarian exemptions provided for under the sanctions regime are upheld. Reports that international humanitarian organisations' ability to provide assistance has been reduced, therefore, need to be addressed. As the Secretary General has pointed out, there is also an urgent need for more funding towards life-saving humanitarian assistance in the DPRK.

Mr President,

Over the last year, tensions on the Korean Peninsula have continued to rise.

They have now reached a very dangerous level. Provocations have been accompanied by an increase in confrontational rhetoric. In this environment, the potential for mistakes, misunderstandings and miscalculations is high.

In parallel to effectively implementing the sanctions regime, we must undertake further work to reduce tensions, in order to advance the prospects for a comprehensive settlement. Sanctions alone will not resolve the current situation. Intensified and creative diplomatic efforts that pave the way for a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution are urgently needed.

The situation must be approached without prejudice, and we must be prepared to consider both new and previous proposals and agreements. In this regard, there is also a need to explore the possibilities for regional security cooperation and arrangements. Sweden is contributing to these diplomatic efforts. We welcome Under Secretary-General Feltman's recent visit to the DPRK.

Mr President,

This Council has the responsibility to uphold peace and security. There is no military solution to the crisis on the Korean Peninsula. We have to exhaust every avenue for diplomacy and dialogue. Efforts are urgent. The consequences of failure would be disastrous.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at seminar on climate change and security

Published 08 December 2017

8 December 2017 Check against delivery

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to global security. Climate change knows no borders and it presents an existential challenge to us all.

An important security effect of climate change is an increase in the frequency of extreme weather events – floods and storms principally. This affects the infrastructures of towns and cities, access to drinking water and other resources to support daily life. It also drives the displacement of populations and since 2008, an average of 26,4 million people per year have been displaced from their homes by disasters brought on by natural hazards. 85 % of those weather related. This is equivalent to approximately one person displaced every second.

That is why it is so important that we met here today and speak on this crucial topic.

I will speak to you why we see climate change as a matter of international peace and security, and as such why we believe this should be on the table of the security council. Let me also take this opportunity to thank Stockholm Resilience Centre and SIPRI for co-organizing this seminar.

The scale of the climate challenges we face today and in the future is by now evident. The adverse effects of climate change have the potential to undermine the development gains of the last many decades, and they threaten the prospects for achieving Agenda 2030 and the sustainable development goals.

Talking about the development goals quickly turns into long term challenges. But this is no future development, it is a reality of the present. It is livelihoods and food security being threatened due to changing weather patterns, making people more vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist groups. It is a young girl now forced to walk even further to collect water for her family, missing school and being more exposed to sexual violence.. It is crop being lost and famine spreading, resulting in forced migration that causes human suffering and increased tension between people. It is changing water flows in some of the largest rivers, affecting the water supply for millions of people and increasing competition over already scarce resources.

As such, deteriorating climate conditions is a definite threat to international peace and security. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Security Council first ministerial debate on climate-related security issues. Today, this agenda is more urgent than ever.

In 2017 we have continued to witness undeniable examples of climate-related security risks. Recurring drought in the Horn of Africa, the Lake Chad region and in Yemen is contributing to insecurity and conflict. The conflicts and the droughts amplify one another, and have resulted in famines at a scale not seen in many years. Rising sea levels are threatening the very existence of people and countries, not least the Pacific Island States.

Friends,

The relationship between climate change and security is complex. Melting glaciers, floods in coastal areas, hurricanes, drought and desertification as a consequence of climate change, is increasingly affecting all of us, and can trigger unrest or exacerbate already existing social tensions. Climate related resource scarcity, such as lack of water or food, combined with inequality and shifting demographics also provide fertile grounds for conflict. The countries most affected are those already vulnerable, already ridden by conflict and severe poverty, where governance is weak and institutional capacity to deal with shocks and crisis is low.

Let me in this context also emphasize the critical importance of applying a gender perspective. Women are often among those hardest hit but also critical agents of positive change.

One thing is clear: in order for the international community to make informed decisions when it comes to preventing conflict and sustaining peace, we need better understanding of these links and improved

assessments of the risks already at play.

Let me share with you a specific example. A couple of weeks ago I visited Bangladesh. The main purpose was to look into the situation for the hundreds of thousands of people who have fled from Myanmar, but the visit also reminded me of the fact that Bangladesh is one of the most exposed countries to climate change, due to geographic and demographic reasons. Bangladesh is a country where extreme poverty still is prevalent and where one third of the country is projected to be under water within only a few years.

Around half a million people per year are estimated to migrate internally – the adverse effects of climate change being one of the main reasons. Add to this the influx of refugees from Myanmar in recent months, which have put additional pressure on an already exposed environment. I have no doubt the international community needs better assessments of this and similar situations in order to respond as effectively as possible, taking into account all factors that are at play.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Mitigating climate change and its negative security consequences is a key priority for the Swedish government, including during our term in the Security Council.

Improved governance and increased attention to climate related security risks is urgently needed. There is no doubt that the UN should take a leading role in this regard. We have been very clear on this.

However, there is currently an institutional gap in the UN system when it comes to addressing the risks of instability, insecurity and conflict arising from the interaction of climate change and social, economic and political factors. This must change. For the UN to be truly fit for purpose, with conflict prevention at the centre of its efforts, the UN needs to have the capacity to manage climate-related security risks.

It is as such a matter of UN reform: to successfully build a stronger UN that delivers sustainable development and peace for the future, reform efforts must take a climate changed world into account.

Disruptive consequences of climate change will inevitably end up on the

table of the Secretary General and the Security Council –our experiences from this year has already proven this.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Lake Chad Basin region – and which I mentioned earlier in my speech - presents a case in point. The impact of climate change on human livelihoods and security is apparent and widespread. This was also recognized by the Security Council during its visit to the region earlier this year.

In its subsequent resolution, the Security Council emphasized the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies by the UN relating to climate change impacts – an initiative by Sweden to move climate issues to the security council's table.

However, in the follow-up report on the resolution to the Council, analysis on climate-related security risks was lacking. This is clear evidence of the urgent need to strengthen the UN's ability within this field. Let us view this as an opportunity to move this agenda forward.

Let me stress a few points where concrete action are needed:

1. First of all, we need an institutional home for these issues within the UN system. There simply needs to be a function responsible for pulling together information, developing risk assessments and reporting on climate-related security risks to decision making bodies of the UN, including the Security Council. We have been advocating for this on several occasions, and more voices have been added to this call.

2. Secondly, we need to improve our awareness of climate-related security risks. This means both increasing our understanding but also making better use of the knowledge that already exists. Enhanced reporting from the field on the link between climate change and security would make a big difference.

This is about delivering on the call of the Lake Chad Resolution: i.e. improving risk assessments and risk management strategies. The knowledge that exists is currently not informing the Security Council in a systematic manner. This must change. Adequate risk assessments are a prerequisite for adequate response strategies. In this regard, we have suggested that a network of academic and research institutions could provide analysis to the UN. I would very much welcome to hear the thoughts on this from the

experts here today.

3. Thirdly, we need to make risk assessments much more integrated and strategic, taking into account how climate and environmental risks interact with social, political, demographic and economic factors. This is part and parcel of the sustaining peace agenda. We need to apply interdisciplinary approaches and move away from methods where we analyze and manage risks in siloes.

Identifying risks is crucial when talking about security issues related to climate change, I would like to mention the Global challenge annual report 2017 that identifies factors that affect risks:

- The human release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, mainly through carbon dioxide from burning of fossil fuels.
- The damages to ecosystems that store large amounts of carbon, particularly forests and coastal marine ecosystems.
- Our own capacity to curb global emissions and coordinate efforts to reduce emissions. Driven by our understanding of tipping points and increasing the sense of urgency among politicians and the public.
- And finally, knowledge, the knowledge of how our actions influence the climate which in turn affects our ability to resilience.

Ladies and gentlemen,

With one year left at the table of the Security Council, Sweden will continue to advocate for the urgency of this agenda and for the need to strengthen the UN's capacity in this regard. We stand ready to support this, both financially and politically. And we believe others would be willing to follow.

Let me end by pointing to the Secretary General's Climate Summit in September 2019: this summit offers a pivotal moment to bring real change to how we address climate-related security risks. This topic can and should be on the summit's agenda, and the foundations for this should be laid now.

As Secretary General Guterres has said himself: "We are dealing with scientific facts, not politics. And the facts are clear. Climate change is a direct threat in itself and a multiplier of many other threats."

I very much look forward to hearing the panelists and experts here today, and hope that our discussion will be part of continued efforts to strengthen our joint focus on this critical agenda.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Remarks at OSCE ministerial meeting

Published 08 December 2017

Vienna, Austria, 7 December 2017 Check against delivery

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks to Austria for your efforts and your great hospitality. Sweden aligns itself with the EU statement.

Dear colleagues and friends.

Why are we here today? Do we have the same answer to the question of why we sit around the same table? My understanding is that it is because we believe that a rules-based security order is something that we build together. In Helsinki, Paris and onwards, we agreed to uphold a set of fundamental principles. We have agreed that there can be no security between states without respect for human rights within states. We have agreed to hold each other to account in order to uphold and maintain these principles.

Today, we see severe challenges to what we have agreed: The deteriorating situation for human rights in the region. The protracted conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh. And not least: Russia's aggression against Ukraine, its illegal annexation of Crimea and its direct involvement in destabilizing military activities in Eastern Ukraine. Hearing Crimean Tatars share their experiences this morning underlines the urgency.

As a member of the UN Security Council, Sweden would welcome a viable UN mission contributing to restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity and with a continuous presence along the state border between Ukraine and Russia. We are working with partners and allies to see if and how this could be achieved.

The strength of this organization lies in our commonly agreed principles and commitments from Helsinki and Paris and onwards. The OSCE must remain the guardian of these principles.

Of course, we have to do more to ensure that we increase the level of transparency and predictability in the politico-military field. We have to ensure implementation and modernization of our instruments and we welcome the structured dialogue. That is how we develop our work.

In no other region of the world has security cooperation reached the same level as in the OSCE. Therefore, we must safeguard the European security order.

We cannot continue to accept that a few participating States block important decisions which could take us forward.

Security is not a zero-sum game and the rules-based order can only function when everyone adheres to the rules. It is my firm belief that if you want peace, you must prepare for peace.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at the Foreign Trade University, Hanoi, Vietnam

Published 22 November 2017

Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, 22 November 2017. Check against delivery.

Vice-Chancellor, students, ladies and gentlemen,

"... a world that has yet to be imagined."

I was struck by this beautiful wording in the FTU's mission statement. And it is you – all of you here – and those who have gone before you, and those who will come after you, who are responsible for creating that world.

It is an honour for me to be here today and to have been given this opportunity to speak to you. One of the most enjoyable and enriching parts of my job as Minister for Foreign Affairs is meeting young people from all around the globe and all walks of life. I would like to hear about the hopes, dreams and ambitions you nurture, and the challenges you face.

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about Sweden's feminist foreign policy. But allow me, first of all, to say a few words about the long-standing relationship between Sweden and Vietnam.

Sweden was the first western country to establish diplomatic relations with Vietnam. This was in 1969, and since then we have been supporting and engaging with Vietnam, not least through development cooperation programmes that have helped Vietnam build hospitals and much-needed industries, and introduce various reforms in fields such as research, law, health, economics and human rights. Vietnam has made huge and rapid progress over the last 30 years, and bilateral development cooperation has come to an end.

Today we are partners, and our friendship is strong. Like all good friends, we need to visit each other from time to time, and I am looking forward to interesting meetings here in Hanoi.

A few days ago, I witnessed the horrific consequences of the world's failure to prevent yet another humanitarian and human rights crisis. I am referring to the situation in Rakhine State in Myanmar and the refugee crisis in Bangladesh, to where more than 620 000 Rohingya refugees have fled. I have heard shocking first-hand accounts of systematic and widespread violence and abuse, and sexual and gender-based violence. The scale of human suffering is immense.

The international community must condemn the acts of violence, not least by the Myanmar military, and should continue to play a strong, generous and impartial role to support the national efforts required to help Rakhine move forward. I have in my meetings here stressed the need for ASEAN countries to use their influence to address this multidimensional crisis.

Sweden is strongly committed to human rights principles and values that all nations have agreed to adhere to in the UN. There will always be values that we consider universal and indisputable: democracy, the rule of law and freedom of opinion and expression.

Increased respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law would also mean much greater freedom and a stronger position for women – and ultimately for the whole of society. Abolishing all the legislation in the world that discriminates against women and girls would not only increase freedom but have major positive economic impacts.

The importance of improving social, economic and other conditions to achieve true gender equality is an additional factor.

At a time when the multilateral rules-based international order is under threat, every effort must be made to safeguard it and to tackle global challenges together.

Sweden's commitment to multilateral cooperation and our staunch defence of international law are rooted in the realisation that our own security depends on this rules-based international order, where the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, both large and small, are respected globally.

Safeguarding the principles of free trade and the multilateral trading system is crucial to global economic development. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. It facilitates free and open trade, includes well-established rights to freedom of navigation and overflight, and supports the peaceful resolution of maritime disputes. Sweden welcomes the ongoing talks on a Code of Conduct (CoC) between ASEAN and China, and hopes for a swift implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the East Sea.

In our own region, we must not forget the conflict in Ukraine, Russia's aggression and violations of international law. Sweden and the EU underscore the importance of the Minsk agreements and reiterate our support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, and call upon Russia to do likewise.

Joint efforts to fulfil and speed up the implementation of the Paris Agreement are crucial. Climate change threatens to put prosperity out of reach for millions of people, roll back decades of growth and development, and make it impossible to end extreme poverty worldwide by 2030. The world's most poor and vulnerable people will be hardest hit by the impacts of climate change. Climate change adaptation is key in development support.

Meanwhile, never before have we had better know-how, solutions and technology to create opportunities for low-carbon development. There is an energy revolution under way, especially in developing countries, and opportunities abound for leap-frogging – for example, by using off-grid renewable solutions.

Let me turn now to Sweden's feminist foreign policy.

I will start with the policy's four pillars. They will be easy for you to remember, as they all start with the letter 'R'. I call them the '4 Rs': realities, rights, representation and resources.

First, reality means getting the facts right from the outset. And it is important to be concrete. What do the statistics say? What do we want to do and how should we prioritise? For example: if we want peace agreements to take women into account, let us find out how common this is. The answer is that 18 per cent of peace agreements between 1990 and 2014 made reference to women and gender equality. Perhaps, more women peace negotiators could make a difference? Well, statistics say that only 9 per cent of negotiators

were women in the 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011.

This is how we have to work to gain a correct understanding of reality: carefully, methodically and patiently.

Next is rights. Human rights are also women's rights. Here, we can talk about positive and negative rights. Positive rights are areas where the aim is progress, for example equal rights to inheritance and access to education, employment and health. Negative rights concern areas where we aim for prohibition, such as domestic violence, forced marriages and gender-based discrimination.

Then there is representation. Here we talk about participation in decision-making processes. It starts with a simple question: who has the power to create policy? Research shows that when it comes to which policies are pursued, gender matters. For this reason, women's underrepresentation in influential positions, in all areas of society, is a major cause for concern. And if we look at the statistics at global level, we will not find them uplifting. In national parliaments, for instance, less than 25 per cent of parliamentarians are women.

I am proud that half of the ministers in the government I represent are women. And my workplace, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, is quite exceptional: all three ministers, and three out of four State Secretaries, are women.

The final 'R' is resources. Who gets the resources? Who do we give support to? In our development cooperation, we apply a gender perspective when distributing aid. One example: today, only one per cent of spending in security sector reform is given to initiatives where gender equality is a significant objective. This is unacceptable.

The results then? What have we achieved over the last three years?

Since we launched our feminist foreign policy, tens of countries have introduced laws and proposals to strengthen gender equality.

We have established a network of women mediators, and we have increased the participation of women in peace processes in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

We have pushed for the implementation of gender equality strategies at

development banks and environment and climate funds.

We have ensured that a gender perspective has been incorporated into development agendas, and we have helped to give hundreds of thousands of women and girls access to safe abortions.

Those are not easy issues but I believe we all can do something to make a difference.

We can – and we should.

To all of you who are still thinking about how to shape your personal future, and the future of your country, I say this: if you believe something is unfair, do something about it. Be bold and be patient. Don't give up!

I would like to end with a poem by Vietnamese poet Hoang Thi Y Nhi, who two years ago won the Swedish literary Cikada Prize.

"How can we tell
what's ahead of us – the sea, forest, valley or swamp.

But regardless we've got to
go to the end of the road we have chosen.
Even if it takes the walk
of an artist on a cable strung over a vast empty space

Balance
balance
pay attention to balance"

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, at IDEA's launch of The Global State of Democracy report

Published 15 November 2017 Updated 15 November 2017

15 November 2017 Check against delivery.

Mr. Secretary General, colleagues, distinguished guests, friends of democracy,

I'm delighted to see so many people gathered here to discuss the challenges that democracy is facing today, but also the opportunities it presents.

Democracy continues to be the only alternative when it comes to giving all individuals the opportunity to influence the society they live in, as well as their own lives.

Let me therefore begin by underlining the paramount importance of democracy in Sweden's foreign policy. Democracy, human rights and the rule of law make up a very strong entity that are mutually reinforcing, and dependent on each other.

But we must remember that democracy is not something that can be exported, it can only be supported. Democracy is a complex affair. It must include a combination of electoral principles, deliberative and participatory components, liberal rights and not least a reasonable level of equality. Only when these perspectives work together can democracy truly flourish,

This shows that democratic rights are also duties, citizens must engage and participate in civil society, media, debates, demonstrations and so on. Democracy can never grow in a society where you only contribute by voting

every four or five years.

Today I wish to speak to you on democracy from three different perspectives:

1. The Swedish human rights reports and the trend of shrinking space
2. The necessity of women and youth in democracies
3. The European Union and growing populism

...

The reports on human rights, democracy and the rule of law on 135 countries, that the ministry of foreign affairs published earlier this year, show the dynamics behind democratic backsliding. These reports have been published before but for the first time they also include a democracy component.

In these reports we see a clear trend where a growing number of states limit the space available to civil society in various ways.

This is worrying since a vibrant and pluralistic civil society and a free media are essential for democracy.

Governments are increasingly persecuting organisations and individuals fighting for their freedoms of expression, assembly and opinion.

In some traditionally democratic countries too, we have seen backsliding from democratic governance and the space for civil society decrease. Not the least we see this among the European union members states where young - but until now stable - democracies are showing authoritarian tendencies.

According to the global civil society alliance, CIVICUS, ratings for October 2017, only two percent of the world's population today live in a country with a completely open civic space.

Having a strong civil society is the foundation of all functioning democracies and we can see how shrinking space often coincides with a declining democracy. This can be seen in a range of countries such as Cambodia, Turkey, Poland or Venezuela.

Sweden continues to be in the forefront of fighting the causes of shrinking

space. We work in the UN Security Council, the UN Human Rights Council and other UN agencies. The EU is an important player in promoting human rights issues around the world, but also among member states.

...

An area of positive but slow development is women's rights.

Sweden has over the last three years had a feminist foreign policy with the aim to promote women as actors in all spheres of society. This includes increasing women's political representation and empowerment.

As pointed out in the Global State of Democracy report, at current rates of progress, political equality between men and women will not be achieved until 2060.

That is totally unacceptable.

Madeleine Albright has once said that "development without democracy is improbable. Democracy without women is impossible."

I could not agree more.

Gender equality is a fundamental matter of human rights, democracy and social justice. But overwhelming evidence shows that it is also a precondition for sustainable growth, welfare, peace and security. Societies where women are not thriving will not prosper.

The youth continues to be under-represented in most elected parliaments. Even though many countries have a young population they still fail in representation. This is worrisome and risks creating a gap between aging politicians, that does not take sustainable decisions for future generations, and young frustrated voters that are not represented.

I think new initiatives are necessary to guarantee youth representation. I myself come from a political party that decided to set a goal of 25 % under 35 years of age at all election lists for our latest election. I think ideas like these need to be encouraged and more widely used.

....

Let me raise my third and final point. Democracy in the EU is under attack from populism.

An increasing number of people today are losing confidence in conventional politics and are questioning the value of democracy.

The rise of populism, disinformation and racism we are seeing today, not least here in Europe, will test democracy's resilience in the coming years.

We need to focus our attention to prevent further backsliding and work even harder to show the benefits of living in open free societies where democracy reigns. In this regard, we must show that democracy does not only voice the opinion of a few but guarantees decisions promoting economic growth and equal opportunities for the larger public.

Many people may rarely voice their political views but are counting on democratically elected politicians to deliver an effective government and rule of law. Decreasing inequality is essential to regain support for politicians and fighting populism, it is also one of the global development goals and thus a globally recognized priority.

The European Union has an important role to play in this regard and should lead with example.

...

Working for continuous dialogue on democracy is important in preventing it from backsliding. Today's event organised by IDEA is an excellent example and contribution to that end.

IDEA's Global State of Democracy and its indices is an instrument that will be a valuable tool for policy makers, civil society and individuals engaged in democratic development across the globe.

Therefore I would like to take this opportunity to convey my warmest congratulations to all the staff at International IDEA for producing a thorough, timely and relevant publication.

As anti-democratic forces gain foothold around the world, closer cooperation between governments, international organisations and civil society will form the basis of our defence.

Lastly, this Monday, Sweden qualified for next year's World cup in football,

but in contrast to football, democracy is not a spectator sport. It needs everyone's participation and I encourage each and everyone in this room, and beyond, to join the game.

Thank you for listening.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at debate in the UN Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict

Published 31 October 2017

Margot Wallström, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, New York, 31 October 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr President,

Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for their important briefings to the Council this morning. I also want to thank the Secretary-General for his Annual Report. We particularly welcome the focus in this year's report on protection and prevention. I also commend the Secretary-General and the Special Representative for their enhanced engagement with the concerned parties.

I would like to pay particular tribute today to Mubin Shaikh for sharing his inspiring story with the Council. It makes a difference to listen to the voices of those who have lived the issues we are discussing here.

As I said in this council on Friday, I visited Afghanistan last week. In Afghanistan, one in three civilian casualties of the conflict is a child. In addition, children continue to be recruited, particularly by armed groups; they remain at risk of sexual violence and are also subject to forced detention.

I want you to imagine a classroom. The teacher has given the class an assignment to 'fill in the blank': I want to be – dot – dot – dot – when I grow up. A doctor? A lawyer? A teacher?

One boy has no answer. A week later, his chair in the classroom is empty.

His father had died in the war, and the boy already knew that he would now have to provide for his family by working as a shoe polisher.

There are countless such stories. Some of them, like this one, were captured in a short film by a young film maker who I met in Herat.

And I can assure you, that in every meeting I had in Afghanistan, I was told how children are the ones who suffer most from the conflict.

We all know that this is the case in every conflict. We, the international community, have a responsibility. We must do all in our power to give all children the right to their childhood.

Mr. President,

The Secretary-General's report tells us about the shocking scale and severity of violations and abuses against children in armed conflicts around the world. To think of how children have been killed and maimed, recruited and used, as human shields and human bombs, is heartbreaking.

We must not lose this generation of children. How we treat children affected by armed conflict has consequences for their future.

And giving up on them means giving up on their communities, and on the countries they live in.

Mr President,

While we cannot solve all the conflicts on the agenda of the Security Council here and now, we can protect the children that are suffering because of them. The Children and Armed Conflict agenda is a framework for this.

It gives us the tools to prevent all violations and abuses against children and to ensure that perpetrators are held to account. There is a unique consensus within the Council on this agenda, and we should spare no effort in its implementation.

Sweden has a long tradition of working to strengthen the protection of children. As members of the Security Council and as Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict our aim is to advance this work further.

There are a number of areas where we believe there is room for improvement.

Firstly, this Council has heard from child victims of non-state armed groups, including Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and Daesh. Their stories, like Mubin's, are shocking.

They have told us of their recruitment as child soldiers; of sexual slavery; of mass abductions. We have a responsibility to act in the face of such attacks to our common humanity.

The first step is to improve our work to prevent human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. This should include violations and abuses by all parties to conflict, including state and non-state armed groups. In this regard we call on those member states that have not yet done so to sign the Paris Principles and the Safe Schools Declaration.

But, we, the international community, must also ensure that our response to these groups is in accordance with international law.

Secondly, we should prioritise the effective reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces or armed groups. These children should always be treated primarily as victims. Successful reintegration is in the best interests of the child, but also in the best interest of society as a whole. Children should always be part of the solution, not part of the problem. This was a clear message during this Council's visit to the Lake Chad region.

Thirdly, we should guarantee the right to education and protect schools. This is important in order to prevent conflicts and to build a sustainable peace.

The fourth Sustainable Development Goal underlines the important role of children's education in reducing poverty and inequality. Here, I want to mention girls' access to education in particular.

As the penholder for Children and Armed Conflict we are very pleased that the Council today adopted a Presidential Statement that shows the Council's strong unity behind the Children and Armed Conflict mandate. The Presidential Statement strengthens the Council's stance on many of the issues that I have just raised.

Mr President,

Looking to the future, we will continue to lead on this issue. This includes using the Security Council and our role as Chair of the Working Group as a platform to integrate child protection as a priority in peacekeeping, prevention and the sustaining peace-agenda and to stand up for the integrity of the mandate.

We will also work hard in all of our efforts, both inside and outside the Council, to:

- ensure children's right to education;
- ensure children's right to health, including mental health and psychosocial support, in conflicts; and,
- enable children to make their voice heard.

Mr President,

Protecting children today prevents conflicts tomorrow. When we give children their futures back, we give them the opportunity to realize their dreams. Whether it is to become a doctor, a lawyer or a teacher. By doing so, we put in place the building blocks for peaceful and sustainable societies. The children trapped in armed conflict today have no time to lose, neither should we. It is time for action.

Thank You



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at Security Council briefing on Peace and Security in Africa

Published 30 October 2017

Margot Wallström, New York, 30 October 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr President,

The situation in the Sahel is a source of increasing concern. It has implications, not only for the millions of people facing insecurity and hunger, but also for the wider region, and indeed, globally. The root causes are complex and transboundary. The effects of the spread of violent extremism, organised crime, climate change, a worsening human rights situation and weak institutions are mutually reinforcing. They are having devastating consequences for the people of Sahel and show the limits of traditional peacekeeping. In response, a combination of short- and long-term efforts must be applied. We are heavily engaged through our development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, as well as our contribution to MINUSMA and the EU mission.

Stability in Mali is critical for the Sahel as a whole. Supporting the full, inclusive and effective implementation of the peace agreement must remain a priority, not least in view of the upcoming elections. It is our best chance at building a sustained peace, and preventing the further spread of instability. The sanctions regime established pursuant to resolution 2374 should be an active tool in our endeavours to achieve peace and stability in Mali. However, sanctions are not an end in themselves. They are a means of encouraging political momentum

Mr President,

Allow me to dwell for a moment on the issue of inclusivity. In Mali, Security Council members, during their recent visit, met with women civil society representatives. Asked whether they had access to the political leadership in their country, they responded that they did not only want access to politicians; rather, they wanted to become decision-makers in their own right, represented on equal terms with men.

While the 30 % quota law is a welcome development, women are still largely excluded from the political sphere; just as they are from bodies related to the implementation of the peace agreement. As we discussed on Friday, women's representation is not just a question of fairness; it is a matter of effectiveness and of increasing the probability of a lasting peace agreement.

However, when you fear leaving your house to fetch water a few kilometres away, or when your children are prevented from going to school for years, political representation seems an abstract goal. This is the reality in central Mali, as it is in many other places throughout the Sahel. For me, the interlinkage between security, human rights and development is evident. Without security, there can be no development. Without full respect for human rights, any security effort is doomed to fail, further alienating the population from the state.

Mr President,

The collective efforts of the G5 Sahel countries to step up development efforts, and to move towards the full operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, are therefore truly commendable. They have our wholehearted support. Considering the complex set of challenges on the ground, the manner in which the force performs its tasks will be critical to its results.

Let me highlight three areas that should guide our continued engagement with the G5 Sahel Joint Force:

Firstly, the G5 Sahel Joint Force is one of many instruments that make up an integrated, sustainable and regional approach to the situation in the Sahel. The primacy of politics should guide this work, and it is essential to ensure that an overarching political framework for the Sahel is put in place.

Continued unity among G5 Sahel countries and the international community is crucial. We also encourage strong engagement by the African Union, not least in ensuring coordination with other regional initiatives and frameworks and in ensuring further integration within the AU Peace and Security

Architecture. This is an opportunity for the UN, the AU and the sub-region to work as one, together with other partners, such as the EU.

Secondly, the success of the force will depend on support to it from the population. This is particularly true where armed terrorist groups are entrenched within the population, exploiting the absence of the state authority. A solid human rights compliance framework will, therefore, be of the utmost importance; not least to restore trust in state institutions and prevent fuelling further radicalisation and destabilisation. The G5 Sahel countries have recognised this need in the Joint Force's Concept of Operations; we must now move towards the establishment of mechanisms to prevent and address international human rights and international humanitarian law violations and abuses.

It is essential that the activities of the force include a gender perspective in planning as well as in specific protection actions. The Joint Force might also encounter children associated with armed groups. Clear procedures on how to tackle this issue, including through cooperation with child protection advisors, are therefore needed.

Finally, peace is best pursued in partnership. We need to ensure that our repeated calls for regional ownership, expectations from the force and our demands for accountability are matched with adequate resources and support.

The suggested options for support put forward by the Secretary-General illustrate that many possibilities exist.

Predictable and sustainable UN support is vital for the force to be able to deliver on its objectives; Sweden stands ready to explore all models, including the most ambitious. A supportive role from the UN can underpin a stronger political framework, including through the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and mutual accountability. In addition to our support through the EU, Sweden is also considering possible ways of supporting the FC-G5S bilaterally, particularly in the area of preventing and addressing human rights and international humanitarian law violations and abuses.

Mr President,

In 2017, an estimated 30 million people in the Sahel will not have enough food to eat. At the same time, terrorists continue to threaten lives and undermine the livelihoods of the population across the region.

The success of our efforts in the Sahel will be judged by how we improve the lives of the people who live there. The G5 Sahel Joint Force is a welcome initiative to increase security, complement the activities of MINUSMA and end the terrorist threat. It deserves our full support. Accompanied by robust and meaningful development efforts to address the root causes of conflict and instability, it offers a chance to set the region on the path to sustainable peace.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at the UN Security Council debate on Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

Published 27 October 2017 Updated 27 October 2017

Margot Wallström, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, New York, 27 October 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr President, Colleagues, Friends,

I come here directly from a visit to Herat and Kabul in Afghanistan. I met with women and girls in the midst of conflict. They struggle to make ends meet and to keep their families safe. They face a constant risk of sexual violence.

While talking to these women, my thought was: "What does the Women, Peace and Security agenda do for them"?

Well, it should ensure that the women I met, for instance, those who work in the security sector, have more female colleagues; and that they can work without the threat of harassment.

It should ensure that the female mediators, that Sweden has provided training for, can have a real role. And work without the shadow of death threats.

And, it should ensure that the girl I met – 18 years old, married away at 13, and with five children – that she, perhaps, would have had ten more years, to grow as a person, to get an education, to realise her dreams in life.

Oppression of women is a global disease. We see how women, all over the world, are systematically underrepresented in decision-making, how women receive fewer resources, and how women lack fundamental rights in a

number of areas.

Mr President,

Sexual violence, as a weapon of war, is a horrendous manifestation of the oppression of women.

I got to see this up close when I, as you might recall, was the first Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict a few years ago. I often say that it was a role that left me with a heavier heart, but also with hope for the future.

What I came to realise was that we make three mistakes when we look at this issue. We tend to view it as inevitable; unspeakable and as a lesser crime.

I had that job back in 2010-2012 when resolution 1325 turned ten years. Today we have had that resolution, and seven more, for 17 years, and we are still, unfortunately, far from eradicating this horrendous practice. It saddens me. But it also strengthens my resolve.

Mr President,

In order to achieve real results for the Women Peace and Security agenda, we need to work systematically. We need to have a gender perspective in all aspects of peace building.

Let me point to three important aspects.

First: data and analysis. We can do much more about the situation on the ground, if we have and use disaggregated data on women and men. As an example, it could concern statistics on education, internally displaced people or the number of women and men employed in the police force.

Once we have the data, we need to look at it carefully before drawing conclusions. Reporting should have an integrated gender perspective which feeds into the Secretary General's recommendations and conclusions. Women's civil society organisations, often at the frontline, can give valuable input.

Sweden stands ready to work with the UN to enhance data collection, and analysis of gender disaggregated data.

Second: expertise. Many reports have highlighted how gender experts contribute to the overall success of UN Missions. I am worried that budget cuts and mainstreamed mandates could result in cuts of essential gender expertise in UN missions. This would mean that we risk leaving out half of the population in our critical work on Protection of Civilians or strengthening the Rule of Law. And we all must get better at training and providing women to UN peace missions.

Third: Women's organisations and networks. Women organisations receive a disproportionately small amount of development funding. This must change. Whether in the public, private or NGO spheres, there are networks of active women who are actors for peace and security. We should support women's organisations and networks where we can, and enable them to participate fully at a local, national and also at an international level.

Mr President,

When Sweden joined the Security Council, we set out two overarching priorities: Conflict Prevention and Women, Peace and Security. In all our work in the Council, we have sought to operationalise the Women, Peace and Security agenda. For instance, through ensuring the inclusion of gender reporting in mission mandates and adding listing criterion for sexual and gender-based violence in sanctions regimes. We will continue this work, with commitment, not only on a day like this, but on every other day as well.

It gives me hope that the new UN leadership places gender at the centre of its diplomacy for peace.

It also gives me hope to read the Secretary-General's report, which points out that meaningful participation of women has a demonstrated impact on the sustainability and effectiveness of peace processes, economic development and social prosperity.

There is a momentum for women's participation in peace processes. We should seize this momentum, and place women's full enjoyment of their rights at the core of international peace and security. This is not a women's issue. It is a peace and security issue. This is necessary to successfully

respond to the many crises on the Council's agenda. The frameworks and tools are in place – it is up to us to make it happen. We know what is needed. Political space. Active civil society organisations. Constant capacity building.

And we have examples. For instance, in Afghanistan, where the restructured High Peace Council has 13 female members and 39 male members, Sweden has supported local female leaders to build their capacity to participate in mediation and dialogue processes.

In Somalia, political will from the National Leadership Forum ensured a quota for women in parliament – despite resistance to women's participation.

In Colombia, women's organisations paved the way for women's inclusion in the peace process.

Mr President,

True change can only be achieved with strong and courageous political leadership. Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed set an example through the joint UN-African Union high-level mission to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which focused on Women, Peace and Security and development. We should build on this good example and use this methodology in future country visits.

Gender equality makes societies more peaceful. Or as I like to put it: More women more peace. We, the Security Council, need to show leadership. Not only today, but across the country-specific files and in all aspects of our work.

Mr President,

Let us remember Hammarskjöld's words;

No peace which is not peace for all, no rest until all has been fulfilled.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström: How can we make our region more stable and secure?

Published 18 October 2017

Speech at the university in Archangelsk, 18 October 2017. Check against delivery.

Like a bride-to-be, I receive
A letter at each day's end,
And late at night I conceive
An answer for my friend

Brighter, a star is shining
Between that pair of trees,
Calmly promising
That what I dream will be.

(ryska: kak nevésta polutjájo)

Anna Achmátova. Standing before a group of young people like you, I get a sense of nostalgia by lines like that, because it makes me remember that time in life when you lived in dreams about the future.

I hope that you live in dreams about the future, and I hope that some of you would be willing to share your thoughts about the future later.

It is a pleasure to be in Archangelsk and to talk to you today. To those of you who study Swedish, I would like to say:

Vad roligt att ni är intresserade av Sverige. Jag hoppas att ni vill komma och

besöka vårt land någon dag.

Although I would not mind spending all my time talking about poetry and dreams, this speech has a slightly different headline, which is "How can we make our region more stable and secure?"

I will give you five answers to this question, and I would actually like to begin in the future.

1) Number one: common efforts to meet common challenges

I think that in fifty years from now, we will be judged by how we acted in one particular issue.

There is no question which is as fateful to us – and by us I mean all of us, all humans – as climate change.

It is becoming more and more impossible to look away from it. We can already now see clear effects: shrinking glaciers, shifting plant and animal ranges, growing deserts, increased draughts, and more extreme weather conditions. In your country the Perm frost is starting to melt, and ice on rivers and lakes is breaking up earlier.

This development will lead to devastating consequences for humanity in the future. Just to mention one example – there is a prediction that up to 250 million people in the world may be displaced by climate change by 2050.

I am sorry to say, but previous generations, including my own, have left a mess on this planet which you, and your children will have to clean up. Steps have been taken. The Paris Climate Accord was a paradigm shift, as well as Agenda 2030. But we shall not live under the illusion that they on their own will bring things back to normal.

Climate change hits all of our countries together. And because of that, we need to tackle it together.

2) The second answer concerns security politics and confidence building measures

It is no secret that there are tensions in our region today which were not there a few years' ago.

And it is no secret that our countries have different views on certain international affairs.

However, the Swedish people and the Russian people have one very strong interest in common: that of living together in peace.

There is a lot we can do to minimise the risk of conflict and misunderstandings in our region. I would like to mention the notion of confidence building measures. Those of you who study international politics might know of it.

To put it in simple terms, it is about ways to take away question marks and possible confusion about the behaviour of other countries.

A concrete example of this is when we invite observers to military exercises. The fact that we meet with our Russian colleagues is also a way of increasing confidence.

And also here, I come back to the word "cooperation".

My country's security policy is built on the conviction that threats against peace and stability are best handled in cooperation with other countries.

In the Barents region, constructive regional cooperation has played an important role for stability. The Barents Rescue Area is a concrete example of the added value of practical confidence building in our region.

3) Three: gender equality

I began this speech by quoting a female poet, and I also began by talking about dreams. Your country has a history of strong women. I hope the girls in this room feel inspired by them.

Gender equality is, to put in short, the idea that the dreams of the girls in this room should be as possible to fulfil, as the dreams of the boys.

To me, it is hard to see how this can be controversial to some.

Gender equality is actually an answer to how we can make our region more stable. Why? Because, we can see from research that there is a positive relation between women's opportunities and stability. Gender equality has positive effects on health and education, and it reduces extremism in societies.

An important thing here is that it is also good for men, if women get better lives.

In our government, for every decision that is taken, we ask the question "how does this affect women?".

And if we see that a proposal – for instance a new law – has unintentional effects on women, we try to change it so that it makes life better for both men and women.

4) Four: People-to-people contacts

Everything I have said so far about cooperation to meet different challenges, will be so much easier to do, if we already know each other.

What I mean by that is simple: it is good for us and for the future, if young Russians meet with young Swedes.

That is why it makes me happy to see that so many of you are studying Swedish. I have heard that there will be Sweden days in Archangelsk later this year, and I hope that many of you will participate in them!

By meeting and making friends with people from other countries, we understand that they are just like us: that they have the same dreams and that they want the same things in life as we do. With such understanding, the risk for conflict gets smaller.

And I believe that the Barents cooperation is an area where this works well. From what I understand, there are Barents Summer schools and networks of young entrepreneurs. Archangelsk and Kiruna are twin towns, and we will organise Sweden days here.

5) Let me, lastly say something about the Barents cooperation, which is why I am here

Tomorrow we will have a meeting with the Barents Council, where Sweden will take over the Chairmanship from Russia.

In this cooperation, our countries, together with Finland, Norway, Denmark and Iceland meet, as well as with regional and local governments and indigenous peoples. We discuss common challenges and how we can meet them together.

In fact, many of the issues I have mentioned are our priorities for this work.

We want to work with the environment and with economic and social development. And within those areas we want to focus on gender equality and youth exchange.

When it comes to facing the climate and other big challenges, we have developed a Barents Action Plan on climate change.

We will focus our work in the Barents cooperation on sustainable development, youth cooperation and gender equality.

So, to come back to the first question about how we can make our region more stable and secure, there are ways forward.

But perhaps I could have made this speech much shorter if I had, straight away, given the real answer to the question. It is: you.

You, the young people of Russia, as well as of Sweden and of the other countries in our region. It is you, who will have to deal with the unfinished business of our time. The climate. Our common security. Gender equality. Economic and social equality.

And I can only hope that you will manage it better than my generation has done.

Please add these things to the dreams about your future. And let us all hope, as Achmatova wrote, that what you dream will be.

I am now ready to take questions from you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

National statement UNGA72

Published 22 September 2017

Delivered by H.E. Ms Margot Wallström, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sweden. Check against delivery.

Mr President, Secretary-General, Excellencies,

In 1954, former Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, stated that "the United Nations was not created to bring us to heaven, but to save us from hell".

The need for a United Nations that seeks to save us from humanity's worst impulses remains. However, in these days of uncertainty we must also learn from - and build on - what is positive in our world, and in the United Nations.

In his important address on Tuesday, our Secretary-General laid out the threats and challenges we face; and how we can overcome them. Delivering a peaceful and prosperous future will depend on collective action.

This is the moment for multilateralism, not unilateralism. We must grasp it or risk the consequences.

The United Nations is at the centre of this effort. It is a tailor-made space for the world to find the solutions to the common challenges of our time. And, despite the, sometimes justified, criticisms, it is clear that we still believe in the United Nations' power. If we did not, Presidents, Prime Ministers, business and civil society leaders would not be here this week. I believe that we all recognise, that in the face of global challenges, 'going it alone' is no longer an option.

The United Nations, founded to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to promote better standards of life in larger freedom, has prevented a repetition of the catastrophic wars that preceded its founding. Extreme poverty has fallen to an historic low. Life expectancy continues to

climb. Millions of people are reached every year with life-saving humanitarian assistance.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sustaining Peace Agenda are a powerful illustration of what we can achieve together.

These agreements are the strategies for our common future. We must now ensure that this organisation has the structure and tools needed to support countries' to deliver them.

The broad support for the Secretary-General's reform agenda illustrates the importance we attach to an effective United Nations, its role at the centre of multilateralism, and as a platform for the delivery of our common commitments.

The scope of the reforms being proposed by the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General reveals the complex task at hand. The Peace and Security Architecture must better prevent conflicts and sustain peace. The UN Development System must be radically reoriented to achieve the 2030 Agenda. And, to deliver these changes, modern management skills and systems will be essential.

More importantly, we must recognise that these reforms cannot be pursued in isolation from one another. People do not experience life in pieces. Their needs must be central. Peace and security, economic and social development, and the protection and promotion of human rights are mutually reinforcing – in responding, all pillars of the UN system, as well as our own bilateral efforts, must also be interlinked and mutually reinforcing. This calls for new ways of thinking and working.

Sweden fully subscribes to the principles for reform articulated by the Secretary-General: a country-level and people centered perspective, gender-parity, decentralized responsibility and decision making, and reformed budget procedures.

Secretary-General Guterres, Deputy Secretary-General Mohammed, you have our full support for your efforts.

On our part, we, as member-states have a responsibility to act coherently, to avoid micro-management and to ensure long-term, stable and adequate financing. More flexible funding is necessary. We firmly believe in core and

un-earmarked funding. We cannot allow ourselves to cherry pick to accommodate domestic interests; this will not give the organization the stability it needs.

I am proud to tell you that Sweden will increase our development cooperation budget by an approximately USD 350 million in 2018, bringing our budget to its highest ever level, and delivering on our commitment to devote 1% of gross national income to ODA. In addition, we will support the Secretary-General's efforts with kronor, as well as words, by making available additional flexible funding for reform.

In the immediate term, faced with record-levels of humanitarian need, the humanitarian system requires urgent funding to save lives and end suffering. In the longer term, investing in the 2030 Agenda and the sustaining peace agenda will build resilience.

Excellencies,

Let me focus now on three particular areas in the remainder of my remarks.

Firstly, nine months ago Sweden joined the UN Security Council. As the General Assembly elected us to the Council, it is only proper that I report back to you on what we have been doing on your behalf. Our approach to the Council is simple. While we each come with our national perspective, and while we will not always agree; as Council members, we are bound together by a responsibility to the charter and the world.

To this end, Sweden works with all members to deliver meaningful outcomes from the Council's discussions. We work closely with the other elected members, who represent the broader membership, and bring important perspectives. We are also talking with many of you, as part of our commitment to speak with countries on the Council's agenda, not only about them. Delivering real outcomes for those who need them is a responsibility that goes beyond our national interests.

And needs are growing. The number of major conflicts is on the rise. However, as the Secretary-General has said, neither war, nor peace, is inevitable. They result from the choices we make. Many of the conflicts on the Council's agenda have come about not because we failed to see them coming – the signs were there - but because we failed to respond early enough or quickly enough.

And, prevention means not only choosing to heed the warnings when they come, but investing in peaceful societies to avoid the causes of conflict emerging in the first place. As leaders within our communities, and as national leaders, we must choose peace, invest in peace, deliver peace. And, the UN system must be configured to support us.

Sweden has made conflict prevention a central pillar of our Council membership. We have underscored the need for the Council to recognise the primacy of politics in peacekeeping mandates, and the need for long term political strategies that aim to prevent conflict and sustain peace by addressing root causes. I believe we are making progress.

This is evidenced by the Council's support for a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Gambia, for the peace process in Colombia and for the transitions in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire, as well as its cooperation with the African Union to bring stability to Somalia.

As Chair of the Council's Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, Sweden has sought to strengthen the protection of children in conflict zones. Protection of children today, prevents conflicts tomorrow.

Nonetheless, we have more to do. The situation in Myanmar is a haunting example of where the seeds of conflict went unresolved, with tragic consequences. It is now urgent that the violence end, that the population be protected, that human rights be respected, and that dignified return be allowed. Humanitarian access is essential. Sweden supports the recommendations of the Annan Commission. We urge the Myanmar government to implement them without delay.

In Syria, prevention also failed. The price paid by the country and its citizens has been unimaginable and horrific. Sweden will continue to work through the Council for nationwide humanitarian access. And for a political solution, which is the only option for long-term peace and a better future for Syria.

In South Sudan, the civilian population has also borne the brunt of a nearly 4-year long devastating conflict. I welcome recent initiatives by South Sudan's neighbours. I urge the Government and all other parties to increase humanitarian access, to lay down their arms and engage in a meaningful process to end this conflict.

We continue our longstanding engagement in trying to advance the Middle East Peace Process. As the Secretary-General said during his recent visit to

the region, the two-state-solution is the only way forward. Only a negotiated settlement between the parties and an end to the 50 years of occupation, can achieve this goal – Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in peace and security. We need to resolve this conflict once and for all. Doing so will have implications for peace that go beyond the holy land and the Middle East itself.

Perhaps the greatest threat to international peace and security is the unacceptable and repeated provocations by the DPRK in pursuit of a nuclear weapons programme. We call upon the DPRK to cease further testing, fulfil its international obligations, and turn to a path of sincere dialogue on de-nuclearization. All states must implement the measures decided upon by a united Security Council. Sanctions must be combined with political efforts to pave the way for a peaceful solution. We welcome the Secretary-General's pledge to make his good offices available to this end.

Excellencies,

Lasting peace requires the involvement of the entire population, meaning that the full, equal, and effective participation of women must be hardwired into all of our efforts towards sustaining peace. This brings me to my second point, Women, peace and security.

As a representative of the world's first feminist government, this issue is close to my heart. From speaking with many of you, I realise that I am far from alone in my strong conviction that women's participation in peace and security efforts is essential for sustainable peace.

Ensuring women's participation must be at the centre of the UN's reform efforts. Sweden is working tirelessly to put the Women, Peace and Security agenda into action in all aspects of the Council's work, from including gender reporting in mission mandates to adding listing criterion for sexual and gender-based violence in sanctions regimes.

Sweden's feminist foreign policy is an agenda for change aimed at increasing rights, representation and resources for all women and girls, based on the reality of their lives. We urge all countries to form their own feminist policy and to ensure that everyone, women, men, boys and girls are treated equally.

Excellencies,

My third, and last point, is our common responsibility for global

development. The 2030 Agenda provides the pathways to achieve the peaceful, sustainable and equitable societies we want. All countries – rich and poor - share the responsibility of turning this promise into a reality for millions of people around the world. It will not be done by governments alone. All stakeholders from across society have a part to play. Ensuring that the UN Development System is transformed to support these efforts will be critical.

Measuring our progress against the Sustainable Development Goals will be essential both for decision making and accountability. Sweden has developed a set of national goals, linked to the SDGs and our national budget, which we are using to measure the development of our society.

As we all know, the strength of the 2030 Agenda is in the inherent interlinkages between all 17 goals. Each goal is equally important and interdependent; nonetheless, I would like to highlight two goals.

First, the goal of Reducing Inequality: Globalization has opened the world, strengthened economic growth and lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty. However, we have failed to spread the benefits of globalization equally. We must do better. As part of our contribution, in 2016, Sweden, together with an initial core group of states, business and trade unions, launched the Global Deal for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth. The Global Deal is a partnership developed with the ILO and the OECD with a focus on enhanced social dialogue and sound industrial relations, which are crucial to reducing inequality.

The second goal I would like to mention is that of Healthy Oceans and Seas. The oceans connect us all. Without water, there is no life. Therefore, the deteriorating condition of our oceans must ring alarm bells for us all. Sweden was pleased to co-host, with Fiji, The Ocean Conference that took place in June. The multi-stakeholder participation, and commitments made, highlighted the fact that saving the oceans will require all sectors of society to play their part – and that they are ready to do so.

The oceans are also affected by, and in return affect, our climate. We are already seeing the devastating impact of extreme weather events. Climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of such events. Left unchecked, climate change will wash away development gains and increase instability and conflict.

To those few that still doubt the overwhelming evidence that climate change

is real, I ask: are you really willing to take the chance? Especially when we see that new technologies offer the opportunity to simultaneously reduce emissions and grow economies. Sweden is already proving this is possible and has set a goal of zero net greenhouse emissions by 2045.

All countries must join the effort to achieve the decisive transformations needed to reduce emissions and prevent the worse effects of climate change from happening. With 160 State Parties to the Paris Agreement so far, the global commitment remains strong.

Excellencies,

In his address on Tuesday, the Secretary-General told us "We must act as one, because only together, as united nations, can we fulfil the promise of the Charter and advance human dignity for all."

He is right. The expression that "We are all in this together" has perhaps never been so apt. As our world becomes more integrated, so do the challenges and threats we face. We cannot go it alone, we must stand together. Multilateralism is the only path to peace and prosperity.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Athens Democracy Forum

Published 14 September 2017 Updated 14 September 2017

Athens, 14 September 2017. Check against delivery.

Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to have been given this opportunity to speak to you here at the Athens Democracy Forum – and on the eve of the International Day of Democracy. A most pertinent time and place for this conversation.

As many before me have noted, the idea of liberal democracy is being challenged. Many western countries are facing a crisis of confidence.

There seems to be a growing divide between people – and declining trust in elected officials. Globalisation has lifted many people out of poverty, but it has also left many behind – many of whom now voice their discontent at the ballot box or elsewhere.

At the same time, many emerging democracies are beginning to show signs of backsliding. In May this year, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs published reports on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in 135 countries. Unfortunately, the reports show that the situation is deteriorating in many parts of the world. At the same time, there are more armed conflicts and violence in the world today than in a long time. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program at Uppsala University, there are currently 50 state-based armed conflicts in the world.

There are many explanations for how we ended up here. Thousands of analyses have been made. But we don't have all night...

I do believe, however, that we can all agree that confidence in democratic institutions needs to be regained, on many different levels. Of course, measures need to be taken nationally.

To build confidence globally, leaders must put short-term self-interest aside, and work together to achieve the stability and security that people who voted for them rightly expect – to work for peace.

The inability of the international community to prevent conflict undermines trust in institutions such as the United Nations. Syria is just one example.

So, today I would like to talk about how the concept of security and the nature of conflict are changing. About how we should manage today's wide range of security threats to prevent armed conflict from breaking out. I will talk about how to invest in long-term peace for future generations.

First, I will say a few words about the need, as I see it, to change the mindset about security. I will then make three points on the action we can take.

Changing the way we think about security.

It may be trite to say that we are living in dangerous and turbulent times, but this is a fact that must be emphasised. Perhaps it has never been as difficult to deal with contemporary challenges as it is today.

More than ever before, our reality is characterised by complex and interlinked conflicts, threats and challenges. Be it the threat of North Korean nuclear weapons, the increasing tensions between Russia and the West, or the seemingly unstoppable Syrian conflict and the migration and refugee flows stemming from it.

And these conflicts and threats are far from the traditional conflicts of the past. Now we have non-state actors. Terrorism. Cyber warfare. It is harder to distinguish between beginning and end, and harder to distinguish who the winner is.

Against this background, it is unfortunate that in recent years the global conversation about security has increasingly focused on military spending.

There are about 65 million displaced people in the world today. This means immense human suffering. And it also threatens stability, not least in Europe.

We have all witnessed the EU's inability to deal with large influxes of refugees.

By 2050, an estimated 250 million people may be displaced by climate change. That is four times the number of displaced people in the world today.

Climate change will make the world a less safe place in many ways. Lack of food and water is a great driver of conflict. It is high time we made the connection between climate and security.

So, what action do we need to take?

Firstly, we need to defend the multilateral world order and improve collaboration.

Many of today's security threats, including climate change and terrorism, know no borders. This is why we need to harness the full potential of multilateral platforms such as the United Nations, the European Union and the African Union to find common and sometimes global responses.

The Paris Agreement is one such response. The fact that almost every country in the world was able to agree that climate change is a real threat requiring global action is a historic achievement we should be proud of.

Yet today, the whole idea of collaboration and multilateralism is being questioned. Brexit, increased protectionism, abuse of the veto in the UN Security Council, and the US decision to leave the Paris Agreement are some examples. Actors in the international system appear to increasingly view the world from a transactional perspective – as a zero-sum game, where you can only win if someone else loses.

I do not share this world view; the fact that collaboration between nations often produces win-win situations and common security is well documented. The EU is one good example – perhaps one of the most successful peace projects the world has ever seen.

The multilateral rule-based world order came into being for a reason. The opening words of the United Nations Charter are: "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war...". To achieve global stability, we must defend this world order.

Might does not make right.

Real democracies, built on equality, trust and social security, are more resilient and much less prone to armed conflict. There can be no compromise on principles. We cannot achieve sustainable peace and security merely through political transactions. If we want to achieve real results, we must be guided by our principles and values. This is the smartest policy.

Secondly, we have to invest in peace. Spend money on the right things.

Si vis pacem, para bellum: If you want peace, prepare for war. Unfortunately, this well-known Latin proverb seems to resonate just as much today as it did in the 5th century.

Some people want to make us believe that buying weapons means buying security. But their business plan is flawed. Raising military spending to two per cent of our GDP won't make the world's security threats disappear. Perhaps we need an additional target: a spending target for investments in crisis prevention, development and economic cooperation – in long-term, sustainable peace.

This means encouraging countries to invest in security-building measures such as diplomacy and confidence building, foreign aid and development cooperation, multilateral cooperation and action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Diplomacy is the first line of defence. As US Secretary of Defence James Mattis said in 2013, while Commander of US Central Command: "If you don't fully fund the State Department, then I need to buy more ammunition."

For most countries, military spending and proper military capability will of course continue to be a cornerstone of security policy. But there is no way military spending alone will solve the wide range of threats and challenges we face today.

Sweden contributes one per cent of GDP to foreign aid and development cooperation. Today, I am happy to announce that we are committing an additional SEK 225 million over the next three years specifically for long term investments in peace and security. This includes support for free media, women's representation, disarmament and strengthening the UN's work to prevent conflict.

Modern times require modern policy. Considering the many and varied threats and challenges facing present and future generations, the words to live by should be: Si vis pacem, para pacem: If you want peace, prepare for peace.

Thirdly, more women more peace

Gender equality is the unfinished business of our time. We know that when all of society is included, and both women and men have a voice, we stand a better chance of building a foundation for legitimate peace agreements that create socially and economically sustainable societies.

As some of you might know, Sweden has a feminist government and a feminist foreign policy. Half the population cannot be left behind if the aim is sustainable peace. Research shows that the probability of a peace agreement being sustained is 35 percent higher if women participated in the process, yet only 4% of the signatories of peace agreements between 1992 and 2011 were women.

Peace processes therefore inherently need to be inclusive. Women must actively participate in all decision-making processes at all levels and be active in defining priorities and resource allocation, in times of peace and in times of war. To put it simply: "Nothing for women without women."

To put words into action, I have initiated a Swedish network of women peace mediators, and Sweden is simultaneously taking part in the development of a Nordic women's mediator network. The goal is not only to strengthen our national capabilities but, more importantly, to cut across traditional divides and create cooperative networks with international women mediation teams worldwide.

As a member of the United Nations Security Council, Sweden works to ensure that women are present – in resolutions, statements and debates – in peace negotiations and operations.

Wherever I have travelled in the world, from Ukraine to Colombia to DR Congo, I have met brave women who strive to de-escalate violence and promote initiatives for peace, often in very dangerous environments where risks to personal safety are extreme. The work of these women is extraordinary and it deserves our full support and long-term commitment.

To conclude:

By changing the way we view threats, and taking a long-term perspective when we respond, we can prevent immeasurable human suffering and the huge monetary costs involved in managing conflicts after they break out. When we do this, we also restore confidence in the ability of leaders and the international community to do what is right.

I would like to end by quoting former US first lady, diplomat and human rights activist Eleanor Roosevelt: "It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it."

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at launch of UNDP report Journey to Extremism in Africa: drivers, incentives and the ‘tipping point’ for recruitment

Published 13 September 2017

Fotografiska, Stockholm, 11 september.

Let me first extend a warm welcome to the launch of the UNDP study "Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment". It is a great privilege and honour to host the launch of such an important and timely report here in Stockholm.

I would especially like to thank Fotografiska for hosting this event and the accompanying photo exhibition as well as the UNDP for their tireless work for global development. It is encouraging to see such broad participation and engagement in what amounts to one of the great threats to peace, security and development today: violent extremism.

As we are all unfortunately aware, terrorism continues to cause suffering, fear and disruption across the globe. Indeed, we suffered an attack here in Stockholm only a few months ago, in which five people were killed and 15 people injured. In other parts of the world, far greater numbers are victims of extremist groups such as Daesh, Boko Haram and al-Shabab as they continue to commit heinous crimes and serious abuses and violations of human rights, including sexual enslavement, child and forced marriages and denials of girls' and women's enjoyment of the right to education.

We need to do everything we can to put an end to the horrors of terrorism.

Terrorism threatens the very foundation of peaceful, democratic and open societies.

I would like to emphasize three areas that are central in the fight against extremism.

First, a comprehensive and sustainable approach to countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism must include a broad range of measures and perspectives. While we must continue to take measures that enhance security, it is essential not to overlook the importance of tackling the root causes to terrorism and ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Violent extremism is often inspired by a global agenda but rooted in local discontent. Injustices and deprivation of rights and dignity can nurture recruitment to extremist violent groups. Only through strengthening societal inclusiveness, political participation and respect for human rights, can we successfully prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism. A carefully designed gender-perspective is also needed, taking into account the different perspectives of men and women and girls and boys are crucial to creating lasting results.

Secondly, I would like to point out the close relationship between development and violent extremism. Violent extremism has devastating consequences not only for those who are directly affected by it, but also for the development gains which have been made in recent decades. Terrorism breeds instability and division, which in turn generate poverty, lack of economic opportunity, forced migration, organized crime and breeding grounds for further radicalization.

The most sustainable way to fight this radicalization is through long-term efforts like the ones found in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

This brings me to my third point: the importance of research. This UNDP study makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the drivers of violent extremism, in Africa and beyond.

The more we learn about the drivers and root causes of radicalization, the more we understand the importance of individual and local circumstances. It is only with a solid grasp of these underlying factors and circumstances that we can effectively and sustainably counter and prevent that which motivates individuals and groups to commit acts of violence. Finally, I would like to say a few words about the particular geographical context of this study. Due

to the unique ethnic and religious configuration of many African states and the transnational nature of terrorism, broad regional approaches are necessary. This includes working through regional fora and multilateral institutions. The African Union is an important partner in countering terrorism and preventing radical extremism.

We need to work with African partners in a bilateral and multilateral setting against violent extremism and the rise of radicalisation. Civil society and international organizations also have an important role to play. Indeed, the UNDP Africa program 'Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach' is a good example of how development can be directly linked to measures against the root causes of radicalisation and violent extremism.

I would once again like to extend my thanks to the UNDP for their work. It is only with a solid understanding of the underlying causes, drivers and motivations of violent extremism that effective approaches can be designed.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Concluding remarks, Hanaholmen

Published 07 September 2017

Nu blåser storm därute, och stänger sommarens dörr,
Det är för sent för att undra och leta.
Jag älskar kanske mindre än vad jag gjorde förr,
men mer än du nånsin får veta
Nu ser vi alla fyrar kring höstens långa kust
och hör vågorna villsamma vandra
En enda sak är viktig, och det är hjärtats lust
och att få vara samman med varandra.

Ja, det blåser storm där ute. Det blåser storm över Östersjön, och det blåser storm över Atlanten. Och till utmaningarna i omvärlden, har vi under det här året fått lägga terrorn, som drabbat våra länder – i Åbo och Stockholm.

Vi måste fortsätta hålla i varandra, om vi ska kunna stå upp, även när det stormar. Därför är jag glad över att vara här idag.

When I was thinking about a suitable introduction to these remarks, I thought: "Finland 100 years, the close Finnish Swedish relations; perhaps a Finnish Swedish author has written something appropriate ..."

What came to mind was, of course, Märta Tikkanen's "Love story of the century". But giving it a second thought, I soon realised that it would perhaps not be seen as good diplomacy to use such a comparison of our relationship, which after all has not been that complicated ...

But we have been a kind of a couple for a century. Today's seminar has been one of many examples of this special relationship. I have been listening with great interest during this morning, and let me share a few thoughts about the different thematic areas that we have covered today.

The European security order is under pressure, and again, we have a sharpened security situation in our direct neighborhood.

In hard times, close friends like us have to stick together. Luckily, we have the best of possibilities to do so. Sweden and Finland share the same values and interests, and we have a close bilateral partnership as well as practical cooperation.

The Swedish-Finnish cooperation in foreign policy is extensive. Let me put it in concrete terms: Minister Soini and I meet on a regular basis – we have even become travel companions, I am looking forward to going to Macedonia later this autumn. Our foreign ministries have a dialogue on all levels. Our diplomats cooperate closely in all corners of the world. Since September last year, a Finnish official serves in my ministry, and a couple of days ago a Swedish official started a one year service in the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Our cooperation is broad. To mention a few examples, there is conflict prevention and mediation, crisis management operations and our deepened defence cooperation, which now includes planning for scenarios beyond peace-time.

There is a need for diplomacy and confidence building measures in order to prevent crisis and to strengthen common security. Dialogue in the OSCE, including with Russia, is vital. Of course Finland's experience with its eastern neighbor is something we look at as well.

Next week, Sweden organizes the large-scale national military exercise "Aurora". Finland and other partners will participate, which we really appreciate. We have also invited a number of States to a voluntary Vienna document inspection of the exercise. This kind of openness is important for predictability and stability in our region.

- Sweden welcomes the establishment of the Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid threats, which is an important platform for regional cooperation as well as cooperation between the EU and NATO on hybrid issues. We also welcome the initiative for the Centre of Excellence to assess hybrid threats and risks in the Baltic Sea region, in cooperation with the EU and NATO.

Then there is the "little" issue of the EU.

Sweden and Finland came into the EU as a couple more than twenty years ago. I do not have to convince anyone here about the advantages of the European Union. But I think it would be of interest if I listed a few examples of Swedish-Finnish cooperation to strengthen the EU in the area of foreign and security policy.

First, let's not forget that Sweden and Finland actively contributed to shape the Common Defence and Security Policy. It all started with a Swedish-Finnish initiative to bring the so-called Peterberg tasks into the EU, followed by establishing the civilian-military nature of the CSDP at the EU Summit in Helsinki in 1999.

And speaking of initiatives, our two countries more recently took the initiative to develop the EU Global Strategy, which is now the framework for our common security and defence policy.

Also, Sweden and Finland are the initiators of a civilian stabilisation mission in Iraq, which I hope will be deployed shortly and help Iraq in the new post-Mosul phase.

What lies ahead? We now enter a dynamic phase for EU's security and defence co-operation. Sweden and Finland will keep working together to influence it, because Europe needs to assume a greater responsibility for its own security.

At the same time, the EU is challenged both internally and externally. In this situation we must do more to strengthen the common security and defence policy. It is Sweden's intention to join the permanent structured co-operation (PESCO) and to contribute to its success.

Now, if we zoom out further – there is the relationship between the EU and the United States.

Let us admit that there are heavy winds over the Atlantic. But let us also admit that both sides of the ocean have, and will have, strong common interests. A simple example is that transatlantic trade creates 15 million jobs in the US and in the EU.

If we care about the security and prosperity of our citizens, we have to have constructive relations with the US. It is as simple as that. Be it on the issue of pandemics or global terrorism or security – we have to work together to tackle global challenges forcefully.

The realization that we still need close ties to the US does not mean that we should not be clear about our core principles. That goes without saying.

To be effective, the EU needs to stand united, speak with one voice, and act in a coherent manner.

Also, let us not forget that Nordic cooperation can complement EU action.

Excellencies,

These times are turbulent and unpredictable. But looking back at our century old relation, we can at least say that we have been through tough times before.

In a world disrupted, how can we act as a Nordic block?

First, we need to cooperate to improve the capacity of the multilateral system and the UN to address today's threats and challenges. All Nordic countries strongly support the vision of the UN Secretary-General for a "surge in diplomacy of peace".

We need to move from reactive measures towards long-term political solutions. In the UN Security Council, Sweden has made conflict prevention a core priority. We look forward to continued Nordic cooperation on this agenda during our membership.

Remember what Defence Secretary Mattis said back in 2013: "If you don't fully fund the State Department, I will need to buy more ammunition".

Peaceful democracies don't go to war with each other. Yet, money for ammunition seems to be easier to come by, than funds for peace building efforts.

No peace is sustainable without the inclusion of women. I take pride in being a minister in a government that calls itself Feminist, and our endeavours to promote a feminist foreign policy are known by everyone here.

But I am happy that we are not alone. Last year we launched the Nordic Women Mediation Network together with our Nordic neighbours. The goal is not only to bring together Nordic women mediators, but also to create a vibrant global community of international women mediation teams. To date, the Network has made positive contributions to peace efforts in Syria, Afghanistan, Cyprus and Burundi – and several more engagements are being planned.

Dear all,

this "Love story of the century" between Finland and Sweden is a world of its own: it has been full of royal visits, high level arrangements and ice-hockey games. Culture and trade. But more importantly, it is made up of millions of Finns and Swedes who speak the same languages, who work

together, who live together – or, to paraphrase Tove Jansson; who quietly, without interruption and with great concentration, carry on with the one-hundred-and-one small things that make up their world.

Thank you, kiitos, tack!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström's speech on Raoul Wallenberg Day

Published 28 August 2017

Stockholm, 27 August 2017. Check against delivery.

Friends,

It is an honour and a pleasure to welcome you to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for this year's Raoul Wallenberg Commemorative Lecture on modern forms of anti-Semitism by historian Dr Henrik Bachner.

This theme is unfortunately all too relevant these days as well. We have recently seen appalling pictures of Nazi groups, the Ku Klux Klan and white supremacist demonstrators in Charlottesville, Virginia. The Nordic Resistance Movement was on site during Almedalen Week. On 1 May, Nazi demonstrators also paraded through Falun. Henrik's lecture will shed light on some of the worrying anti-Semitic trends of our time and offer insights into how we can combat anti-Semitism.

The unconditional condemnation of anti-Semitism – and all forms of racism and religious oppression – is a democratic obligation. The Swedish Government is very concerned about these developments, both at home and around the world, and our role in combating these manifestations is unwavering.

This day also offers an important opportunity to stop for a moment and remember Raoul Wallenberg and his actions. With a major dose of courage, cunning, commitment and calm, he succeeded in saving thousands of Jews from the Holocaust by issuing them with protective passports. It is essential that we never forget such moral courage, and it is equally important that we draw inspiration from it in the world we live in today. I would like to extend

my warmest congratulations to this and last year's winner of the Raoul Wallenberg Award.

* * *

We are witnessing increasing intolerance and hate in Sweden, Europe and around the world – on the internet, in our streets and around religious institutions.

This intolerance and hate is often directed at minority groups such as Jews, but it is also a threat to us all and to our democracy – a democracy that we in Europe have fought hard for.

The Swedish Government believes that civil society is absolutely necessary and important in combating anti-Semitism and all forms of racism, hate and intolerance. Sweden is a pluralistic and democratic country, and the Government is completely determined and engaged in its efforts to protect these basic values in our society and culture.

Jewish life is part of Swedish life, and Jewish culture is an important thread in our Swedish cultural and social tapestry.

Everyone who lives in Sweden must be able to live an equal, secure and dignified life – without fear or threats when practising their peaceful religion. Freedom of religion is a fundamental human right.

The Government has taken a range of measures to protect Jewish life in Sweden – focusing in particular on education, critical media awareness, and knowledge about history and the Holocaust.

To ensure that everyone in our country knows about Nazi crimes against humanity, the Government will reintroduce grants to enable school pupils to make remembrance trips to Auschwitz.

And in 2020 – 20 years after the important Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust – Sweden will arrange a new conference of remembrance and education.

Efforts to strengthen democracy, support civil society and improve security around religious institutions are other cornerstones in our efforts in this national endeavour.

* * *

But anti-Semitism is not a local phenomenon – it is a global problem. For centuries, Jews have been the target of unfair accusations, persecution, hate and violence – not limited to any particular national or regional context – rather merely because they were Jews.

Anti-Semitism has deep historical roots and has taken many forms, often having both local and transnational characteristics. The arrival of the internet has seen the emergence of borderless environments fostering hate, in which long-standing conspiracy theories about Jews have been revived and given new outlets.

The battle against anti-Semitism online is a comprehensive challenge facing open and democratic societies. Countries must cooperate with the media industry, civil society and experts.

The 'EU Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online' is an important step, but much remains to be done to monitor, report on and enforce accountability.

Continued international cooperation is essential. The EU, the United Nations and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance are important partners that Sweden continues to actively cooperate with, and bilateral consultations with countries such as Israel, the United States and European countries continue to be a priority.

Anti-Semitism must also be seen in its broader context of hate, intolerance, war and terrorism – both online and offline.

We see how anti-Semitism flourishes in the same environments as violent extremism – environments where democratic values are replaced by violence.

The ongoing wars across the globe, the horrors of terrorism – at close quarters and at a distance – underscore with all their clarity the importance of continuing to address the root causes of intolerance, hate, violence and armed conflict.

Through international cooperation in the EU and the UN, through education, legislation, policing and security-enhancing measures, we must continue long-term confidence-building and conflict resolution, and continue to work for a global culture based on respect and dialogue – not least between religions – and upholding human rights in all contexts.

It is obvious that no country can achieve this on its own, and it is clear that national governments must collaborate with civil society.

An active, democratic civil society, education, dialogue and collaboration are undoubtedly key to a more peaceful and more tolerant world.

I would like to thank you for coming here today, and to thank Henrik, who will speak on anti-Semitism. Greater knowledge is an important step in the fight against anti-Semitism.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at seminar about the EU and the Western Balkans

Published 21 June 2017

Europahuset, Stockholm 29 May 2017. Check against delivery.

Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very warm welcome to Stockholm, and to this timely and important discussion on EU accession of the Western Balkan countries.

Much has changed since we met in this format a year and a half ago. One of the EU Member States, and a close friend to many of us, has unfortunately decided to leave the Union.

Some might even say that since we last met, we have witnessed a shift in the global political climate, a shift towards what has been called "the age of anger".

But we have also seen a progressive candidate, with EU flags at his rallies, win the French presidential election.

* * *

Friends,

The political winds may change direction, but Sweden is resolute when it

comes to the Western Balkans.

We have always been a strong advocate of deepened democratic and economic reforms through EU enlargement.

This policy enjoys broad parliamentary and public support in Sweden. But, here too, there are voices that question whether the EU should expand any further.

These voices may say: "Perhaps that's enough for now; perhaps it's time to pause; perhaps this is a good time to wait and see."

My view is this: if we go down that path, we will not only threaten European stability.

We will be shirking our moral obligation to honour our promise. In 2003, the EU declared that all the countries of the Western Balkans were potential EU candidate countries.

Predictability and credibility must be hallmarks of the European Union.

We must stay true to our commitments.

Some of the countries in the region are already candidate countries, and some have started negotiating membership through their own hard work.

For these countries to enjoy continued stability and development, the door to the EU must remain open.

It was therefore extremely encouraging to hear High Representative Frederica Mogherini clearly reaffirm this message during her Western Balkans tour earlier this year.

Continued democratic and economic reforms in the Western Balkans are perhaps more important today than ever before, both for the countries of the Western Balkans and for the EU.

* * *

Friends,

As you can hear, my conviction is firm: closer relations with the EU for the countries of the Western Balkans are crucial for our common European

future.

I will now outline three reasons for this conviction.

Firstly: the EU accession reform agenda brings stable societies. The EU accession process has brought peace and prosperity to central Europe and the Balkans.

The process has helped to transform societies, profoundly and for the better – even though many challenges remain in the Western Balkans, as we all know.

But in order to meet these challenges and enhance stability where tensions remain, I believe that more and deeper cooperation with the EU is needed. Not less.

And the job is not finished until all the potential candidate countries of the Western Balkans, who want to become members, are members of the EU.

Since we last met in December 2015, positive developments have taken place:

- In September last year, the Council asked the Commission to prepare an opinion on whether Bosnia and Herzegovina was ready to start negotiations.
- The Stabilisation and Association Agreement between Kosovo and the EU has entered into force.
- Both Serbia and Montenegro have continued to open new chapters in their negotiations.
- If Albania continues its crucial justice reform, we might soon see a decision by the Council to open negotiations.
- And with a new government soon in place in Skopje – within a few days according to the latest reports – we are hoping for some movement in Macedonia as well.

Only through dynamic EU integration processes can we build lasting stability.

But commitment must be shown by all EU Member States.

Individual Member States cannot use bilateral issues to block progress. The pace of progress on EU integration should be based solely on the merits of reforms and EU alignment.

This is how we guarantee the credibility of a process that has been so successful thus far – strict but fair conditionality.

The European Commission's task is to guide us all through this process with unwavering drive and dedication.

We need this engagement and commitment to be supported by Member States at the highest political level, and to be accompanied by adequate resources.

However, and most importantly: the enlargement countries will set the pace through their determination and ability to address the key challenges they face.

Rule of law, fundamental rights and freedoms – as well as economic development – are at the heart of the European Union.

It is therefore natural for them to be at the heart of your countries' accession process.

We all know that major challenges exist: lack of respect for the rule of law and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression, as well as organised crime and corruption.

For all of the Western Balkan countries, serious efforts are still needed in these areas on your path towards the EU.

Secondly: regional cooperation and socio-economic development – connectivity, openness, youth, reconciliation – are the way forward.

Regional cooperation is a cornerstone of the European Union. We can never achieve stability and peace, let alone economic development, without good neighbourly relations and cooperation.

Therefore, the EU has insisted on regional cooperation in the Western Balkans.

Over the last few years, the Berlin process has helped to boost the connectivity of the countries in the region, and we fully support this. The

Western Balkan countries may be relatively small, but together you can be competitive.

Here, your situation is comparable to that of the Nordic countries. We have long-standing cooperation including a customs union and freedom of movement. And this remains in place, despite the fact that some of us have joined the EU and others haven't. Because it is still very valuable to us.

There is a need for socio-economic development in the Balkans. Here too, you could help each other and support progress in your countries for the benefit of all.

Regional cooperation will also help reconciliation between countries and within countries. The younger generations need to get to know each other and understand that they have a common future, regardless of the events of the past.

I would like to see more youth programmes in the Western Balkans, with people coming together to learn from each other.

And thirdly: let us communicate the EU to our citizens.

Friends, we have a common challenge – how to communicate all the benefits of the EU to our citizens: peace and prosperity, freedom and justice.

We have to work together to ensure that our common values are understood and appreciated.

We need to work together to better explain how all the rules and regulations, and meetings and compromises, translate into a better life for us all.

We need to counter the disinformation about the EU and its Member States from those who want to undermine us and curtail our fundamental freedoms.

To this end, we know that free media and the freedom of expression are fundamental. But we need to ensure that people understand the difference between free and responsible media, journalists who scrutinise power through democratic means, and those who use the freedom of expression to do harm.

We also need to discuss and debate why further EU enlargement, for example throughout the Western Balkans, is in the interest of Europe as a project for peace and prosperity.

And when we communicate this important vision, we need to remember the following: communication, at its core, is about democratisation.

We need a European Union for the citizens, where people feel that it is their Union and that they have a say in where it is heading.

* * *

My vision is perhaps best encapsulated by a music school in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Mostar Rock School.

As we all know, the wonderful city of Mostar has had its fair share of challenges. But this school gives young people from across the Mostar region the opportunity to engage with one another, and the focus of everyone's attention is music – not ethnicity or family history.

This project has been very successful, bringing young people together around a common passion. Sweden is very proud to support this music school and welcomes plans for similar projects across the Western Balkans.

This wonderful example shows that reconciliation is possible; it demonstrates the power of music and culture; it reminds us that young people are the future; and it illustrates that efforts to support the Western Balkans bring hope and stability to our common continent.

* * *

Friends,

I began by talking about how the winds of change shift.

But the fundamental values of the EU remain the same.

They are, as always, enshrined in our Treaty: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

These values – and I feel honoured and proud reading them out loud – might be challenged by some, even within the EU.

But, at the same time, they remain our moral compass as we face the future.

In challenging times like these, we have to stand together, and recall how

and why our union was first established.

As we know, it was created by linking the economies of France and Germany. A historic and political journey followed, as more and more countries joined.

As the Franco-German engine might once again give renewed impetus to our European project, Sweden's position remains the same.

We are well aware of the impact of Brexit, including on the will to deepen and enlarge our Union.

We are well aware that further enlargement is governed by the Copenhagen criteria, and that the current state of our union underlines the importance of democratic governance, human rights and the rule of law.

But as I have clearly indicated, Sweden remains a strong advocate of deepened democratic and economic reforms through EU enlargement, not least with regard to our friends in the Western Balkans.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska, USA

Published 11 May 2017

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot
Wallström, 11 May 2017. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, colleagues, Arctic friends,

It is truly a great pleasure to be back in beautiful Alaska.

I would like, first of all, to thank Secretary Tillerson and the Host Committee for their warm hospitality.

And to the United States: Congratulations on a successful chairmanship.

While many parts of the world are marred with violence and conflicts, the Arctic is characterised by peace, stability, low tension and cooperation based on respect for international law.

But the Arctic is also about challenges. I wonder what our planet would say if she had a seat at our table.

Perhaps she would remind us how the Arctic functions as our cooling system.

Perhaps she would admit to being as concerned as the scientific community. As worried as the local and indigenous communities who live on the life-support systems it offers.

This deep concern might stem from the fact that things are changing so fast. Only two decades from now, the Arctic Ocean could be largely free of sea ice.

Perhaps our planet would say: I have been your best friend since the Industrial revolution. I have done all I can to dampen and absorb. I have tried to keep Greenland and the permafrost in Siberia intact.

I have sent you no invoices. But this is about to change.

Perhaps our planet would quote our own reports: Arctic warming could have a cumulative net cost of 90 trillion dollars at the end of this century.

Friends,

The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement provide a science-based path away from these risks and towards equality and sustainability.

Like no other generation before us, we have the knowledge, technology, money and capacity to save our planet.

It's a win-win, as the business community knows. Investment in green solutions creates new jobs. Sustainability has become a business case. And in the longer term, the low-carbon growth story is the only growth story on offer.

The Swedish example shows that it is possible. Since 1990 we have reduced our greenhouse gas emissions by 23 percent. Meanwhile our GDP has grown by 58 percent.

My Government has set the next target: Sweden will be carbon neutral by 2045.

Our common goal, to save the Arctic, requires a joint **priority, political will** and a **process** of new scientific research, business innovation and many determined steps towards a sustainable future.

Timo, the Arctic Council will be in safe hands with Finland as Chair.

You know that if we want a sustainable future, we need a stable Arctic. With my grandchildren in mind, I would say: let's go for it.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at SIPRI Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development

Published 11 May 2017

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at SIPRI Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development, 3-4 May 2017, Stockholm. Check against delivery.

Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege and honour to welcome you to the fourth annual Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development.

First of all, I would like to thank SIPRI for having established this Forum as a meaningful and important new tradition. This is the fourth time we have met – and, unfortunately, the reasons for us gathering around these issues of peace and development remain urgent.

Since our task is so important, I am particularly pleased to see such broad participation, and so much knowledge and experience gathered here today.

We are privileged to have with us:

- H.E. Vadym Chernysh, Minister of Temporary Occupied Territories and IDPs, Ukraine
- H.E. Momodu Kargbo, Minister of Finance Sierra Leone, co-chair International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State Building
- H.E. Axel Addy, Minister for Commerce and Industry, Liberia
- H.E. Deqa Yasin, Minister for Women's Affairs and Human Rights, Somalia TBC
- Dr Hanan Ashrawi, PLO Executive Committee Member, PLC Member

In addition, we have colleagues here today from a number of influential

think tanks and civil society groups from around the world, from institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations, and from regional bodies, not least the African Union. A warm welcome to all of you!

The theme of this year's Forum is highly relevant. Asking ourselves "What works?" is a frank and honest recognition that we collectively need to redouble our efforts to build inclusive societies, prevent violent conflicts and sustain peace.

Friends, sadly we are once again meeting at a time of great unrest. Ongoing developments in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, South Sudan, Afghanistan and elsewhere have resulted in the largest humanitarian crisis in modern history. Conflicts are not only increasing in number, but are becoming more complex and violent.

Yet there is promise. Last year's inclusive peace agreement in Colombia may bring sustainable peace to a once conflict-ridden nation. Also in Somalia, the peaceful presidential election was the result of successful state and peacebuilding efforts – and effective cooperation between Somalia and its international partners.

There is a new resolve in the international community to make sustaining peace a priority. But we need to turn words into action. I see the need for improvement in three areas:

First, politically: we need to forge a new political consensus that puts conflict prevention and sustaining peace at the core of our efforts.

Second, practically: we need to improve the capacity of the multilateral system to work together across organisations, mandates and areas of responsibility to address the root causes and drivers of conflict. We need to ask ourselves: "What works?" – and be brave enough to answer truthfully.

Third, financially: we need to secure predictable and sustainable financing for prevention and sustaining peace. Investing in prevention is not only morally right. It is the smart, economically sound and sustainable thing to do.

However, in addition to this, we must urgently give increased attention to the linkages between climate change and security. The Security Council recently visited the Lake Chad region. As a result, UN Security Council Resolution 2349 made clear reference to the role of climate change as a threat multiplier and a driver of instability in the Lake Chad region. The urgent humanitarian

crisis in a country like Somalia also reflects these critical linkages.

It is important that we continue to improve reporting mechanisms and that we can draw on expertise and research to make decisions based on facts. The UN system needs an institutional home, where an integrated approach can be used. Sweden therefore supports the appointment of a Special Representative on Climate and Security.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this Forum provides a unique opportunity for frank and open discussions on contemporary peacebuilding. We need to learn from our collective successes and failures. I am proud to represent a feminist foreign policy that aims to build international political momentum in support of effective and inclusive conflict prevention.

Minister Lövin and I are therefore happy to co-host this Forum with SIPRI. SIPRI has long been a world-class think tank dedicated to disarmament and non-proliferation, and we are now pleased that it is also developing a unique niche within the broader agenda of peace and development. On that note, Minister Lövin and I would like, once again, to express our deepest gratitude to SIPRI for all its hard work in organising this Forum. We would also like to thank the outgoing chair of SIPRI, Ambassador Sven-Olof Petersson, and warmly welcome the incoming chair, Ambassador Jan Eliasson. We are indeed looking forward to continued fruitful cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, over the next two days you will be discussing the future of peacekeeping operations, how to ensure inclusive peace processes, the complexity of violence, the humanitarian-development nexus and much more. I, for one, am very much looking forward to these discussions. I am sure they will help us advance sound policy and ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, 25 April 2017

Published 25 April 2017

Statement by Margot Wallström – Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank all of you for attending this important conference.

We meet here today in solidarity with the people in Yemen, who are suffering a rapidly escalating humanitarian crisis. We meet to make our pledges to a conflict that has far too long been neglected and forgotten by the global community, the human suffering too long uncared-for. Their hardship is difficult to imagine.

In light of developments, I would like to address three concrete points concerning how we can move forward.

1. Remind ourselves who are most affected by conflict and the financial pledges we are all here to make.
2. The necessity to respect the rules of armed conflict, International Humanitarian Law and guarantee humanitarian access.
3. Not forget that a political solution is the only way to reach sustainable peace and development in Yemen.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

As mentioned by Secretary General Guterres, the international community has so far been slow in reacting to the enormous humanitarian needs in Yemen, with only 15% of the Humanitarian Response Plan funded. We can change that here today. Our combined support for the response plan will

allow humanitarian operations in Yemen to reach millions of people in need, regardless of their politics, religion and ethnicity or their geographical location.

I would like to join my fellow co-hosts in highlighting the dire situation among Yemen's children. Recent reports from UNICEF and other humanitarian actors are painful reminders that children most often pay the heaviest price. More than 2.2 million children are acutely malnourished. An increasing number of children run the risk of being recruited as soldiers or facing sexual and gender-based violence. More than two thirds of all girls are married off before they reach 18 years.

The dramatic economic downturn and liquidity crisis further aggravate the situation.

Add to this the breakdown of health care services; an outbreak of cholera; the internal displacement of 2 million people. The combined picture leads to the conclusion that we must act now, and we must start with the most immediate needs.

In 2017, Sweden has already disbursed SEK 165 million (approximately USD 18 million) and is today pledging an additional SEK 70 million (approximately USD 7.8 million) for immediate disbursement within ten days. We are also substantial donors of un-earmarked core funding to UN agencies and humanitarian organisations operating in Yemen. Un-earmarked support is particularly important, since it allows UN organisations to act more flexibly and more rapidly.

But an increase in resources will not be enough without immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access for delivery of life-saving assistance. This includes all seaports, particularly Hodeidah, and Sana'a airport. If these life lines are made unusable, there is little doubt that Yemen will face a famine of catastrophic scale. The United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism needs our full support.

Furthermore, aid workers are still risking their lives to deliver humanitarian assistance to people in need inside Yemen. Later today, we will have the opportunity to listen to representatives from different local NGOs that form part of the OCHA Humanitarian Country Team.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

We remind all parties to the armed conflict that attacks on aid workers are prohibited under International Humanitarian Law. All parties must respect the rules and principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution.

We also have to bear in mind the specific impact that the catastrophic situation in Yemen has on women and girls. A recent report from the United

Nations Security Council informal expert group on women, peace and security states that 17 000 incidents of gender-based violence have been reported since the conflict escalated, with few medical professionals trained to attend these kinds of injuries. Girls represent 63 per cent of the children who are forced out of school, and many previous gains in educational terms have been reversed.

We know that women's involvement increases the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance, as well as the likelihood of successful peace negotiations. The importance of mainstreaming gender equality throughout the whole humanitarian response, as well as the political dialogue, cannot be emphasised enough.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, Mr Secretary General, Let me finish by saying that increased humanitarian funding is a short-term solution. A political solution is the only way to achieve sustainable peace and development in Yemen. Sweden lends it full support to the UN Special Envoy and the process to reach a new cessation of hostilities and a negotiated political agreement.

On behalf of the Swedish Government, I thank you all for attending this event. Your presence sends an important signal to the people in Yemen that the international community cares.

Let's make sure that the result of our meeting will make a real and substantial difference for the many people in need.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Margot Wallström at seminar on hate speech and threats against women journalists

Published 18 April 2017

Stockholm, 2 December 2016. Check against delivery.

This year we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Swedish Freedom of the Press Act the first of its kind in the world. The significance of freedom of the press act cannot be overestimated.

The Act abolished censorship of all printed publications, and guaranteed public access to official documents and the right and opportunity to engage in political debate.

The Freedom of the Press Act has played a pivotal role in the development of the modern Swedish society.

Freedom of expression and opinion, transparency and access to information are prerequisites for democratic societies, where the rule of law applies and where everyone's human rights are respected.

These rights are also a prerequisite for innovation, debate, scrutiny and accountability – all valuable ingredients of a free and open society.

At the same time, we are acutely aware of the many challenges and difficulties facing the rights and fundamental freedoms that the Act set out to safeguard, and which are increasingly under attack around the world.

Today, in many places around the world, we see a repressive media climate, where disinformation and propaganda go hand in hand with deteriorating security and working conditions for journalists. Confidence in the media is decreasing, and the space human rights defenders and advocates of

democracy have to work in is shrinking. At the same time, repressive laws targeting journalists are being adopted in many states.

Being a journalist is often a dangerous profession to engage in, especially when trying to do so in the most risky of contexts.

The risks and dangers to female journalists are often higher than those encountered by their male counterparts.

Women face not only the implicit dangers of hostile environments, but of cultural and societal prejudice as well.

As we face a worsening working environment for female journalists, it is as important as ever to defend the human rights and freedoms we sometimes take for granted.

Our gathering here today is a celebration of all journalists who refuse to be silenced, with a special focus on female journalists.

Journalism is one of the professions that is most exposed to threats; this is especially true for female journalists. They are intimidated and harassed not only for being journalists, but also on grounds of their sex.

From a global perspective, violence against women is one of the most prevalent human rights violations. Despite the amount of attention given to the issue, it is regrettably as common as ever.

This constitutes not only a threat to women and qualitative journalism, but also to freedom of expression, equality and democracy. We must never forget that democracy thrives when a plurality of voices are heard. Unfortunately, many voices are under attack.

Female journalists can offer a different news agenda and different insight into regular news stories if they are allowed to operate and work without fear for their safety and well-being.

The plague of the violence against women is perhaps even more present in cyberspace. Attacks on female journalists online are overwhelmingly sexual in nature, including rape threats, cyberstalking, blackmail and disinformation.

While the opportunities offered by the internet vastly outweigh the challenges, there are still a number of issues to deal with. Technology has brought us many improvements and we are dependent on the internet in all

aspects of our lives. The internet has enabled easier and faster communication as well as borderless connections between people, and the free flow of ideas and empowerment of individuals.

But information technology has also blurred the line between private and public, and professional and non-professional, and has been used to threaten and keep female journalists living in fear. The internet has put women in the line of fire to an even greater degree. Online harassment is more dangerous because of its ability to spread around the world and because once it's online, it stays online.

From a Swedish perspective, we are convinced that the only way forward is to promote, protect and defend freedom of expression and opinion. We need to work continuously on different levels to ensure that these issues are never forgotten or ignored.

Journalism is a very effective means of countering disinformation and combatting incitement to violence and hatred.

It can be a strong antidote against all types of prejudices.

Allow me to mention a few examples of concrete action moving the issue forward: Last year, UNESCO adopted a resolution on safety for journalists presented by Sweden.

Sweden provides broad support to journalists and human rights defenders as part of our development cooperation.

Sweden is a driving force in implementing the UN action plan for the safety of journalists and combatting impunity.

Safety of journalists is also a recurring feature in the UN Human Rights Council as well as the General Assembly.

Through the Swedish development agency and the Swedish institute, we help fund journalist training and provide support to independent media outlets and investigative journalism.

On the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the Freedom of the Press Act and the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has launched a communication campaign highlighting the benefits of freedom of expression and opinion, and transparency.

I feel truly privileged to be in this room with you all and take part in this significant event.

We must keep in mind that doing the right thing is not always easy, it can come at a high price, but in our continuous global struggle for freedom of expression and opinion, as well as for democracy, we must not deviate from this path.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at the conference "Supporting the future of Syria and the region" in Brussels

Published 05 April 2017

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, 5 April 2017. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

As we meet here today we are all outraged by yesterday's chemical weapons attack on Idlib. These deplorable acts of violence can never be accepted. Our efforts and commitment to providing humanitarian support remain strong, but we should be clear that in the face of chemical attacks on children our humanitarian efforts will never suffice. We cannot offset or undo gas attacks with humanitarian support. Acts like these are indefensible and stand in outrageous contradiction to the efforts we are gathered here to support and enhance. A political solution as outlined in resolution 2254, including a political transition, remains the only way forward. Sweden fully supports the UN-led talks in Geneva and efforts to ensure the full and effective participation of women at the negotiation table.

Sweden will continue to provide support to the humanitarian operations in Syria and the neighbouring states. Let me tell you briefly what we have done so far. Since 2011, we have provided USD 278 million in humanitarian aid. This is in addition to our unearmarked core budget support to the UN humanitarian organisations and the Central Emergency Response Fund. As a complement to our substantial humanitarian aid we have pledged USD 200 million through our five-year Syria crisis strategy, aimed at building resilience.

The number of Syrians displaced and suffering from the consequences of conflict is increasing and, in addition to our substantial humanitarian aid and resilience support, we have provided protection in Sweden for more than 140 000 asylum seekers from Syria since the beginning of the conflict, which, while not at the same level as the millions hosted by Syria's neighbours, is the highest number per capita outside the region. Today, I can also present an additional USD 35 million in 2017 that will be allocated, and we expect to increase our support further later this year.

We remain concerned about violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Therefore, Sweden provides support to the International Impartial Investigation Mechanism (IIIM) for the investigation of grave international crimes in Syria as well as the UN's and OPCW's Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM).

Three months after the ceasefire agreement, we are seeing an escalation of violence. More needs to be done by the Astana guarantors to ensure protection of civilians as well as sustained humanitarian access.

We will continue to provide humanitarian aid and support efforts to build resilience. But it must be made clear that the only sustainable way of addressing the needs of vulnerable Syrians is by finding a political solution to the conflict. We owe this to the millions of Syrians who continue to suffer from the consequences of conflict.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström in Washington 22 March 2017

Published 23 March 2017

The speech was held in Washington at a ministerial meeting with coalition partners in the fight against ISIL/Daesh.

Colleagues,

Let me first thank our host, Secretary of State Tillerson, for bringing us together here today.

Our first priority is to push back ISIL/Daesh militarily.

My government has taken a decision to increase our military presence in Iraq. This will be sent to parliament for a decision during the spring.

Currently, we have 35 people involved in training and education of the Iraqi security forces.

The new decision is aimed at doubling this number.

However, ISIL/Daesh cannot be defeated by military means only.

I would like to make four points:

First: last year we provided USD 46 million in humanitarian aid to the UN-led response to the Syria crisis and USD 22 million to Iraq.

The UNDP's Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilisation in Iraq received USD 10 million – double the previous year's contribution.

UN funds and programmes receive large core contributions from Sweden. In fact, we rank among the top three core donors.

Currently, we are developing a new five-year strategy for Iraq. It will focus on resilience, peacebuilding, and gender equality and female participation. The strategy will encompass up to USD 100 million, and will be launched in the second half of 2017.

Second, we can only tackle terrorism durably if we are sensitive to the political context.

Root causes need to be addressed. National reconciliation, political reforms and inclusiveness are crucial.

In the short term, the stabilization efforts by the Iraqi government and the UN in the liberated areas are vital. As more areas are being liberated from ISIL/Daesh the need for longer term stabilization and civilian support is increasing. EU is well placed to provide such civilian support in the security sector.

For the longer term, the reform efforts initiated by Prime Minister Abadi are very encouraging. Their effective implementation needs to be ensured. The Iraqi government has our full support in these endeavors.

Third, everyone needs to feel they have a stake in the future.

The experiences and voices of women, in particular, must be taken into account to build sustainable peace, and to mitigate risks of radicalisation leading to violent extremism/terrorism.

Young people are vulnerable to ISIL/Daesh propaganda, and must be included in society so as to avoid falling into the marginalisation trap that might lead to violent extremism.

Forth, we need to close gaps that can be used for terrorist financing.

We must do our utmost to hinder financial crime, including money laundering – an enterprise in which ISIL/Daesh is involved.

And let me ask, how do we put an end to trafficking of Yazidi women and girls? How do we cut off fuel supply for vehicles used by ISIL/Daesh?

We know that terrorist financing is difficult to track because it involves small

amounts of money.

Even small amounts of money can have deadly consequences, but there are ways to fight back.

Recently, a Swedish man associated with ISIL/Daesh was convicted for running a crowdfunding enterprise. He had encouraged people on Facebook to fund projects linked to terrorist activities.

For Sweden this is a unique sentence. And although it has yet not gained legal force, I hope this sends a clear message that Sweden does not accept its citizens using the internet to boost the income of terrorist organisations.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech on feminist foreign policy at the 350-year anniversary of Lund University

Published 07 March 2017

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, 7 March 2017. Check against delivery.

'A feminist foreign policy and diplomacy as a tool for peace and gender equality'

Ladies and gentlemen, dear students,

'Is the world becoming a better place?'

That's one of the questions being asked during all the seminars as Lund University celebrates its 350th anniversary.

So let me first say warm congratulations, and let me assure you that I am always very happy to be back here among all the students.

And I am sure that this question – 'Is the world becoming a better place?' – has been discussed by generations of students while walking the streets and parks of Lund.

Throughout history, the answer has been both yes and no. Just like in 2017, rapid progress has gone hand in hand with setbacks.

Today we are faced with several protracted conflicts, the continued scourge of terrorism, systematic sexual and gender-based violence, and the largest refugee crisis in modern history.

It is clear that the international system has failed in its core task of ensuring peace and security for all. The world needs to change its approach. Adhering to the status quo is not an option.

In order to break the status quo and make the world a better place, we need gender equality. The fantastic phrase 'women's rights are human rights' must become the spine of all our political work.

I am the Foreign Minister of the world's first officially feminist government, consisting of 12 men and 12 women. And since my government assumed office two years ago we have pursued a feminist foreign policy.

In this way we are trying to shift our focus from response to prevention. We are changing our approach from reactive to proactive.

And prevention can never be successful without a proper analysis of how situations and developments affect men, women, boys and girls differently.

* * *

Friends,

Allow me to continue by describing what our feminist foreign policy is, how we apply it, and what difference it has made so far.

The concluding section will provide some very practical examples of how we use diplomacy as a tool for peace and gender equality.

So: when describing a feminist foreign policy, it is useful to start with three fundamental 'Rs': rights, representation and resources.

Rights are at the core of our policy. Human rights are also women's rights. The fact that such a simple statement still causes so much controversy is just more proof of how much a feminist foreign policy is needed.

When it comes to the second 'R', representation, we start by asking a simple question: who makes decisions?

Whether in foreign or domestic policy, or economic decision-making, we see that women are chronically under-represented in positions of influence.

Resources refer to the need to apply a gender perspective, also when distributing aid and other resources. If you want to understand why women

and men are treated differently worldwide, you should – as the saying goes – follow the money. Are women in charge of their own economic situation and their own resources?

For example: in 2014, humanitarian funding for UN-wide crisis response totalled more than USD 9 billion. But only 4 per cent of projects were gender-specific. This needs to change.

The three Rs are all anchored in a fourth one: reality.

Reality is about getting the facts and analysis right from the outset.

What does the situation on the ground look like if we include 100 per cent of the population?

In this time of misinformation campaigns and 'alternative facts', the need to base policies on knowledge and experience is perhaps greater than ever.

* * *

The second question that must be asked is how the feminist foreign policy is applied.

In practice, our feminist foreign policy means that:

we apply a systematic gender perspective in everything we do; we use our foreign policy tools to promote gender equality; and we use gender equality to advance our foreign policy objectives.

So, how do we do this within the Swedish Foreign Service?

Let me highlight four operational ingredients.

First: **leadership**.

I proclaimed the feminist foreign policy the same day I took office in October 2014.

I have assumed leadership as Minister. This is a necessary condition, but it is not enough.

Leadership is needed at all other levels of the Ministry.

I have made it crystal clear to all heads of department that they are

responsible for the gender mainstreaming of their own and their staff's work and workplace.

Second: **ownership.**

Two months after the launch of the feminist foreign policy, we sent a letter to all parts of the Foreign Service outlining our strategic thinking and inviting everyone – from Copenhagen to Kabul – to get back to us with their reflections and input.

This was a key step. A policy that had been introduced 'top-down' now became home-grown.

This also spurred colleagues from different policy areas and geographical locations to discuss gender equality and increase their understanding of possibilities for action.

The reports from these discussions gave us a solid base as we continued to develop and operationalise our policy.

It is essential for all parts of any organisation to have a feeling of ownership if a new policy, such as the feminist foreign policy, is to continue over time.

Third: **direction.**

The suggestions from colleagues all over the world were channelled into our first feminist foreign policy action plan, launched in November 2015.

This action plan now directs our work, outlining 'the hows', 'whos' and 'whats'.

It includes six long-term goals and yearly focus areas reflecting the most pressing challenges.

The action plan has been incorporated into the Foreign Service's operational plan.

This means that work on gender mainstreaming is followed up and measured in our regular processes within all of the Ministry's activities.

And as you all know, this is crucial to keeping momentum in any large bureaucracy.

The yearly process enables us to learn and benefit from consultations and new data. (If you want to have a look at our feminist foreign policy action plan, you can easily access it on the website of the Swedish Government).

Fourth: **support**.

Gender mainstreaming is everyone's responsibility.

However, a focal point function is also necessary.

We therefore have an Ambassador for gender equality, who is also the coordinator of the feminist foreign policy.

The Ambassador and her team coordinate the development and follow-up of the action plan.

They develop support material, including eLearning. They collect and disseminate good practices, connect across policy areas and contribute to developing policy, communication and incentive structures.

For instance, we now award a regional diploma to an embassy that has implemented the policy in a particularly outstanding way.

Moreover, the Ambassador has a specific point of contact among the advisors in my office in order to facilitate all important procedures.

* * *

However: to talk about methods and ways of implementation is one thing. The main question, and our third question here, is what difference a feminist foreign policy has made so far.

The overall result has been a cultural shift within our Foreign Service, as an organisation.

Two years of feminist foreign policy have generated important outcomes.

Our efforts have contributed to some 20 countries drawing up laws and proposals to strengthen gender equality; to hundreds of thousands of women and girls avoiding unsafe abortions and unwanted pregnancies; and to some 90 local communities abandoning the practice of female genital mutilation.

On rights, we are proud that our chairmanship of the Call to Action initiative

has helped to increase the number of partners.

We are now 66 States and organisations having made over 265 commitments to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in emergencies.

Regarding representation, we have promoted women as actors in peace-making through the provision of resources, connections, capacity-building and advisory support from our Swedish network of women mediators.

When it comes to resources, the Swedish Government is providing substantive support to promote gender equality and women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights.

As an example, a gender equality perspective should be integrated in all assistance provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

* * *

Friends,

After this overview of our feminist foreign policy, I would like to describe more specifically how we are strengthening Sweden's capacity to contribute to inclusive and sustainable peace processes.

First of all, a support function for dialogue and peace processes has been established at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Stockholm. Moreover, a handful of embassies in conflict areas will receive extra support.

The aim is to strengthen Sweden's involvement throughout the conflict cycle and more effectively address the root causes fuelling conflicts.

The modern mediation landscape is multi-dimensional. We are witnessing a proliferation of actors engaged in inter- and intra-state conflicts. This affects both when and how Sweden should contribute to peace processes.

The classic 'solo mediator' is less frequently called upon. What we see more often today are different forms of partnership with other peacekeeping actors, such as the UN, EU, AU, OSCE, the Red Cross and, not least, local organisations. In this way, political, personal or financial aid is provided.

We also need to think creatively about the role of mediator and all the different instruments available. Here are some current examples of available

Swedish instruments:

- We have embassies and development assistance in 13 conflict-affected countries, including Colombia, Afghanistan and Somalia.
- We have special envoys for the peace efforts in the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa and Syria.
- We have conflict-secured all of our development assistance with a focus on peace-building.
- A new development strategy for peaceful and inclusive societies is expected to be complete by summer. The strategy builds on Sustainable Development Goal 16 and has a special focus on conflict prevention, women, peace and security, as well as rapid support for peace processes.
- I have taken the initiative to form a Swedish female mediation network. The network consists of nine experienced women ready to promote inclusive peace processes and assist local women peace-builders. The Mediation Network has, for example, contributed to peace efforts in Syria, Burundi, Afghanistan and Somalia. In Afghanistan, a dialogue and mediation training with local Afghan women peace-builders have been particularly successful. The Swedish network is a component of a Nordic mediation network.
- The image of Sweden as an honest, serious and long-term partner enables us to provide good offices and to use Sweden as a platform for talks between different parties.
- Sweden's broad engagement and partnership with multilateral organisations, such as the UN, EU, AU and OSCE provide good opportunities to promote peaceful resolution of conflicts, both in the field and in New York, Brussels and Geneva.
- We have a partnership with a series of mediation organisations, such as Interpeace, Intermediate, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, the European Institute of Peace, Conciliation Resources and the Crisis Management Initiative.
- Swedish organisations, such as the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), often provide unique input and knowledge of individual peace efforts.

We should also recognise that lessons learned from peace efforts in

Colombia, the Philippines, Somalia and Liberia are central to our efforts.

Because we know that transparency is a prerequisite for dealing with the causes of conflicts and for peace to last.

A successful peace process is not only a question of a cease-fire or a formal agreement between the warring parties.

It is also about justice, reconciliation, reconstruction, education, health, political access and distribution of resources. A sustainable peace process creates the conditions for stable and legally secure institutions that promote social, economic and political development for all.

Within the framework of our feminist foreign policy, we will therefore further develop support for women's meaningful participation in peace efforts before, during and after conflicts.

For me, it is obvious that women must be included equally in all parts of society. When research so clearly shows that gender-equal societies are also less likely to end up in conflict, it is no longer possible to justify why half the population should be excluded from discussions about their own future.

We will also strengthen our ability to build peace from below. Formal peace processes that exclude either the victims of the conflict or local peace-builders have limited opportunities to be sustained over time.

By linking processes at local, national and international level, one can lay the foundation for legitimate agreement that takes the root causes of conflict into account.

Inclusive peace processes are therefore not only an issue of rights. They are also smart policy.

* * *

Friends,

When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, there were only two women on the Human Rights Commission responsible for drafting the declaration.

Many of you know of the first one, Eleanor Roosevelt. The other one was Hansa Mehta, an Indian writer and independence activist.

When the Commission proposed the phrase 'all men are brothers', Hansa Mehta objected. She noted that this could be interpreted in some countries as an opportunity to exclude women.

Hansa's insistence on incorporating an expression that fully recognised the equality of women and men resulted in the text finally adopted for Article 1 that reads: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Each of you individually, and all of you collectively, have a sphere of influence that is within your control at a personal level, in your interactions with others, and in organisations where you might be active.

Bringing women into decision-making, applying gender analyses, calling for and collecting gender-disaggregated data – these things can be done everywhere, at universities and at foreign ministries.

In different ways, we can all raise our voices and play a part.

Sometimes it will take 100 years and millions of men and women to change the course of history.

Sometimes it takes one person and one moment.

Hansa Mehta was just one woman, but she had a seat at the table and her actions ensured that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights became truly universal.

When I look at you, I see that the room is full of sisters and brothers to Hansa Mehta.

The time has come for gender equality.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Conference on Disarmament

Published 01 March 2017

Geneva 1 March 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Two years ago I had the honour of addressing the Conference on Disarmament. On that occasion, I stated that we needed to move further and faster on nuclear disarmament, and that one step in that direction would be to finally overcome the impasse that for far too long had paralyzed the CD.

Much to my regret I feel compelled to repeat these messages today.

Over the past two years we have witnessed an increase in unfilled commitments, in polarization, and in the inability of multilateral forums to conduct their mandated work – the CD being a case in point, the 2015 NPT Review Conference another one.

Disarmament diplomacy now has to be conducted with a clear sense of urgency – an urgency for which there is ample justification.

Sweden as a small militarily non-aligned country is dependent on a world order based on international law. That is why we react strongly when the European or global security order is challenged.

A particularly dangerous aspect is the continuing existence of nuclear weapons. Although the number of warheads has come down substantially from the 1986 all-time high, they remain at levels that put the survival of the human race at risk.

The last multilateral nuclear disarmament treaty negotiated in this room, the CTBT, has yet to enter into force. The strong norm against testing established by this treaty is time and time again being challenged by the DPRK tests.

Instead of disarmament, the prevailing trend seems to be modernization of nuclear arsenals, almost at any cost, taking us even further from the fulfillment of the NPT promise of a world without nuclear weapons – the only true guarantee against the horrors of nuclear war.

In the fringes of the debate, you even come across reckless talk about when the actual use of nuclear weapons would be justified. Development of lower-yield battlefield weapons could only serve the purpose of dangerously blurring the line between conventional and nuclear warfare.

So we cannot afford to lose more opportunities. Time is running out, as symbolized by the recent announcement by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists that the doomsday clock has been adjusted by 30 seconds. It is now two and a half minutes to midnight. That is the second highest alert status since its inception in 1947.

Mr. President,

Have there been any positive movements? I would say - yes. The most positive development during recent years is the recognition that nuclear weapons cannot be reconciled with international humanitarian law. Human beings, not states, have been placed at the forefront of the discussion. We all know that nuclear weapons must never be used, and that any use would have catastrophic consequences.

In Japan the survivors of the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki are referred to as Hibakusha. I met a group of hibakusha's during my visit to the 2015 NPT-conference in New York. They work tirelessly to educate young people about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. The memory of what disaster even a single nuclear attack could bring must never be forgotten. We all bear a responsibility for this.

Sweden looks forward to participating in the negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. I am aware that not all states share our view on these negotiations, and that some, regrettably, do not intend to partake. Let me explain our perspective.

Sweden has always participated in multilateral negotiations related to disarmament. We see no reason not to do so this time. We feel strongly that we all have an obligation to contribute in a multilateral UN negotiation. . In a deteriorating security environment we must take every opportunity to seek progress in nuclear disarmament. And we cannot ignore the humanitarian perspective. But will these negotiations be successful in achieving nuclear disarmament? The fact is that we do not know. But we all have an obligation to try. And I estimate that the norm against the use of nuclear weapons and against the weapons themselves stands a good chance of being strengthened. Some argue that the prohibition treaty process will be divisive and harmful to the NPT. My view is that the prohibition can be beneficial by injecting new political energy into the debate. Something urgently needed. Let me also be clear that Sweden sees the prohibition in the context of the NPT framework, not as a substitute for it.

Let me mention three other important recent developments. One was the decision to set up a high level expert preparatory group on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. This is a question long overdue and should have been dealt with by the CD. But let us now hope that the work of this group will be followed by concrete action. Sweden looks forward to participating in the group together with Canada and other states.

The second positive development was the First Committee showing very strong support for the resolution on de-alerting, introduced by Sweden together with other members of the de-alerting group. In today's world of unimaginably high information flows, fatal decisions can be made within minutes. Therefore, more than ever, decreasing the readiness of nuclear weapon arsenals are crucial. And last but not least, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed with Iran, and endorsed by the Security Council, is a crucial agreement that must not be put at risk by any party.

Mr. President,

In May, a new review cycle of the NPT starts, leading up to the Review Conference in 2020. That year will also mark the 50th anniversary of the NPT. No doubt, this treaty is the cornerstone for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. But it has not lived up to its full potential. There are serious flaws in the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments, and the responsibility falls heavily on the nuclear powers. They cannot continue to ignore the promise to disarm their nuclear arsenals. Russia and the United States must take the lead in restarting the reduction of nuclear weapons. There are also many other important measures the nuclear weapon

states could commit to in connection with the NPT Review Conference. Measures such as legally binding negative security guarantees, a ban on nuclear-armed cruise missiles, negotiations on tactical nuclear weapons. And maybe more important, risk reduction including de-alerting. I strongly encourage the nuclear weapon states to abandon hair trigger launch procedures , which are potentially destabilizing. Reduced operational readiness to avoid accidental nuclear use is in everybody's interest.

Mr. President,

Small Arms and Light Weapons kill half a million people every year. The majority of direct victims are men. Women, boys and girls also suffer from the violence caused by small arms and light weapons. Societies are being brutalised as illicit and uncontrolled weapons are in circulation, domestic and intimate-partner violence is increasing and the public space for women is reduced. We must all gain better control of these weapons including ammunition. The 2018 Review Conference on the UN Programme of Action on illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons will provide an important opportunity to strengthen our work against them.

Furthermore let me mention the important issue of chemical weapons. We appreciate that the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) for chemical weapons use in Syria was extended for another year. The decision by the Third Review Conference on Certain Conventional Weapons to set up a GGE on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems should also be recognised as an important step forward.

Mr. President,

My country has the privilege to serve on the United Nations Security Council this year and next year. The main task of the Council, and thereby our main task, is to preserve international peace and security and prevent future conflicts from emerging. In my view, sustainable security can only be attained through cooperation and disarmament. The lack of cooperation and disarmament has led to a more unstable and insecure world. This development must be turned around, not only for ourselves but even more so for the sake of the younger generation.

Let us now, through the ban negotiation and a proper implementation of the NPT, contribute to setting our world on a safer course.

Thank you, Mr. President.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Human Rights Council

Published 01 March 2017

Geneva, 1 March 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be able to once again address the Human Rights Council.

Equality is the foundation of the multilateral system that is the United Nations. It is the cornerstone of international law and human rights. All States are equal, so too are all the persons in this room and beyond.

Yet the winds of change are blowing. Unfortunately, the winds are not those of increased solidarity, understanding and multilateralism but rather those of xenophobia, prejudice and isolationism.

All of us, Sweden included, face continued challenges in ensuring the full respect for human rights.

Some argue that under the current circumstances, we should lower our ambitions concerning human rights; it is not realistic to push for their universal respect.

To them I say: human rights are not based on idealism. Human rights are based on binding obligations of international law. This is not the time to question what has already been agreed but to work together for their full and equal implementation.

The lessons learned by our predecessors in the ashes of a war-torn world were the very reasons for the creation of a multilateral system based on

unity, equality and the rule of law. In the words of Dag Hammarskjöld: "The UN was not created to bring us to heaven, but in order to save us from hell". Sweden will continue to fight tirelessly to reaffirm the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights for everyone. We will continue to reject any attempts by States to restrict human rights by referencing national laws, religions, customs or traditions.

And we will continue to defend the independence of the Council and its special procedures against all those who wish to undermine its legitimacy and possibility to act.

In order to promote and protect human rights globally, Sweden will later this spring publish reports regarding the current situation for human rights in all regions of the world. The Government has also recently handed over a communication to Parliament on our priorities regarding human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Mr President,

Two years ago I stood before you and declared that women's rights are human rights. But gender equality is still a vision rather than a reality in all parts of the world. Violence, oppression and systematic subordination are common place for countless persons, particularly women and children.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights are human rights. Based on Sweden's own experience, full respect for these rights is essential to achieve gender equality, full and equal participation in society, poverty reduction and social and economic development. These rights naturally have implications for a person's health. The role of midwifery is a key element in this regard as it allows women better access to maternal care. The Swedish campaign [Midwives4All](#) contributes in highlighting these aspects and rights which help save women's lives.

Sweden will continue to champion sexual and reproductive health and rights for all.

Mr President,

As members of the United Nations, we have all vowed to adhere to the principle of non-discrimination for everyone, everywhere.

The struggle against hatred, violence and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity has to remain high on our agenda. We cannot

sit idly by and watch as Governments actively engage in the promotion of hatred and violence against those most in need of protection. Discrimination can never be justified.

Mr President,

Again, it is because we are equal that we must all respect and protect each other's freedom of opinion and expression.

To defend these rights, the safety of journalists, bloggers, publishers, artists and union leaders is a paramount responsibility for us all.

Unfortunately, we witness an even growing number of reprisals, violence, imprisonments and murders committed against all those courageous enough to fight for the pursuit of human rights. Hence, we must all redouble our efforts to protect human rights defenders and allow civil society organisations greater protection and to combat the shrinking space.

In order to highlight the importance of freedom of opinion and expression, and to commemorate the 250th anniversary of freedom of expression in Sweden, I will later today open a Swedish exhibition here at the UN on this issue.

Mr President,

Sweden is committed to the promotion and protection of international law and human rights across the entire UN system, including in the Security Council.

As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Sweden will continue to advocate for the advancement of human rights, in particular women's human rights, as an essential component of conflict prevention and peacebuilding as well as in achieving a durable peace.

Violations of human rights are indeed a threat to international peace and security. It is time for the international community to act accordingly.

For it must be the will of "we the people of the United Nations" that in the end decides our common fate.

I thank you, Mr President.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Remarks by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at high level dialogue on sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda

Published 25 January 2017 Updated 25 January 2017

United Nations, New York, 24 January. Check against delivery.

Mr President of the General Assembly, Mr Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

"We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war..."

These are the opening words of the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations.

This has been the mission of the United Nations since its very beginning.

We must therefore ask ourselves every day: what are we doing to prevent the 'scourge of war'? Are we doing enough? Can we do more?

I come straight from the Arctic Frontiers conference in Tromsø, where I participated yesterday and met scientists and experts that painted a bleak picture of environmental developments in the Arctic, not least developments related to climate change. We know that last year was the warmest one ever recorded on the earth. This has had particular impact on the Arctic – the cap of the world. In one of the panels in Tromsø yesterday, the moderator asked the panelists how they could sleep at night, knowing all which they know. One of the experts replied that he tried to look for hope-spots in the world.

I believe this is what we need to look for: hope-spots. Such as this meeting here today, where we meet to discuss what we can do better.

And this is exactly what we are here to discuss today: preventing conflict and finding synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace.

In these times of nationalism and fear, we can send a message of hope.

I would like to thank Mr Peter Thomson, President of the General Assembly, for convening this high-level dialogue on this most important matter.

I was greatly encouraged by the strong show of support at the open debate in the Security Council earlier this month on conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Secretary-General Guterres outlined a number of concrete measures aimed at strengthening the capacity of the UN system to detect and respond early to signs of looming crises.

We must continue to discuss how to improve for example reporting in order to detect early signs of conflict. And we must consider how to strengthen our will and capacity to take action when we receive reports. And we must explore how to make better use of the tools that we have, such as mediation and the good offices of the UN.

Opportunism and populism are strong forces in today's world. Peace and sustainable societies can never be taken for granted. The 2030 Agenda is a universal tool, and its universality requires all countries and all people to be involved in peacebuilding and prevention.

I would like to highlight four issues that I believe can make a difference to our efforts for the mutually reinforcing Sustaining Peace and the 2030 Agenda.

Strong institutions and good governance

Goal 16 emphasises that access to justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions are essential in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. To achieve this goal, we need political commitment, inclusive and participatory governance, sound policies and legal frameworks, and effective development cooperation.

We can also learn from each other. South-south cooperation and peer learning are important. The g7+ group of fragile states has implemented an initiative called Fragile-to-Fragile (or F2F) cooperation. With their own experience of transitioning out of fragility, and Timor-Leste taking the lead, they successfully supported election registration in Guinea Bissau in 2014 and assisted the Ebola-struck countries of West Africa in 2015. In 2016, two missions were conducted to support democratic and peaceful developments in the Central African Republic. As co-chair of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding with Sierra Leone, the current chair of the g7+, Sweden continues to support these efforts.

2. Risk management, root causes, early warning – early action

Peacebuilding must be nationally owned and inclusive. We must focus on understanding risks (including risks related to climate change), addressing the root causes of conflict, and building peace from the ground up. We must make better use of the tools at our disposal, including dialogue and mediation.

We are only as strong as our partnerships. The UN should strengthen its collaboration with other partners, not least the World Bank. Through better coordination between UN entities in the field, joint analysis, planning and implementation frameworks for political, security, and development interventions based on national development plans, the UN can increase its impact on sustaining peace.

3. The role of women

This is the unfinished business of our time. We have seen how women's experiences and a civil society that includes women contribute to early warnings and alternative conflict resolution methods. When the whole of society is involved and both women and men have a voice, we stand a better chance of building a foundation for legitimate peace accords that create socially and economically sustainable societies.

4. The economy of prevention

Prevention is not only right – it is also the economically smart thing to do.

Imagine the costs if Gambia were to have been thrown into armed conflict. Instead with the use of good offices and the work of regional actors, including ECOWAS, this did not happen.

A society's economic situation is often a risk factor to consider when we look at early warning signs and root causes. More effective conflict prevention means that less of our development budgets will be spent on humanitarian assistance. By preventing conflicts, we can enable economic growth and reduce human suffering. Donors and financial institutions need to invest in peace and prevention.

The trend towards increased earmarking of contributions to UN activities will hinder multilateral flexibility and relevance in fragile contexts. Sweden is a top-five contributor to most of the UN funds and programmes. As a large donor of core support, we provide UN agencies with the kind of flexible and predictable funding needed to enhance capacities and enable a swift response to a sudden crisis.

Finally, the main responsibility lies with us, as UN Member States, to implement the 2030 Agenda in our countries, as well as the peace continuum, as the Secretary-General has put it. We need the UN to support us in this endeavour. The platform and the policy are there already. It is for us to implement.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Remarks by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at Arctic Environment Forum

Published 24 January 2017 Updated 24 January 2017

Tromsö, 23 January 2017. Check against delivery.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

The past year was the warmest ever recorded on Earth. It broke the record set in 2015, which in turn broke the record set the previous year.

Preliminary statistics in 2016 show that temperatures rose by 1.3 degrees Celsius compared with pre-industrial levels. Behind the average temperature are great variations, with a disturbing increase in temperatures taking place closer to the poles.

Climate change is reality, already affecting our lives and societies. And remember that the emission of greenhouse gases is a cumulative process. The carbon budget is not like other budgets; we don't start anew with the New Year.

Scientists warn us of tipping points, of accelerating, even irreversible processes, of diminishing ice masses in the Arctic, of drastic changes in ocean currents, and of sizeable releases of greenhouse gas emissions from previously frozen soils and sediments.

I stated this morning, and I repeat it again: global warming, and its impact on the Arctic, is not just a potential environmental and ecological disaster. It could also very well develop into a security threat of global proportions.

In 2015, we came together worldwide in a remarkable demonstration of resolve with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on

climate change.

Over the past year, that determination was sustained as over a hundred states deposited their Paris Agreement ratification instruments, bringing it into force in record time.

As we translate these commitments into action, the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement present us with an equation that can only be resolved through a paradigm shift.

This shift needs to take place in the entire development of our societies and in our aspirations for providing a good life, not only for ourselves, but for future generations.

And the narrative, which is for us to project, should be a vision of hope. It must be based on scientific facts and knowledge, and it must be all-encompassing.

It stands in contrast to 'fact-free politics', to retreating into narrow-minded nationalism and to pitting one group against another.

This is the challenge that lies ahead of us as we look to 2017 and beyond.

* * *

Dear friends,

Over the past two decades, Sweden has experienced a period of sustained economic growth while carbon emissions have fallen. In fact, we have seen worldwide that emissions have stayed flat while the global economy has grown.

This decoupling of energy sector emissions and economic growth should put to rest the argument that combating climate change requires accepting lower growth and lower standards of living.

It falls on us as governments to provide political leadership in setting out the direction and putting a legal framework into place.

We will look to the business community to provide innovation and respond to people's needs as enlightened consumers.

We will need a civil society which serves as a watchdog and as a channel for

people to demonstrate engagement.

The Paris Agreement set out some good principles. Global efforts must be built using a bottom-up approach. They must be transparent to generate trust and accountability, and they must be all-inclusive to bring success.

The call for the UN to 'deliver as one' has perhaps never been as imperative as right now.

The climate community and the development community must come together and find ways to engage in collaborative efforts on what promises to be a transformative agenda.

* * *

Friends,

We know that the Arctic is particularly vulnerable to rising temperatures.

We also know that the main sources of CO2 emissions originate outside the Arctic region.

And we know as well that the solutions to the climate crisis in the Arctic must be dealt with primarily at global level.

But I believe the Arctic Council has a very important role to play in exploring region-specific measures and adding value to ongoing global efforts.

I therefore urge the Arctic Council Member States to explore ways to further strengthen the climate-related work of the Council.

Let us move forward together.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Arctic Frontiers: Nordic Cooperation in the Arctic

Published 23 January 2017 Updated 23 January 2017

Tromsø, 23 January 2017. Check against delivery.

Ladies and gentlemen, Nordic friends,

I am very much looking forward to the Norwegian presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers and I fully support your set of priorities.

Your emphasis on increased support for green innovations, regional integration, and digitalisation is also highly relevant for this part of the world.

I am convinced that our countries can lead the way towards a green, low-emission economy that is sustainable and equitable.

In times of increased global uncertainty, Nordic cooperation and coordination is more important than ever.

If we are united as a region on matters of shared interest, it will be easier to get others to listen to what we have to say – in the EU, in the UN and in other multilateral forums.

This will be particularly important in the coming years, with Sweden as a member of the UN Security Council, Norway's participation in G20 and Denmark presiding over the OECD Ministerial Meeting on foreign policy, economy and trade.

Sweden will take over the rotating presidency of the Nordic Council of

Ministers in 2018. We will of course build on the important work that has been done by previous presidencies, not least Norway.

We are still in an exploratory phase concerning our own priorities, and we are looking forward to a close dialogue with Norway to ensure continuity and long-term progress.

In 2018, Sweden will also chair the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Council of Baltic Sea States, which will provide good opportunities for increased synergies between our different regional forums. We also foresee close cooperation with the Finnish chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

* * *

As we are gathered here in Tromsø, let me also say a few words on Nordic cooperation in the Arctic.

We all share an ambition to maintain the Arctic as a region of peace and stability.

We also have a common interest in dealing with the challenge of climate change and its dramatic effects on the region.

I encourage the Nordic countries to explore how to further strengthen the role of the Arctic Council in the processes of mitigation, adaptation and resilience.

I believe there is room for improvement, but we need to join forces in order to achieve results.

The Nordic Council of Ministers could very well support such ambitions. I welcome the Council's ongoing efforts to develop a new Arctic programme. It will provide a good base on which to further strengthen the Arctic dimension of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Ladies and gentlemen, Nordic friends,

The Arctic is already a showcase of constructive regional dialogue.

Let us also turn it into a role model for sustainable development and an ambitious climate policy.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Arctic Frontiers opening session in Tromsø

Published 23 January 2017 Updated 23 January 2017

Tromsø 23 January 2017. Check against delivery.

Let me first of all thank my Norwegian hosts for inviting me to this important event in wonderful Tromsø.

As a northerner myself, coming from Västerbotten, I feel a special affinity and commitment to this beautiful but fragile part of the world.

* * *

The Arctic has in the past probably been considered a periphery by many.

This is now far from being true. Global developments have put the region at the centre of international attention.

So, when dealing with the Arctic of today we are dealing with high politics in the true sense of the concept.

The reasons are primarily: (1) climate change, (2) the vast economic potential in the Arctic, and (3) security related developments globally.

* * *

The Arctic is the epicentre of the global climate crisis.

Last year, a new alarming record was set when the average November

temperature approached 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level. The limits set out in the Paris Agreement have thus partially already been reached in this part of the world.

And compared to 2006, the November icecap has shrunk by 800 000 square kilometres, almost the size of two Swedens.

I could continue to give you more examples, like reminding you of those days last year when the temperature in parts of the Arctic approached 20 degrees above normal levels.

But we have enough examples, and the scientific findings are robust enough to conclude that a climate crisis in the Arctic is not a future scenario. It is going on as we speak.

So, let me be clear:

Global warming and its effects on the Arctic is not only a potential environmental and ecological disaster. It could also very well develop into a security threat of global proportions.

We must therefore step up our ambitions to combat climate change at all possible levels.

Sweden has taken concrete initiatives to strengthen the cooperation on climate issues in the Arctic Council.

I know that other countries, not least Norway and Finland, fully share our strong commitments.

The only sensible choice for the future is to embark on a paradigm shift in the development of societies and in our aspirations for providing a good life, not only for ourselves but for future generations.

* * *

The people in the north, including the indigenous peoples, have the same right to economic and social development as the rest of our countries.

It is crucial however that this development is sustainable.

Supporting innovations in green technology and the use of best practices throughout the production cycle is therefore essential.

In this respect, I am rather optimistic. I think that we in many sectors have reached the point where there is a 'business case' for sustainable solutions.

Reopening coal mines belongs in the past. Producing steel without CO2-emissions, as done by our largest steel manufacturing company SSAB, is the future.

As politicians, our responsibility is to create proper incentives to strengthen this trend.

I am convinced that the Nordic countries, with their highly innovative Arctic regions, are ideally placed to assume global leadership in this respect.

In this context, I warmly welcome ongoing initiatives to further strengthen cooperation at various levels between the Arctic regions.

* * *

Finally, I would like to highlight the importance of keeping the Arctic as a region of peace and stability built on the respect of international law including UNCLOS.

The Arctic Council is a unique platform for constructive dialogue and we should seek ways to strengthen the Council further.

But I also want to highlight the very important 'people to people' cooperation within the Barents framework.

To strengthen cross-border ties between civil societies in our Barents and Arctic regions is a true investment in peace and security.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at the conference for peace in the Middle East

Published 15 January 2017 Updated 15 January 2017

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the international conference for peace in the Middle East, Paris 15 January 2017. Check against delivery.

Dear Colleagues and Excellencies,

I am very pleased to be here today together with more than 70 countries and organisations gathered in order to save and promote the two-state solution.

Let me start by commending my esteemed French colleague Mr. Ayrault and ambassador Vimont for the impressive leadership shown by taking this initiative. I realize the challenging work that has gone into this initiative. Now we have a unique opportunity to try and meet the expectations of the region. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Secretary Kerry for his strong engagement.

We meet with a sense of urgency. And we are here today to renew our efforts on one of the most complex and longstanding conflicts. On Tuesday, Sweden as the current president of the UN Security Council will chair the next debate on the Middle East peace process. This peace process has been a Swedish priority for decades.

I would like to make three points : The two-states solution, land to build on and the importance of civil society.

1. Firstly, the two-state solution must become a reality. The legitimate aspirations of both parties must be met through direct bilateral negotiations.

Meanwhile, we must abstain from any actions pre-judging the outcome of future negotiations, such as the status of Jerusalem. I believe a momentum has finally been created to break the dead-lock, let us assume responsibility and go from words to action, respecting international law and human rights. My Government recognized Palestine in 2014. This was a logical step not only to recognize the Palestinians right to self-determination, but also a way of making the two parties less unequal in future negotiations.

2. Secondly, there must be land to build on, to consolidate a democratic, viable and sovereign Palestinian state, living peacefully side by side with Israel. When I visited Palestine last month, everyone was clinging to their maps. In Palestine maps are everything, because they show how Palestine is rapidly shrinking. I could feel the Palestinian frustration over the deteriorating situation, where everyday life is affected: Trade, fishing and the farmer I met who could not even reach his own olive trees. There was also a feeling of abandonment by the international community. In this respect, the recent Security Council resolution 2334 was truly a milestone, highlighting the serious threat to the two-state solution.

3. Thirdly, we must do all that we can to recreate hope about a better future which involves civil society. Women and youth must be part of this. Youth born after the Oslo-agreement don't believe in a two-state solution. This message was clear when Sweden led the consultations with some 150 CSO:s in our working group for civil society in Israel and Palestine, as part of the French initiative. Rebuilding trust between the two peoples is necessary and urgent in order to revive prospects for peace. To rekindle a public debate on this is of paramount importance. Sweden stands ready to host a CSO-Forum this spring.

I believe that the vision of the two-state solution has been re-energized. Now we must stay engaged and make sure that today's participation is a commitment to genuine continuation and follow-up. Let us send a clear message that we are here to support and encourage the parties to reach a two-state solution. I feel privileged to be part of our joint effort in re-creating hope.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at ministerial debate in the Security Council on conflict prevention and sustaining peace

Published 10 January 2017 Updated 10 January 2017

Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at ministerial debate in the Security Council on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Check against delivery.

Mr. Secretary-General,

Thank you for reminding us of the achievements of the United Nations over the last 70 years, and for laying out your vision of a UN equipped to respond to the conflicts and instability that today affect the lives of millions.

A close and proactive working relationship between the Secretary-General and the Council is the cornerstone of this organisation's ability to deliver lasting peace and security. We look forward to forging a strong and trusting relationship with you, not least to improve the UN's capacity to take early action to prevent violent conflict.

We have discussed conflict prevention, today's topic, many times before in this Chamber. But progress is meager. I will speak about how this needs to change.

Mr. Secretary-General, Fellow members of the Council,

2016 exposed the urgent need for a global recommitment to multilateral solutions to conflict and to collaborative security – and specifically to the prevention of conflict. The horror in Syria and Yemen, and situations such as the instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, dominate this Council's work. Can we afford an ever-growing list of crises slipping into violent conflict and needless human misery?

UN's humanitarian and peacekeeping instruments have come under immense pressure. 22.2 billion USD in humanitarian appeals. Over 100,000 UN peacekeepers. Meanwhile, research shows that measures to peacefully prevent conflict cost, on average, just a tenth of post-conflict recovery efforts. Investing in prevention is not only morally right. It is the smart, economically sound and sustainable thing to do.

Prevention requires addressing the root causes of conflict and instability before they reach the front pages or this Council's agenda. It calls for inclusive nationally led processes that build strong institutions; and that are supported by a 'whole of organisation' commitment. The Sustaining Peace agenda, together with the Sustainable Development Goals, provides the platform and the master plan.

At the same time, Chapter VI of the Charter, on pacific settlement of disputes, requires the parties to a dispute to seek solutions through peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation or judicial settlement.

We have the tools. What we need now is a new political consensus in support of prevention.

Let me highlight some areas for priority actions that can underpin it:

Firstly, make prevention a priority for the whole UN system. Hold each entity accountable for its part in contributing. Ensure that the UN works closely with other international, regional and sub-regional actors. A good example is the current joint efforts, by ECOWAS and the UN Regional Office for West Africa and the Sahel, regarding The Gambia.

Secondly, improve the capacity of the United Nations to recognise and address the root causes and drivers of conflict by working together across the UN system's pillars, mandates and agencies. In this regard, we are encouraged by the concrete steps you have already taken, Secretary-General, to make the Secretariat work more efficiently.

Thirdly, improve system-wide analysis and welcome independent, authoritative advice from the Secretary-General, including on new and emerging threats and risks, such as climate change, to improve our collective strategic planning and response. Tell us what we need to know, not what we want to hear.

Fourthly, harness the agency of women to create sustainable peace through inclusive processes. Experiences shared through a network of female peace mediators that I have initiated, confirm the importance of inclusiveness.

Finally, recognise, in the words of the Secretary-General, that there can be no humanitarian solution for a political crisis. Humanitarian action can never be a substitute for political dialogue and mediation.

Colleagues,

We should heed the Secretary-General's call for a "surge in diplomacy for peace".

In order to do so, Sweden commits to contributing to a Security Council that empowers the Secretary-General to take timely, decisive and effective action to resolve disputes and prevent conflicts before they begin.

I hope that other Council members can join us in adopting this approach. We will do our utmost to create an atmosphere of open, respectful and honest dialogue around this table.

Secretary-General,

We have heard your call for effective conflict prevention. We know that for you to be effective, you need the political support of Member States.

We therefore commit to a new consensus on prevention. We commit to overcome our differences in pursuit of the common good.

We owe this to the United Nations and to our constituencies.

We owe it to the people and nations of the world.

Let us resolve to put peace first.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the Swedish Committee Against Antisemitism

Published 10 November 2016 Updated 09 November 2016

Check against delivery.

Friends,

I am very pleased to be here today, to engage with you and to underline the importance of the Swedish Committee against Anti-Semitism.

Thank you so much for inviting me to speak to you.

I will begin by outlining how the Government fights anti-Semitism in our own country. I will then offer some of my views on anti-Semitism as a global problem. And I will conclude with a few words about the need for peace in the Middle East.

* * *

We are witnessing an increase in intolerance and hatred in Sweden, around Europe and the rest of the world – on the internet, in the streets, and around religious institutions.

This intolerance is directed at minority groups such as Jews, but it is a threat to all of us, and to the democratic societies that we Europeans have historically fought hard to build.

The Government recognises that civil society actors like you are absolutely crucial in the fight against anti-Semitism and all forms of racism, hatred and

intolerance.

Sweden is a pluralistic and democratic country – and we are determined to protect these core values of our culture and society.

Jewish life is part of Swedish life, and Jewish culture is an important thread in our European social and cultural fabric.

Everyone living in Sweden should be able to lead a life based on equality, safety and dignity – and without fear or threat when practising one's peaceful religion. The right of religious freedom and belief is a fundamental human right.

A range of actions are taken to protect Jewish life in Sweden, with particular focus on education, media literacy, knowledge about history and the Holocaust, and on strengthening democracy, building civil society, enhancing security for religious institutions – to name the most important.

Moreover, the Government is working on a new national plan to combat racism and hate crime, which also addresses the anti-Semitism that the Jewish community is subjected to.

* * *

Friends,

Let me move on to my second point. Anti-Semitism is a global problem, and not limited to any national setting or regional context.

For centuries, Jews have been the target of unfair blame, wrongful accusations, senseless hatred and violence – simply because they are Jews.

Anti-Semitism has deep and historical roots and it has taken many different forms.

This 'hatred of the other' has always had both local and transnational characteristics.

But with the advent of the internet, new borderless environments have been created in which age-old conspiracy theories can take additional forms.

Fighting anti-Semitism online is a huge challenge for the open and democratic world.

Here, governments need to cooperate with the media industry, civil society and specialists.

The EU Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online is an important step, but much remains to be done in terms of monitoring, implementation, accountability and enforcement.

Continued international cooperation is important. The EU, the United Nations and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance are vital in this work.

Bilateral consultations and cooperation with Israel, the United States and partners in Europe remain a priority.

Anti-Semitism must also be viewed within a larger context of hate and intolerance, online and offline.

We see how anti-Semitism flourishes in the same environment as violent extremism – in spaces where democratic values are replaced by violence.

The ongoing wars around the world, continued terrorist attacks against cities in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe, and the ongoing refugee crisis underline all too clearly the need to address the root causes of intolerance, hatred, violence and armed conflict.

Through international cooperation – in the EU and the United Nations, with education, legal measures, and enhanced security – we must devote our efforts to long-term confidence-building, conflict resolution and a culture of dialogue with respect for human rights in all contexts.

It is clear that no single country can solve these problems alone.

And it is clear to us that no set of countries or governments can solve these issues without working in close cooperation with civil society organisations.

An active civil society is key in this endeavour; education and dialogue are, without doubt, the most important cornerstones of a peaceful and tolerant society.

* * *

Friends,

I will conclude by saying a few words about the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the need for peace in the Middle East.

We see quite clearly that when there is an upsurge in violence in this conflict, the situation of Jews living in Swedish cities is affected.

Jews come under attack – and are accused and threatened because of actions that they have no part in, and sometimes don't support.

Anti-Semitic violence on our streets is linked to the situation in Israel and Palestine.

A sustainable solution to this long-standing conflict in the Middle East is urgently needed.

Sweden supports a two-state solution in which the peaceful co-existence of Israel and Palestine becomes a reality.

In our analysis, recognising the state of Palestine was an important step towards a two-state solution and a bid to break the deadlock and status quo of years of failed negotiations.

The two-state solution, we believe, requires the negotiating parties to be on an equal footing.

Many people in Palestine have experienced nothing but conflict in their lifetimes, and any hope of a different future is steadily disappearing.

Our recognition of Palestine was therefore also an endeavour to restore hope.

Meanwhile, Sweden remains a steadfast and good friend of Israel.

Calling our foreign policy anti-Semitic – as some have done – is completely unacceptable and unfounded.

Friends,

I would like to wish you a very successful and rewarding conference.

We look forward to continued cooperation with the Swedish Committee Against Antisemitism on the crucial fight against anti-Semitism and for greater democracy.

We can learn a great deal from your work, and be inspired by your valuable contribution to knowledge and solutions for a better society and a better world.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech on Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at IHEC in Carthage, Tunis

Published 28 October 2016 Updated 28 October 2016

Check against delivery

Minister Labidi, Mr. Dimiter Chalev, Ladies and Gentlemen, Students,

Four hundred and seventeen thousand. That is the number of internally displaced people in Libya. Many of them are women and children living under dire humanitarian conditions, without protection against gender-based and sexual violence, which is increasing according to recent reports.

Four percent. The number of signatories of 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 that were women. In the same sample, only 2 percent of chief mediators and 9 percent negotiators are women.

I am here today to talk to you about why Sweden actively pursues a feminist foreign policy. With these two interlinked examples – Libya, a conflict with serious repercussions not least for Tunisia, and the lack of women involved in peace processes globally – I want to illustrate why it is so important that we include 100 percent of the population when we address war and conflict. But not only then: Tunisia is one of the best examples of how women's active political participation contributes to sustainable social change and democratic gains.

I am honoured to address you at this prestigious research institution and thank IHEC and the UN Office of Human Rights for hosting us.

Thank you, Mr. Chalev, for your introductory comments. I look forward to a

discussion with you, Ms. Labidi. I am happy to see many familiar faces here today of women who have contributed to Tunisia's democratic consolidation, and the faces of many more whom I hope will do so in the future.

I have divided speech into three parts. First, I will describe the concept of a feminist foreign policy in more detail. Secondly, I will highlight some areas where the world can learn from Tunisia. I will conclude with some thoughts on how we can achieve real change.

What a feminist foreign policy can do

Sweden's feminist foreign policy aims at ensuring women's rights and participation in central decision-making processes. Gender equality is not just the right thing to do. As research is consistently telling us, it is the necessary and smart thing to do if we want to achieve our wider security and foreign policy objectives. We know for a fact that increasing gender equality has a positive impact on food security, extremism, health, education and various other key global concerns.

Feminist foreign policy is an integral part of the activities of the Swedish Foreign Service. Our methodology can be summarised in four words, all beginning with the letter "R."

Reality check is about getting the facts right from the outset. If we look to the needs and aspirations of 100 percent of the population, what is the situation on the ground? How should we then prioritize?

Rights. The fact is that human rights are also women's rights. Here, two fundamental tracks must be followed when pursuing a feminist foreign policy. Firstly, there are areas where we must aim for prohibition, such as gender-based discrimination, domestic violence and forced marriages. Secondly, there are areas where the aim is progress, for example equal rights to inheritance and access to education, employment and health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights. These areas are key to women's empowerment.

Representation, which includes influence over agenda-setting and starts by asking a simple question: who conducts policy? Whether it regards foreign or domestic policy, whether in Sweden or Tunisia, we see that women are still under-represented in influential positions in all areas of society. I am proud

that the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs might be an exception: five top positions – all three ministers and two out of three state secretaries – are held by women.

Resources refers to Sweden's ambitious international work, for example in development cooperation. The starting-point here is the need to apply a gender perspective when distributing aid and resources. To give an example: today, only one per cent of spending in security sector reform is allocated to initiatives which consider gender equality a significant objective. This is unacceptable. Global gender equality goals must have financial backing.

Learning from each other: the Tunisian example

It gives me particular pleasure to talk about gender issues here in Tunisia. Since Tunisia's independence 60 years ago, you have led the way in terms of advancing women's rights. Tunisian policies promoting women's education and participation in the labour market are unique in this part of the world. Women hold prominent positions in politics, social life and business, several of whom I see here today. I also see many bright and dedicated students, young men and women, the future leaders of Tunisia. To you I want to say: intellectual freedom is a cornerstone of democracy, cherish it, protect it. When you graduate, there is a world waiting for new leadership and strong values.

I also want to highlight the role that women played in the revolution five years ago and continue to play in consolidating your democracy. Tunisia's many democratic gains – new political parties, free democratic elections, freedom of speech and a vibrant civil society – are an illustration of how women's participation is crucial for sustainable development. The new Tunisian constitution that was adopted in 2014 guarantees equal human rights and citizenship for men and women and is a testament to the commitment, struggle and endurance of many passionate advocates in politics, civil society and media alike. I applaud you.

How can we work together to achieve real change?

As you may know, Sweden yesterday inaugurated our embassy to Tunisia. I warmly welcome this strengthening of our bilateral ties and look forward to the work that we will do together in the future. Swedish aid to Tunisia includes support for human rights training in the justice sector and capacity building for female judges. Facilitated by the Swedish Institute, cooperation now also addresses the topic of gender equality through children's literature.

Swedish companies employ over 5,000 Tunisians, a majority of them women. And I have learned that Beity, with Swedish support, has inaugurated a Centre d'Accueil for marginalized women here in Tunis. Sweden is proud to be a partner in all these ventures and more to come as we look forward to closer cooperation between our two countries.

Dear friends,

Gender equality is not a 'women's issue'. It is an issue of human rights, and of development. Our two countries have already pledged to work together towards the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Gender equality is not just one of the 17 goals, but also precondition for the achievement of many of the others.

Sweden will join the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member for 2017-2018. We will prioritize the topic of women, peace and security in our work, pushing to operationalise the ground-breaking Security Council Resolution 1325 with regard to all phases including peacebuilding and conflict prevention. We will work to overcome the glaring underrepresentation of female mediators in UN peace processes.

Sweden's feminist foreign policy aims to respond to one of the greatest challenges of this century: the continued violations of women's and girls' human. Regardless of whether we struggle for gender equality at home - in Sweden or Tunisia, or in a context of conflict like neighbouring Libya – let's remember how the Swedish feminist and author Elin Wägner compared values and ideals to old-fashioned bicycle lights: they don't light up until you pedal forwards.

In our work for global gender equality, Sweden and Tunisia can do a great deal together. I am confident that many of you in this room will join in pedalling forward.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs ahead of United Nations Day

Published 27 October 2016 Updated 27 October 2016

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Stockholm Concert Hall, 21 October 2016. Check against delivery.

Friends of the UN,

I would like to begin by thanking the United Nations Association of Sweden for inviting me here to this celebration of United Nations Day.

As Minister for Foreign Affairs, and as a human being, I am proud of the great commitment to the UN that exists in Sweden – and of the work that Sweden has done in the UN ever since we became a member 70 years ago.

You know as well as I do: the UN is the world's most important platform for international peace and security. The UN is a matter for all of us.

We need an effective UN with popular support that is in tune with the times.

That was true yesterday. It is true today. And it will be true tomorrow.

And in times like ours, I think you will agree that the UN is needed more than ever – along with belief in the UN and commitment to the UN.

I would therefore like to thank you for continuing to spread knowledge of the UN in Swedish society.

Over the next twenty minutes I will speak about three areas.

Firstly: what is the situation in the world, and does the UN still play a role in the changes we want to see?

Secondly: what is Sweden's responsibility, and what can a small country like Sweden do?

And the third and most important question is also the theme of this year's seminar: what is Sweden's role on the UN Security Council?

Friends,

We live in troubled times. One terrible act of terrorism is followed by another. Millions of people are fleeing wars and disasters.

We hear reports every day of terrible human suffering – from war-torn Syria to hurricane-struck Haiti.

The threat from authoritarian leaders, the questioning of democracy, growing isolationism.

And this is despite the fact that our greatest need is for more cooperation, more multilateralism.

How can we manage to tackle the challenges of our time?

I am convinced that the UN can and must be part of the answer. And there are many good examples of the UN functioning as the forum for peace that we want to see.

Because 2015 was a year filled with major UN agreements.

I'm thinking of the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai.

I'm thinking of the International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa.

I'm thinking of COP21 in Paris.

And, of course, I'm thinking of last year's agreement on the new Global Goals for Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda.

Through the 2030 Agenda, the countries of the world have committed to

ending poverty and hunger everywhere; to combating inequalities within and among countries; to building peaceful and inclusive societies; to protecting human rights and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and to ensuring the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources.

This agreement and this commitment are a triumph for the UN system as a concept and as a platform for decision-making.

But now we have to translate these into practice, and this depends not only on the UN as an institution, but also equally on the Member States.

If we are to live up to the new Global Goals, we need a strong and effective UN.

Naturally, Sweden will continue to work for this.

And I am grateful that you – Sweden's civil society – are helping us to help the UN.

* * *

Friends,

Commitment to the UN is part of the Swedish national identity.

More than 80 000 Swedes have served in UN peacekeeping operations, and Sweden has taken part in most UN operations since 1948.

Dag Hammarskjöld, Alva Myrdal, Jan Eliasson, Hans Blix, Folke Bernadotte, Staffan de Mistura – who will be joining us here today – have all worked for peace in the service of the UN.

And it is perhaps significant that when the World Federation of United Nations Associations was formed in 1946, its first President was a Swedish parliamentarian, [and woman,] Kerstin Hesselgren.

And it feels similarly natural that the current President, Bonian Golmohammadi, is also Swedish.

Sweden's work in the UN is characterised by its breadth, depth and commitment – in everything from UN development policy efforts to the law of the sea and preserving marine biodiversity.

Allow me to cite a few current UN issues to illustrate this breadth.

Since 2014, Sweden has contributed an intelligence unit comprising around 250 personnel to the UN operations in Mali.

This has given us an insight into the major challenges the UN is facing, not least the threat to civilian populations and operations personnel.

Sweden continues to work for zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuses in UN contexts.

The UN also serves as the hub of the humanitarian system. Today, there are 125 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.

This year, the first global humanitarian summit was held. We can be proud that Sweden is one of the very largest humanitarian donors, even in absolute terms.

I would like to touch briefly on the issue of migration. The UN summit on migration held on 19 September was an important step towards finding innovative and sustainable solutions for the world's 65 million refugees and internally displaced people.

And to create the conditions for secure, orderly and regulated migration for the world's 244 million migrants.

The summit marked the beginning of a process, and the follow-up will be crucial. Naturally, Sweden will take part in this work.

Disarmament has been on the UN's agenda ever since the organisation was formed.

In times of increasing armament, voices for disarmament must continue to be heard.

In a worsened security policy climate, status quo in the area of disarmament implies greater risks for all.

Within weeks, the First Committee of the General Assembly will decide on the resolution to begin negotiations on a global ban on nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons are the only weapons of mass destruction that are still not banned outright.

And I am very proud to announce that the Government this week decided to back this resolution.

It is a crucial step towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

For a week now, we have also known who will be the next Secretary-General of the United Nations – António Guterres of Portugal.

The world needs a courageous and strong Secretary-General with vision and drive, who will work for peace, gender equality, human rights and sustainable development in line with the UN Charter.

I look forward to working with Mr Guterres – not least during Sweden's presidency of the UN Security Council, which begins as Mr Guterres takes office in January 2017.

Friends,

On 28 June this year, Sweden was elected by a comfortable margin as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

I am honoured by, and proud of, the confidence that the countries of the world have shown in us. Our seat on the Security Council is a testament to the Government's global policy for sustainable peace and development.

The UN Charter gives the UN Security Council ultimate responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

The Security Council must therefore be the guarantor of key principles and rules in the multilateral system. In turn, this system is the foundation of our security policy and of most of our cooperation with other states.

So how can Sweden's seat on the Security Council contribute to a more peaceful world? And what are Sweden's priorities ahead of our membership of the Security Council?

The Security Council agenda is dominated by country-specific issues. Sweden must be a professional and principled member that takes responsibility for the entire Security Council agenda.

We must also be prepared for the unexpected. The Security Council agenda

is partly steered by events, and the Council's focus can be adjusted heavily based on major events in the world.

Imagine, for example, what happened to the agenda when the Arab Spring broke out.

Sweden's actions in the Security Council will be informed by values and principles: international law, human rights, gender equality and a humanitarian perspective.

Standing up for international law in the Security Council is both a means to ensure that policy is formulated within the framework of the UN Charter and international law, and an end in itself.

We will bring our foreign policy priorities to the Security Council: the importance of preventing conflict and relapse into conflict, the inclusion of women in peace processes, and the connection between security and development.

Sweden will work on these issues – particularly within the points already on the Security Council agenda – to ensure the greatest possible impact 'on the ground'.

All of our work on the Security Council will be informed by a gender equality perspective.

Equality between women and men is a goal in itself, but it is also a prerequisite if we are to achieve international peace and security.

Last year, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva published a study showing that peace processes in which women were included also lead to more peace treaties and more sustainable peace.

Therefore, more women must participate as mediators in peace processes, and take part in peacekeeping missions.

The international community must move from words to deeds in implementing commitments for women, peace and security.

We want the strong wording with respect to women, peace and security in the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMA) to spread to other UN resolutions.

We want recognition for the peacebuilding efforts of Colombia's women. We want Mali to be urged to do more to include women in its peace process.

And for Somalia to actually live up to its commitment to a quota of 30 per cent women in the next parliament in the election that is still being delayed.

In recent weeks, the situation in Syria has deteriorated even further. It is unacceptable to bomb civilian populations, attacks hospitals and target humanitarian convoys.

This cannot be allowed to continue, and it is appalling that the Security Council has failed – mainly due to the Russian veto – to achieve consensus on this issue.

Our membership of the Security Council offers us an opportunity in yet another arena to contribute to creating the conditions for a peace process in Syria. We are already supporting the process by ensuring that civil society and women are present at the talks being held.

We will work for increased prospects of humanitarian assistance getting through, and improved compliance with humanitarian law.

Our membership also offers an opportunity to improve the UN's capabilities to prevent conflicts turning into armed conflicts.

The Security Council must become better at reacting to signs of impending conflict. This requires a thorough understanding of the root causes of conflicts – including social, economic and political factors.

But it also means using Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter on the pacific settlement of disputes.

When Sweden takes its seat on the Security Council, we will therefore push for a fresh approach and a redoubling of efforts to prevent armed conflict.

Improved reporting to the Security Council from the UN field offices could improve the Council's risk assessments.

And enhanced cooperation with regional organisations such as the African Union and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the Security Council can more effectively become closer to countries that risk becoming stages for war and conflict.

The new Secretary-General must also have sufficient courage and sufficient political scope to act. And the Security Council must have the courage to give the Secretary-General that scope.

Preventing armed conflict is a matter of both increased capabilities and a stronger will.

As a member of the Security Council, we will stand up for this – and for a strong Secretary-General.

This is our aim – and I have already contacted António Guterres to this effect.

In summary, let me say that Sweden's role will be to help ensure that Security Council decisions, which are binding on all 193 UN Member States, are as good and as effective as possible.

Because it is important to remember that Sweden is on the Council at the mandate of and on behalf of the General Assembly. We have been entrusted with a responsibility.

And we will discharge our duty with pride and with principle, in dialogue with the other fourteen members of the Security Council, with the countries on the Council's agenda, and with countries that contribute troops to UN operations.

We will not only talk about countries, we will talk with countries.

We will bring our Swedish perspective to the UN's inner sanctum. We know who we are, what we stand for and what we want.

At the same time, we must be realistic.

We also know that the world, and the other fourteen members of the Council, five of whom have a veto, do not always share our views.

This is a reality in relation to which we will have to position ourselves, using the tools of diplomacy and dialogue.

Friends,

Transparency and dialogue will be the hallmarks of Sweden's membership of the Security Council. We will work for more efficient working methods in the Council. And we will continue to contribute to strengthening cooperation between the UN and the EU.

This transparent approach will also be the hallmark of our work at home in Sweden.

The Riksdag's Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs will be kept informed.

Civil society will regularly be invited to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for dialogue – the first meeting took place in September.

And I have myself established a reference council for our Security Council membership. It consists of fifteen members, participating in a personal capacity, from academia, government agencies and civil society.

The reference council last met on Wednesday, and the United Nations Association's own President, Aleksander Gabelic, is among the members.

I know that this council will have important perspectives to contribute.

Friends of the UN,

My time is almost up, and I would therefore like to conclude with what are actually the crucial questions.

Why is the UN really needed? And why do we celebrate United Nations Day?

By way of an answer, I would like to refer to the United Nations Charter.

The UN is needed to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

And the UN is needed for its work on fundamental human rights, and for the dignity and worth of every human being, and for equal rights for men and women.

So simple – and yet so difficult.

I think you will agree that it is particularly important to celebrate United Nations Day this year, when the world and the UN are facing so many

challenges.

I think that by gathering here today, we are showing that we believe in the UN as an concept. But also that we are showing that we want a reinvigorated and strong UN with the conditions to work in the service of peace – in practice.

But this also requires us to see the bigger picture, and to understand that issues such as peace, development, climate, security and human rights are all interdependent.

Sweden will be a caring critic of the UN. A friend who always wishes well, but is not afraid to speak out when mistakes are made.

And I think that we celebrate United Nations Day to remind ourselves and the world that our joint efforts for the UN have taken us some way down the path

– but also to remind us that we are not even close to our destination.

When UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited Stockholm earlier this year, he said that "Sweden is a superpower of solidarity, dialogue and cooperation".

I am proud to represent such a country.

Together with you, I look forward to continuing to work for an effective UN with popular support that is in tune with the times – and for a Sweden that continues to stand up for the UN's principles for the next seventy years.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Hertie School of Governance, Berlin

Published 07 October 2016 Updated 07 October 2016

The EU in a rapidly changing world: where do we go from here? Check against delivery

Professor Doctor Anheier,

Friends,

We meet at a time marked by the destruction of war and by the desperation of refugees.

A gardener in Aleppo asks for peace, but is silenced by bombs.

A Yazidi woman wants to study, but Daesh makes her a sex slave.

A family dreams about Canada, but a little boy is washed up on a Turkish beach.

We meet at a time marked by the return of geopolitical rivalries and aggressive nationalism.

The very foundations of how we live together are being challenged: Russia tries to move borders through aggression and challenges the European security order; another nuclear test is conducted by North Korea.

Our political landscape is revisited by the spectres of xenophobia, autocrats, demagogues, fear-mongering and flat-out lies.

But to paraphrase a man who might soon become the First Gentleman of the

United States:

There is nothing wrong in our world that cannot be cured with what is right in our world.

And dear future European leaders:

There is nothing wrong with Europe that cannot be cured with what is right in Europe.

We are right whenever elections are fair, voices are free, and courts are faultless.

We are right when openness, diversity and trade create decent jobs and equality.

We are right when we unite around seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

We are right when we agree in Paris to save our planet.

We are right whenever peace and diplomacy trump violence.

And we are right to believe that when we work together – the very basis of our European project – there are better days ahead.

* * *

In times of challenges and opportunities, it is always a pleasure to visit friends.

I am pleased to be here in Berlin – one of Europe's most vibrant cities – in the context of the Swedish State Visit.

Germany is not only Sweden's largest trading partner, but also a very important political ally.

And since we are in Berlin, it is pertinent to recall the late Willy Brandt.

We all know that Willy Brandt had to spend parts of his life in Norway and Sweden.

And as I turn to address today's topic – The EU in a rapidly changing world – some of the lessons that Willy Brandt's life taught us are more relevant than

ever:

Our destinies are common.

When in need we help each other.

Europe is stronger when we are united.

And our world is stronger if we bridge the gap between our peoples.

* * *

Let me describe three major challenges that have shaken Europe in the past decade.

And let me then conclude with what I see as five key reforms and initiatives.

* * *

First of all: the financial crisis and the economic turmoil of recent years have had a profound impact on our societies.

They have increased inequalities and gaps between different groups within our Union, and strained the social fabric of Europe.

They have also damaged public trust and confidence in the EU and its institutions.

In some countries hit by austerity measures, there is a feeling of having been treated unfairly.

In other countries, there is discontent and a perceived obligation to pay for other people's problems.

However, we must remember that our economies are intertwined through the Single Market.

The crisis put the EU's problem-solving capacity to the test, and in the end we managed to find common solutions.

But the aftermath of the financial crisis has also had a major impact on the European labour market.

If you are in doubt, talk to the young people in Europe.

Unemployment levels are still too high in many Member States, and this risks sparking social tension.

This is a clear sign that we must continue our reforms, investments and structural measures.

Current actions at EU level appear to be having an effect, and youth unemployment levels are actually falling in most Member States right now.

This trend needs to be strengthened further.

A bright future for the EU is linked to its bright young people and their prospects of being offered decent jobs and opportunities to shape their own lives.

* * *

Secondly, the refugee crisis, the largest movement of people since the Second World War.

People are fleeing from war and oppression, with the hope of finding protection and a decent life – for example in Europe.

We have a joint responsibility to take care of those in need and to protect their right to asylum.

It is a moral obligation; it is the right thing to do.

And, may I add, history has shown that migration normally turns out to be an opportunity for the country that receives ambitious and hard-working citizens.

However, the refugee crisis has also created new tensions in the EU.

Sweden, together with Germany, has welcomed a significant number of refugees.

But for the European asylum system to be sustainable in the long-term, all Member States must shoulder their share of responsibility.

* * *

The third European challenge that I would like to address is Brexit.

The Brexit debate is, just like the refugee crisis, affecting the internal dynamics of our Union.

I deeply regret the result of the referendum – it is certainly not what Sweden and Europe had hoped for.

Nonetheless, it is important to respect the will of the British people.

And now it is important that the EU 27 stand united and strive to work in a spirit of solidarity, unity and trust.

We also hope for close UK-EU cooperation in the future, not least on foreign and security policy.

* * *

The British referendum also puts a spotlight on the important question of popular support for the EU, and it reveals a significant paradox.

On the one hand, EU citizens find it hard to love the EU, voters question its democratic legitimacy and tend to take for granted the many advantages that European integration has brought us.

On the other hand, when I travel to different parts of the world, I notice with pride that the EU is viewed as a shining model of regional cooperation and integration, with a strong power of attraction.

The EU and its Member States account for nearly one third of world trade, and are collectively the world's largest aid donor.

Personally, I believe that the EU, just as so many times before, will come back stronger after yet another harsh wake-up call.

And I am confident that in the long run, more countries – to our East and on the Western Balkans and beyond – will join our chosen European path.

Because it is a path where bloodshed on the battlefield is replaced with patience at the negotiating table.

European history has taught us that this is the path we have to follow.

And remember that it should always be up to the people themselves, for example in the Eastern Partnership countries, to decide whether they would

like to join us on our path.

* * *

So even in the face of challenges, I remain a long-term European optimist.

So before we start our discussion, let me highlight a few areas in which we need concerted action and common solutions.

* * *

1. First of all, we need to discuss how to build security in the 21st century.

Security is by definition something we must build together. Security is something we share.

That leads us to emphasise de-escalation and disarmament, mediation and dialogue, conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

This is a cornerstone of Swedish security policy.

However, in recent years, the security situation in our immediate neighbourhood has, unfortunately, deteriorated rapidly.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its aggression against Ukraine has cost nearly ten thousand lives and continues as we speak.

And the situation on the EU's southern border, the attempted coup in Turkey and the ongoing war in Syria, also require joint action.

That is why the EU's dialogue with Russia must be clear and principled, and our support to Ukraine strong.

The EU's support to the countries of the Eastern Partnership is key to their development into resilient and democratic societies.

So in order to build 'common security' and successfully meet today's multiple challenges, we need to strengthen the European tools at our disposal.

A natural starting point for such a discussion is how we use the European External Action Service.

European foreign ministers, myself included, have homework to do.

But to start with, we very much welcome the EU Global Strategy.

The EUGS has a strong commitment to values and a rules-based global order, as well as a broad-based approach using all the instruments available in external policies.

It is a central platform for the EU to respond proactively and take global responsibility.

We need to strengthen civilian crisis management operations.

We need to use all our tools.

Our military and civilian instruments, whether within the competence of the Member States or the Commission, need to work together more effectively.

We also need to be able to respond to crises more rapidly.

The concept of EU Battle Groups needs to be further developed so that they can become the rapid and flexible response force that they were designed to be.

Using rapid, flexible and adequate civilian and military resources where and when they needed to support long-term stabilisation in the full conflict cycle should be the norm.

We will actively work for the EU to move in that direction.

Sweden has a long track record and will continue to be actively engaged in crisis management, the prevention of radicalisation, respect for human rights, and women's role in peace and development.

We believe that a comprehensive and long-term approach is crucial.

Political instability, climate change, conflicts and violence affect us all in one way or another, directly or indirectly, and it is in our interest to tackle these challenges at their root, in a coherent and integrated manner.

As HRVP Mogherini puts it in her foreword to the EUGS:

"In challenging times, a strong Union is one that thinks strategically, shares a vision and acts together."

* * *

My second point is about migration policy, which also is a very important aspect of the EU's external relations.

The EU must continue to promote peace, security and development, while upholding human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Also, since migration issues are truly global, the EU must show strong leadership in following up the UN Summit on Refugees and Migrants held in September.

And in the EU we need an efficient, common asylum system, based on human rights and international law, where the reception of asylum seekers is shared collectively.

And we need to offer safe and legal routes to Europe and make dangerous Mediterranean crossings unnecessary.

A number of key decisions have already been made and these must now be implemented by all.

In the short term, we are looking at functioning hotspots for the registration of asylum seekers, full implementation of the agreement between the EU and Turkey, and enhanced cooperation with third countries of both origin and transit.

The distribution of asylum seekers in the EU, however, is very uneven.

We must find a common system where Member States share the responsibility to receive people with protection needs.

It is a matter of credibility for the EU.

* * *

Thirdly, we need a renewed focus on how the EU can better deliver on the expectations of its citizens.

The support and trust of Europe's citizens are essential to build what we appropriately call a 'People's Europe'.

Politicians have an important task here in terms of dialogue and

communication.

We need to explain and seek support for EU policies in their early stages.

But we also need to stand up for joint EU decisions in their implementation phase.

The 'People's Europe' is also about defending our democracy.

Standing up to threats, hatred, xenophobia, sexism and violence against minorities.

Never accepting demonisation of religious or ethnic groups.

Defending free and independent media and every person's right to meet and move freely in society.

These democratic values are the foundation of our Union.

* * *

My fourth point is about what we often call a social Europe.

We need an EU that works harder for the well-being of its people.

In a social Europe, growth and social progress go hand in hand.

Workers in the EU should not be forced to compete against each other on the basis of lower wages or poorer working conditions.

A social Europe strengthens people through more secure jobs and better living conditions.

As part of this work, we must also develop a strategic approach to promote gender equality and women's participation in the labour market.

If women's and men's labour force participation rates in the EU were the same, GDP could increase by 12 per cent by 2030.

Striving for a truly equal world of work is not only ethically right, it is also economically smart.

Here, education and life-long learning are key.

By investing in people and equipping them with the right skills, we can help them to adapt to changing conditions.

In the second half of 2017, Prime Minister Löfven will host a social summit in Sweden, which will be an important milestone to drive these issues forward.

* * *

My fifth point is about a green Europe, with an ambitious climate, energy and environmental policy.

I naturally welcome the Council conclusions last week calling for rapid ratification of the Paris Agreement by European countries.

But a strong energy union is also needed to ensure reduced carbon dioxide emissions and increased renewable energy and energy efficiency.

This is important not only for an efficient energy market and security of supply, but also for competitiveness, sustainable growth and more jobs in Europe.

* * *

Friends,

I said at the outset, we meet at a time marked by the destruction of war and by the desperation of refugees.

And there is no other way to end a speech in October 2016 than to return to the war in Syria.

Let me be clear: it is totally and utterly unacceptable to bomb civilians, children and hospitals.

Assad and Russia are moving further away from peace and humanity.

In light of the horrific situation in Aleppo and the breakdown of American attempts to have Russia recommit to the cessation of hostilities, the EU HRVP Mogherini and Commissioner Stylianides launched a humanitarian initiative last Saturday.

The initiative addresses the growing needs of civilians trapped by the

conflict.

But it also aims to facilitate the urgent delivery of basic life-saving assistance to civilians.

The objective is also to ensure the medical evacuation of the sick and wounded from Eastern Aleppo who are in urgent need of medical care.

The focus is on women, children and the elderly.

The EU remains a top donor to the humanitarian response to the Syria crisis, both inside Syria and in neighboring countries.

We also actively support the attempts to reach a political solution; both through Staffan de Mistura's UN mediation role, and by helping the opposition to remain united and committed to a negotiated solution.

* * *

Like all of you, I see the images coming from Syria with a broken and angry heart.

Let me assure you that both Sweden and the EU will continue to do what we can to put an end to the slaughter.

Because as Willy Brandt said:

"Peace is not everything, but without peace, everything is nothing."

Thank you. And now I am looking forward to hearing your questions.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at UNRWA side event “Protracted refugee situations – what more can be done?”

Published 19 September 2016 Updated 19 September 2016

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at UNRWA side event “Protracted refugee situations – what more can be done?” **CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The need for solidarity with the world's refugees and with nations that receive them is more evident than ever. More countries have to take a greater share. These are global issues that require joint global efforts.

I would like to make 6 main points:

We must address the root causes of conflict and strife, invest more in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction, and do more to stop the ongoing conflicts that are behind our record-high humanitarian needs. I recall in this regard that all states have the responsibility to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights for all. Respect for human rights and international humanitarian law are key factors for peace and stability.

When discussing this situation, we cannot ignore the over 5 million Palestinians who have been refugees for two thirds of a century. Nor can we ignore UNRWA's crucial contribution to supporting these refugees and the

positive effects of its work for stability in the region. For this I want to thank UNRWA. Sweden is one of the largest donors to UNRWA. The Government has just proposed to Parliament an additional contribution of just over USD 8 million for 2016.

Sweden is one of the world's largest humanitarian donors, facilitates resettlement of people in need of protection, and supports efforts to integrate refugees in host societies – both in partner countries and at home. Sweden has a strong and long-standing commitment to resettlement, and our resettlement quota is one of the highest in Europe. Sweden has also been active within the EU to encourage more Member States to contribute to resettlement. Sweden will continue to make participation in resettlement activities a high priority also on the international agenda. Sweden promotes refugees' access to education and employment in host countries, as we ourselves make these sectors accessible to refugees and migrants in Sweden.

Since displacement puts women's and girls' health and safety at risk, we also provide valuable insights from our unique feminist foreign policy. We are honoured to be leading the initiative 'Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies' this year, with the aim of building a global coalition to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in emergencies. We urge all actors in humanitarian emergencies to integrate a gender perspective in their work and combat gender-based violence.

Development actors must engage earlier and more robustly in humanitarian contexts and fragile states. Humanitarian and development actors must increasingly share a situational understanding, agree on common mid- to long-term goals, and work towards those common goals, according to their separate mandates. The neutral and unpolitical nature of humanitarian action must be safeguarded.

Sweden has adopted a regional development cooperation strategy (USD 200 million) to strengthen the resilience of the Syrian population, refugees, and vulnerable groups in Syria's neighbouring countries. The strategy implements a lot of the thinking behind a closer humanitarian-development nexus.

More than 80 percent of the world's refugees are hosted in developing countries and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the refugee hosting countries.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Women, Peace and Security Conference

Published 09 September 2016 Updated 09 September 2016

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Women, Peace and Security Conference, 7 September, Rabat, Morocco. Check against delivery.

Minister Bouaida, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

It is my great pleasure to be here today.

Thank you, Minister Bouaida, for hosting me and for inviting both qualified fellow speakers and an inspiring audience.

The theme of today's conference is: Women, Peace, Security and Development.

How very important this is.

All we need to do is to take a look at the world to understand why we must speak about this topic.

Your destiny is also our destiny. This is perhaps more evident now than ever before.

Today, the challenges that each of our countries faces are often common challenges.

We can address them better if we work together and learn from each other.

.....

I would like to begin by addressing three areas I believe are important to discuss when we talk about women, peace, security and development.

Firstly, we must talk about the fact that today, more than 60 million people are seeking refuge from war, persecution or other forms of violence.

Sixty million is the highest number since the Second World War – roughly the equivalent of the entire population of Italy on the run.

And if all those people who are now in need of humanitarian assistance made up one country, it would be the 11th largest country in the world.

The world's refugee population today is increasingly made up of women and young people. According to a recent UNICEF report, half of those seeking refuge today are children. Refugees are increasingly vulnerable, many living in urban areas, not in camps, hard to reach, and at serious risk of violation and exploitation.

How can we work together to better protect women, girls and boys who are forced to flee their homes? And how can we act more boldly to prevent conflicts, end conflicts and build sustainable peace?

Secondly, we must recognise that sexual and gender-based violence in conflict is a security challenge and a threat to development.

When I travelled in my capacity as the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflicts, I often came across three myths that we have to correct, namely that sexual violence in conflicts is inevitable, unspeakable or a lesser crime.

This is a dangerous narrative.

We must therefore speak up and call it what it is: a crime, a tactic of terror and a weapon of war. And we must fight it.

Thirdly, I am convinced of the need for a solid knowledge base, including statistics, as a starting point for informed decisions on policy and reforms.

I therefore believe that gender-disaggregated data and statistics are important.

This was – and still is – important in the case of Sweden.

And it is important in other countries.

I understand that Morocco has introduced gender-responsive budgeting. This sets an example for others.

.....

Gender equality is not a 'women's issue'. It is a core issue for international peace and security. Women and men both stand to gain from greater gender equality.

Indisputable evidence shows that women's participation leads to more sustainable peace.

When my Government assumed office two years ago, we declared that Sweden's Government is a feminist Government.

And I declared that Sweden would pursue a feminist foreign policy.

Why?

Because gender equality and women's participation in society are also peace and security issues.

I like to speak of three Rs: rights, representation and resources. Do women enjoy the same rights as men? Are they represented in society? And do they have the same resources as men?

As I said, evidence shows that women's participation leads to more sustainable peace.

And yet today, we are all too familiar with women being significantly underrepresented in, and excluded from, peace and mediation processes.

Out of 1168 peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2013, only 18 per cent made any reference to women and gender.

From 1992 to 2011, fewer than four per cent of signatories to peace agreements, and only nine per cent of peace negotiators, were women.

Sustainable development, peace and security can never be achieved if half the population is excluded.

I appreciate the important work that Morocco has done, in cooperation with Spain, to make women's role in mediation part of your joint initiative on the promotion of mediation in the Mediterranean. Your training of women in the field of mediation is impressive and sets an example.

As part of my Government's broader feminist foreign policy, we have initiated a Swedish network of women peace mediators. And we are also taking part in the development of a Nordic women's mediator network.

We aim to create networks with international women mediation teams from across the globe.

We hope to be able to cooperate with the Moroccan-Spanish Mediterranean initiative.

.....

I would like to conclude with a reminder to us all: human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights.

This is not only a value to carry in your heart.

Research shows that when women are involved in peace processes, the peace that follows is more sustainable.

So let us take note and carry gender equality in our heads too.

And finally, we should also recall that, according to UNESCO, the oldest continuously operating university in the world is to be found in the Moroccan city of Fez.

Most naturally, it was founded by a woman.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the India Trilateral Forum

Published 09 September 2016 Updated 09 September 2016

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the India Trilateral Forum, Stockholm, 8 September 2016. Check against delivery.

Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to Sweden and to the eleventh India Trilateral Forum.

It's a great pleasure to meet all of you.

I am very happy to see such a prominent gathering of India experts and opinion-makers here in Stockholm.

A warm thank you to our friends at the German Marshall Fund for organising this event.

The Ministry Foreign Affairs has supported the India Trilateral Forum since 2010.

The aim is to bring together experts from Europe, the United States and India for an open and candid dialogue that contributes to widening and deepening cooperation between India, the United States and Europe.

These are very interesting times in our parts of the world, and the agenda reflects that.

I am sure that you will have productive and inspiring discussions.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

As you know, the economic and political rise of India is a fact.

The growing role of India on the global scene is an opportunity for all of us.

India shares a community of values with Sweden, the EU and the US, being committed to democratic institutions, the rule of law and human rights.

A victim of terrorism, India is in the front line globally in the fight against it.

India has a huge and talented diaspora, forming important bonds with other countries.

This is true also here in Sweden, where Indian IT professionals greatly contribute to the successful IT-hub of Stockholm.

India has a young and dynamic population. And Indian culture is celebrated across the world.

So when I think of India rising, I think of hope and great expectations.

When I look ahead at global challenges – be they reducing conflicts and making peace more sustainable, or tackling climate change and ensuring sustainable development, India is, and will continue to be, indispensable.

As India grows on the world stage, I am confident that it will shoulder increased responsibility.

This responsibility will include upholding global norms, protecting global commons and an international order based on international law and human rights, meaning of course also women's rights, and with the UN at its core.

* * *

Friends,

On 28 June, Sweden was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017 and 2018.

The public and very valuable support of India (in the Joint Statement of our two Prime Ministers) was very important to us.

And I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation.

In January we start our term as President of the Council.

We will be prepared to deal with both the Council's ongoing agenda and unforeseen crises.

But in one sense, there will be no surprises.

We will stay true to our principles.

Sweden's foreign policy rests firmly on international law, respect for human rights and gender equality.

Our Security Council membership will do the same.

* * *

Friends,

The world knows India as a strong advocate of global collaboration within the framework of the United Nations.

It has been a leading country in many UN contexts, such as the G77.

India's commitment and efforts to promote export control are commendable.

Sweden remains a supporter of India's membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group and will work with partners to move this process forward.

I warmly congratulate and welcome India's joining the Missile Technology Control Regime.

It is my firm belief that India's active participation will strengthen global export control efforts.

India's further engagement in international non-proliferation efforts would be demonstrated by, for example, signing the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty.

Importantly for us, India and Sweden share a steadfast confidence in multilateralism.

I say this because, with the increasing uncertainty in the world, effective multilateralism – with the UN at its core – is perhaps more important than ever before.

A rising India can give new impetus to the belief that nations of the world can meet collective challenges only by working together.

To be effective, the UN system needs reform.

This includes the Security Council.

For the Council to be more legitimate and effective, a more adequate representation from Africa, Asia and Latin America is required.

This is why Sweden supports India as a permanent member of a reformed and enlarged Security Council.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

Sweden is proud to enjoy a growing strategic partnership with the world's largest democracy.

Working with India to expand our relations is an explicit priority of this Government.

Historically, our relations have been strong. We are very pleased that they are now being further widened and deepened in partnership.

We are two democratic countries with some obvious differences – size being one – but we have many key features and interests in common.

This past year or so, we have witnessed a build-up of a new and historic momentum in India–Sweden relations.

In June 2015, we had the pleasure of welcoming President Mukherjee to Sweden – the first-ever visit to our country by an Indian President.

And in February this year, our Prime Minister led one of the largest Swedish trade delegations ever to the 'Make in India' exhibition and conference in Mumbai.

He met with Prime Minister Modi, and they issued a Joint Statement which gives us ambitious, broad and forward-looking directions for our cooperation.

We work together on issues ranging from energy to the environment and health, from digitalisation to defence and security.

We have signed recent MoUs on smart cities, on railways and more.

Trade and investment between our countries is increasing, with about 160 Swedish companies now present in India, and growing Indian investment in Sweden.

And we enjoy a close dialogue on bilateral and global issues in several ways: through our Joint Commission, through Foreign Office Consultations, and, not least, thanks to our re-launched National Security Advisor Level Dialogue.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

Where do we go from here?

Sweden cannot match India in size and numbers.

But following the path our Prime Ministers have set out for us, I believe we can build a unique partnership.

Our partnership should be based on common values and an open dialogue, working together on innovation and smart solutions for the betterment of both our societies.

But also working together on global challenges to ensure the future security and prosperity of our two countries, and of others.

I look forward to working with our Indian friends towards these goals.

* * *

Friends,

I wish to say a few words to you Ambassador Harrison.

Your term here in Sweden is about to end.

I would like to offer you my most heartfelt thanks for your extraordinary efforts in promoting relations between our countries.

You are a true friend of Sweden.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you and, once again, a very warm welcome to Stockholm!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at Stockholm World Water Week

Published 29 August 2016 Updated 29 August 2016

Foreign Minister Margot Wallström's speech at the opening of World Water Week in Stockholm. (Check against delivery)

Excellencies, Ministers, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today, taking part in World Water Week and having been given the opportunity to speak about the role of water in sustainable growth and to give you an overview of how Sweden is working with the 2030 Agenda. First, I would like to thank the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) for having organised this important event for the past 26 years.

Let me begin with a quote that describes our responsibility for water. It is one of my favourite quotes, which I often used at the European Commission in my previous capacity as European Commissioner for the Environment.

"The same water that we can drink from a mountain stream in a northern country was once in Cleopatra's bath, in Abraham's wells and in a nuclear power plant's cooling system." It is the same water because this is how nature's fantastic ecocycle is constructed. The process of course takes time, but it is still the same water. This is how our ecosystem works and it shows the great responsibility that we have to take care of and manage water resources, and ensure the high quality of water in the south as well as the north.

The theme 'Water and Sustainable Growth' is very relevant and has clear links to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainable growth requires

sustainable development, stability, peace, a healthy environment, gender equality and economic growth, etc.

Our world is characterised by conflict, climate change, extremism and inequality. Humanitarian needs seem infinite and we are witnessing the largest number of refugees since the Second World War. At the same time, the World Economic Forum (WEF) in its Global Risks Report has identified water as one of the main challenges worldwide. The water crisis and climate change are closely interlinked: the impact of global climate change is clearly visible in water resources and poses a serious risk to poverty reduction, threatening to undo decades of development efforts.

Millions of people are living in regions with water scarcity, and at the same time a warming planet is increasing the stress on these regions. The world's population continues to grow, which also means increasing demand for water to produce food and for other purposes, such as household needs, sanitation, industrial and energy production, etc.

Armed conflict is often the reason for a lack of access to clean drinking water and sanitation. Peace and stable development are generally requirements for attaining clean water and sanitation.

Climate change also constitutes a threat to global security, as it can be a catalyst for increased tension that can lead to conflicts and poverty, for example, increasing competition for scarce water resources.

However, shared waters and joint management of transboundary water resources can also be an important unifying factor, contributing to dialogue, peace, regional and political stability, and economic growth.

We also know that climate change and a lack of basic resources have a disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable and poor people of the world. They adversely affect security in fragile settings where governance is weak and institutional capacity to deal with shocks and crises is low. We have seen this in Syria, Mali, Sudan, Somalia and in many other places.

Some of the most obvious effects of climate change have direct links to water. Droughts, wild fires, storms, floods, ocean acidification and sea level rise all have devastating effects on life and economic development. Sea level rise can lead to salt polluting fisheries, agriculture and not least the fresh water supply. It is important to remember that oceans and coasts partially support about 75 per cent of the global population residing in the wider

coastal margins.

Access to water, sanitation and hygiene have a direct impact on the health of women and girls. For example, a lack of adequate sanitation and menstrual hygiene facilities at schools and workplaces often leads to absenteeism or pupils dropping out. In many parts of the world, access to a toilet is a matter of security for women and girls.

Access to water significantly reduces women's and girls' workload and the amount of time they spend on arduous tasks such as fetching water. It can free up time for market-based activities and enable them to attend school. But women and girls in the world still experience gender inequality, and a lack of rights, representation and resources. In many families, girls under the age of 15 are twice as likely as boys to be the family member responsible for fetching water.

Women's economic empowerment is not only a prerequisite for the realisation of gender equality; it is also a prerequisite for economic growth, for reducing the number of people living in poverty and for more peaceful and prosperous societies.

There are some similarities between water and the economy. Water starts its existence as rainfall, later creates streams and rivers, forms lakes and finally runs into the oceans. The economy works in a similar way. The flow of activities of individuals, both men and women, enables the economy to grow.

Successful realisation of Goal 6 of the 2030 Agenda will underpin progress across many of the other goals, particularly on nutrition, child health, education, gender equality, healthy cities and healthy water ecosystems and oceans.

Last year, 2015, was an important year for global governance. With worldwide agreements on poverty reduction, disaster risk reduction, development financing and climate change, we now have the comprehensive normative frameworks needed to support sustainable development and peace.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda is a shared responsibility for all countries. Its comprehensive approach involves all actors in society. Sweden is actively working on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and this work is closely linked to the development financing agenda – the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) – and the Policy for Global Development which is

the Swedish version of Policy Coherence for Development. This connection is central to implementation and should be seen as a coherent framework. The most visible example of the Swedish Government's work is the establishment of a national delegation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

International development cooperation is an important tool for supporting developing countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. But efforts towards sustainable development and poverty eradication cannot be a task only for development policy or development actors. This requires the involvement of a broad range of actors and efforts within and across all policy areas, including development cooperation, trade, foreign relations, climate, environment and migration policies, etc.

Sweden emphasises the importance of good multilateral donorship, is advanced in many areas and is a leading voice in international efforts towards more sustainable development. In this respect, dialogue with member states and work throughout the UN system, the EU, the OECD, multilateral development banks and other international organisations will be crucial. The seat on the UN Security Council will also provide a platform for Sweden to work for international peace and security.

The Paris Agreement is an important milestone in the fight against climate change. Climate change is the defining issue of our time and a key priority for the Swedish Government. With my fellow foreign ministers within the European Union, I am – like many Swedish embassies – engaged in climate diplomacy to follow up and spur implementation of the agreement. Sweden will also, together with Fiji, co-host a high-level UN conference on oceans, which will take place in New York in June 2017.

Ladies and gentlemen, as the world's first feminist government and as a strong supporter of the women, peace and security agenda, it is crucial that we see the gendered effects of conflict, poverty and scarcity of basic resources, such as water. Gender mainstreaming is a strategic approach for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels of development.

It is time to turn political commitments into real action.

Thank you!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Margot Wallström at the OAS General Assembly

Published 13 June 2016 Updated 13 June 2016

Speech by Margot Wallström at the meeting with the General Secretary and Permanent Observers. The Organization of American States' General Assembly 13 June 2016, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Check against delivery.

Mr Secretary General, fellow Ministers, Ambassadors and Delegates to the OAS,

I am honoured to be here today. I highly value this opportunity to follow the General Assembly of the OAS, and to meet with friends and partners from the Americas. I would like to thank Minister Navarro and the Dominican Republic for hosting this Assembly and giving us the opportunity to visit historic and beautiful Santo Domingo.

Sweden's relations with the Americas go back a long way in history. They are profound and encompass people, trade and shared values.

Sweden has long been active in development cooperation with many Latin American and Caribbean partners. We are proud of our longstanding partnership with the OAS.

The Americas today is a continent of peace. Democratic rule is well rooted, as is the rule of law. The region has made remarkable headway when it comes to sustainable social and economic development and empowerment including women's rights. The OAS has played, and continues to play, an instrumental role in all these areas.

Sweden will remain a partner. As an observer state and committed friend, Sweden believes that the OAS remains of great relevance. Through its support to demobilisation in Colombia, citizen security in Central America, electoral observer missions, and its human rights system.

Over the years, Sweden has channelled some USD 45 million to OAS' work in these areas. Recently, we have also contributed to the border mission between Guatemala and Belize, and mediation work between youth gangs in El Salvador. In a time of increased polarisation around the world, we need to rally around multilateralism as such.

Friends,

There is a special affinity between Sweden and Latin America and the Caribbean. Sweden's solidarity with the region is inseparable from the history we share. Swedes have engaged, and still do engage, in solidarity work throughout the region – from Nicaragua and Uruguay to Chile and Colombia.

Many Latinos found a safe haven in Sweden during the difficult time of dictatorships and civil wars, and today they make up a vibrant community.

The Social Democrat-led Swedish Government that took office in 2014 has made it a top priority to revitalise and further enhance our relations with Latin America and the Caribbean.

We have travelled extensively in the region. I have had the honour of participating in the last two COFCOR meetings. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and I have also been privileged to receive many of you and your leaders in Sweden.

From our conversations with you, we see a striking convergence of interests and great potential for deepened partnerships.

One area of interest is climate change. Sweden has taken a leading role on climate finance, being the largest per capita donor to the Green Climate Fund and other major climate funds.

And we are intent on overcoming the obstacles to accessing these funds – because those most in need should be first in line. Over the past year, we have consequently initiated a close dialogue with representatives from your countries to ease procedures and build national capacity to secure access.

Furthermore, we recognise the concerns of the Caribbean partners with respect to measures affecting your correspondent banking relations. A balance must be struck between ensuring compliance with international standards and ensuring access to financial services and financial inclusion.

This is important because we really need investment and trade to create growth – and social policies to make this growth inclusive. Within the EU, Sweden is pushing for free and fair trade relations with Latin America. We are also strengthening our bilateral cooperation with many Latin American partners, in areas such as higher education, research and sustainable technology.

Friends,

Last year saw several milestones in the area of effective multilateralism. With the agreements concluded in Sendai, Addis Abeba, New York and Paris we have the tools to set our planet on a path towards sustainability. Sweden is committed to taking its share of responsibility to address the challenges we collectively face.

Our candidacy to the Security Council for the period 2017–2018 is part of this commitment. Our long history of multilateral engagement, peacekeeping contributions and development cooperation is proof that Sweden is a partner that delivers on its promises.

As demonstrated by our decision to recognise Palestine, we continue to be a voice of integrity and solidarity – in the spirit of Dag Hammarskjöld and Olof Palme. We are a small and militarily non-aligned country, without a colonial past, that relies on rules and fairness. We staunchly defend the Charter and its principles, and international law.

It is on this basis that we are respectfully seeking the confidence of our Latin American, Caribbean and North American partners to advance the agenda for peace, as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at the 12th Chemical and Biological Weapons Protection Symposium

Published 08 June 2016 Updated 08 June 2016

Speech by Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs at the 12th Chemical and Biological Weapons Protection Symposium, 8 June 2016. Check against delivery!

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this 12th Chemical and Biological Weapons Protection Symposium here in Stockholm.

When the very first symposium of this kind was held, back in 1983, the world was a very different place in many ways. We were in the middle of the Cold War, with arms races extending to both nuclear and chemical weapons. The Soviet Union was involved in an offensive biological weapons programme in disregard of the Biological Weapons Convention. And Saddam Hussein was using chemical weapons against Iran and would soon release such horrors against Kurdish civilians in both Iran and Iraq. Luckily those days are behind us. The end of the Cold War made it possible to move forward on chemical and biological disarmament, and to achieve great things such as the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

However, in other ways, in the words of French journalist Jean-Baptiste

Alphonse Karr: plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose – the more things change, the more they stay the same. Russia's aggression and illegal annexation of Crimea has precipitated a new sense of mistrust between East and West. In the Middle East, the Syrian regime is implicated in using chemical weapons against its own people, and experts of the former Saddam Hussein regime are allegedly helping terrorists develop chemical weapons capability. Attempts to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention collapsed in 2001 and have failed ever since.

Despite such gloomy prospects, the Nobel Prize awarded to the OPCW a few years ago bears witness to the success of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The norms against biological and chemical weapons are almost universally accepted. The destruction of chemical weapons in the possessor states seems to be approaching completion despite serious delays. The UN and OPCW-led missions to investigate and monitor the dismantling of Syria's chemical weapons programme in the midst of a terrible civil war and an ongoing humanitarian disaster show that East and West can accomplish great things when we decide to work together for a common cause.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The theme of this conference – science and technology for protection against biological and chemical weapons – is a vital link in our ability to deal with the dangers of these weapons of mass destruction, and I am proud of the contribution that Sweden continues to make by holding these conferences every three years.

In fact, Sweden has been punching well beyond its weight in the fight against chemical and biological weapons for many years:

- The important contributions of Rolf Ekéus, Hans Blix and Åke Sellström as leaders of successive UN missions are well established. However, it is less known that Swedish experts from the Swedish Defence Research Agency have contributed to all UN investigation teams since the mid-1980s, in Azerbaijan, Iraq and Mozambique. Sweden contributed one of the experts in the small team that developed the agreed guidelines for the Secretary General's mechanism in the late 1980s, and Dr Åke Sellström helped update that system following the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
- The Secretary General's Mechanism remains our best multilateral

response to a potential biological weapons attack. Accordingly, Sweden organised the first training workshop for experts on the UN Roster in 2009. Last year, as the Ebola outbreak became a reminder of the risks involved, the first workshop to consider the setting up of a network of analytical laboratories for biological weapons was held here in Stockholm. Later this year, in cooperation with the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs, Sweden will host a further training session for experts and another laboratory workshop in support of the Secretary General's mechanism.

- At the request of the then UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms Angela Kane – my neighbour here on the podium – Sweden provided air transport resources to the UN investigation in 2013. The chemical analysis laboratory of the Swedish Defence Research Agency in Umeå supported that mission, and continues to analyse samples in support of the OPCW's important work in Syria.
- The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency continues to help the OPCW develop its system for delivering assistance in case of use or threat of use of chemical weapons.

Sweden will continue to provide political, financial and technical support to the international community's capacity to address contingencies involving chemical and biological weapons. Both the UN and the OPCW are continuing to do valuable work to address the chemical weapons issue in Syria, and my Government is looking forward to contributing further to this work as a member of the OPCW Executive Council –since last month – and, I hope, as a member of the Security Council of the United Nations starting next year.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction constitutes top priority for my Government, and a priority that I am personally very committed to. Let me give you a few examples:

- One of the first actions I took as incoming Minister for Foreign Affairs in October 2014 was to have Sweden join the Humanitarian Initiative and the De-alerting Group. We have also become a member of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. All these initiatives are designed to bring new impetus to the nuclear disarmament process.

- Last month, Sweden participated actively in the Open-ended Working Group in Geneva, bringing forth ideas to help elaborate agreed recommendations to submit to the United Nations. Having proposed the setting up of an Open-ended Working Group to move forward on nuclear disarmament at the time of the last NPT Review Conference, I welcome this opportunity, and hope that nuclear weapons possessor States will also engage in constructive dialogue on nuclear disarmament in the future.
- I have re-established an International Law and Disarmament Delegation, with broad participation from the Swedish Parliament, Swedish authorities, think-tanks and civil society, and have asked them to examine more closely and advise me on the issues of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems and a possible nuclear weapons ban.
- I have tasked the Swedish Defence Research Agency with developing a new generation of the Swedish Automatic Unit for Noble Gas Acquisition – or SAUNA system – in support of the monitoring network of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.
- Only a few weeks ago, my Government appointed a disarmament ambassador, Ms Eva Walder, who will represent Sweden in multilateral negotiations and help advance and develop Swedish disarmament policy.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This symposium takes place at a pivotal time, when we are facing new and evolving threats posed by chemical and biological weapons, and I referred to some of these earlier in my statement. I understand that such dangers will be the theme of this afternoon's session. It will also be an important focus of the comprehensive review of UN Security Council resolution 1540 at a meeting two weeks from now. New science and technology for protection, detection and response are vital to defend against these threats, and that means that your work here this week is very important indeed.

I wish you every success in your deliberations.

And I am now very pleased to declare the 12th Symposium on the Protection against Chemical and Biological Weapons officially open.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Middle East Peace Process-conference in Paris 3 June 2016

Published 03 June 2016 Updated 03 June 2016

Check against delivery!

Excellencies, colleagues,

We who have gathered here today have done so because we believe in the two-state solution and see the urgency of reaching it. We also want to send a strong political message to the parties.

Let me start by commending my French colleague for the political leadership shown by taking this very welcome initiative – to pave the way for a reinvigorated, result-oriented Middle East Peace Process.

Status quo is not status quo – but a constant deterioration of the situation on the ground. Israeli civilians should not need to fear knife attacks on the streets. Palestinian parents should not need to accompany their children to school in order to protect them against harassments.

The international community must assume its responsibility and take action to save the two-state solution. This is the only viable option to fulfil the long-term aspirations of the both peoples, Israeli and Palestinian, to live side by side in peace and security. Regional actors have a crucial role to play – also with regard to the Arab Peace Initiative – but the responsibility lies with all of us.

What then is required?

I would highlight two of the points here today.

First, there must be land to build on. Repeated decisions to declare Palestinian land as Israeli state land undermine the viability of a future Palestinian state.

Second, the vision must remain alive. The vision of a two-state solution – of Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace, security and prosperity. This is one of the main reasons for Sweden's recognition of Palestine. Another reason is to make the parties a little less unequal.

I speak about hope.

We must do all that we can to keep hope alive. This is especially important for the young generation. Without hope, we risk dangerous desperation.

The work ahead must be based on international law including relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Promoting, protecting and respecting human rights is key for the creation of an environment conducive for a re-launched peace process, and for any such process translating into lasting peace.

Civil society organisations are important actors for democratisation, state-building and economic growth. They can contribute to create peaceful coexistence, influence attitudes and hold public officials to account.

Women should influence and participate in all spheres of society, including at the negotiation table. And we certainly also need to include young people. It is my firm belief that a renewed peace process must take into account their perspectives.

Sweden stands ready to work with civil society organisations, including representatives of private sector stakeholder organisations, in the preparation of an international conference. I would also like to propose a civil society forum to be held prior to an upcoming conference, to secure support and contributions from key actors as well as local ownership of a renewed process.

Today is the beginning of renewed efforts towards a peace process which needs a clear timeline. As representatives of the international community we must stay engaged from now on and build alliances to support this endeavour. And work closely with France and other actors to move this

initiative swiftly forward.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at Africa Day in Stockholm

Published 26 May 2016 Updated 26 May 2016

Foreign Minister Margot Wallström's speech at Africa Day in Stockholm 25 May 2016. Check against delivery.

Dear Friends,

Let me tell you how happy I am to be here today as we celebrate Africa Day in Stockholm. This day is an important occasion. Africa has never been more present in Stockholm and in Sweden. Tens of thousands of Swedes have their origin in African countries. Tens of thousands of Swedes travel to the African continent every year. Tens of thousands of Swedes have African friends and relatives.

Here, in our capital Stockholm, there is always something going on that reminds us of, and confirms, the strong links between Sweden and African countries; film festivals, art exhibitions, guest performances in theatre and dance, concerts, debates, seminars and literature events. There are new African restaurants to explore, fantastic wines from South Africa at Systembolaget, beautiful flowers from Kenya, great coffee from Rwanda, Ethiopia and Burundi, just to mention a few things (and you have probably already noticed the importance of good coffee for a Swede...).

And every week the major daily newspapers here in Sweden are running stories on potential and opportunities in Africa. World Economic Forum Africa a couple of weeks ago attracted a substantial interest from Swedish Business, the Swedish Government and Swedish media. No Swede can have missed the fact that it is time to update our image of Africa. With 54 countries and 1 billion people, Africa's influence, impact, voice and responsibility in a globalized world is becoming more evident by the day. I'm sure you know it already - Africa is a part of Sweden.

For me as Foreign Minister, Africa is constantly on my mind and on my agenda. I have travelled extensively to Africa during the last year. And I have received a large number of African leaders here in Stockholm. Today I'm honoured to host the Foreign Ministers from Benin and from Niger. And the same goes for Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. He has been present at African Union summits in Addis Ababa, at international meetings on Africa and tomorrow he is meeting the Namibian President just a few blocks from here. The Swedish partnership with Africa is based on historic ties. It is being strengthened every day. And it will be increasingly important in the future.

Dear friends,

Sweden's relationship with Africa goes a long way back. What started as support for freedom, democracy and human rights has now developed into a partnership for tackling global challenges of mutual concern.

Today, we see and welcome the strong ambition in Africa's Agenda 2063 and its vision for Africa's advancement. The African Union has made a strong point and an important commitment by announcing 2016 as the 'African Year of Human Rights with particular focus on the Rights of Women'. Gender equality and the rights of women are corner stones for Swedish society and for the Swedish feminist foreign policy. I am inspired by the leadership on gender equality demonstrated by the African Union.

Dear friends,

Last year, the world made significant progress on the climate and development agenda. We also need a new global compact to promote peace and security. A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to speak at the UN General Assembly on issues such as resources for peacebuilding and conflict prevention, true national ownership, solid partnerships with regional and sub-regional organisations – including a strengthened strategic partnership between the UN and the African Union – and the role of women in peace processes.

The second Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld of Sweden, had a strong commitment to Africa. We intend to build on this legacy and forge an even stronger partnership.

Dear friends of Africa,

Sweden will stand alongside the people of Africa in the defence of human

rights, in the struggle for democracy and peace, in the fight against climate change, in the promotion of better education and employment opportunities for young people, in the creation of better systems for migration, and in the many more challenges we face together.

Let me end by concluding that Sweden is, and will continue to be, a Past, Present and Future Partner to Africa.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at A Call to Action for addressing Gender-based Violence in Emergencies

Published 24 May 2016 Updated 24 May 2016

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at A Call to Action for addressing Gender-based Violence in Emergencies: Leadership, coordination, tools and practise – side event with UK/UNFPA/UNICEF/IRC/Oxfam, at World Humanitarian Summit, Istanbul 24 maj 2016. Check against delivery!

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates and excellencies in the audience and in the panel,

I am honoured to welcome you all to this side event, jointly organized by Sweden, UK, UNFPA, UNICEF, Oxfam, the International Rescue Committee and GBV AoR. I am also honored to have such a distinguished panel with a broad range of experiences to bring to the table. Thank you all for joining us today.

Overarching view

Worldwide, an estimated one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse in her lifetime. One in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or abused in some other way – often by someone she knows.

Today, almost 60 million people are displaced worldwide as a result of

persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations. You have all heard it before - this is the highest number since the Second World War.

Displaced women and girls are one of the most vulnerable groups in the world, due to gender-based discrimination in access to resources, rights and representation

The risk for women and girls to become targets of sexual and gender-based violence is furthermore multiplied in emergencies.

It is unacceptable that women and girls risk being target of gender-based violence. Gender-based violence - which includes, among other things, domestic violence, sexual violence, female genital mutilation, honour-related violence, child marriage, violence against LGBT-persons and human trafficking - is the most extreme form of gender inequality.

Preventing and responding to gender-based violence must be recognised as lifesaving activities from the onset of an emergency and as a key protection concern.

In conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies, humanitarian stakeholders should assume that gender-based violence is occurring and undertake action.

Humanitarian aid is about saving lives, alleviating suffering and restoring human dignity. By tackling gender-based violence we achieve these aims.

Feminist Foreign policy

Now is the time to walk the talk. I challenge women and men- in leading positions to step up to the plate. Your words are important, but ultimately only your actions count.

It is more urgent than ever to prevent and respond to the horrific crimes against women and girls that are taking place in emergencies such as Syria, Iraq, South Sudan and in the Central African Republic. We have important work ahead of us and I believe that we together can make a difference.

Sweden pursues a feminist foreign and development policy, which is based on four pillars - "R: s" - rights, representation, resources and reality. This policy is committed to accelerating the advancement of gender equality and

women's and girls' rights globally.

Achieving gender equality will require new and coherent approaches, upstream and downstream: including everything from agenda setting, the gathering of information and data, analysis and decision making, the design of interventions, to follow-up and accountability.

Women and girls in humanitarian settings are one of the focus areas of the feminist foreign policy and are given special attention in 2016.

We need to make sure we address this issue in a way that gives real results on the ground. There is a clear gap between what people in humanitarian emergencies experience – not the least women who represent of the victims - and high-level discussions that take place in different fora.

Call to Action

Sweden believes that more actors can use the global multi stakeholder initiative "Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies" as a platform to increase the efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in humanitarian settings.

Sweden is honoured to be leading the initiative Call to Action in 2016 with the aim to build a truly global coalition to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

The Call to Action is a multistakeholder initiative that was launched in 2013 by the UK and Sweden and gathers States, donors and organisations.

Each partner commits to concrete actions to reach the objectives in the Call to Action Roadmap and report annually on progress.

Call to Actions Roadmap provides a framework to follow-up the commitments being made here at the Summit. It is a tool for humanitarian actors to ensure that pledges are translated into concrete and targeted actions on the ground.

I encourage all states and organisations to endorse the Call to Action and its Roadmap.

Sweden's commitments

We are convinced about the need to focus more on the root causes of gender-based violence, which are found in gender-based power inequalities and gender-based discrimination. Responsive measures such as providing adequate service to survivors of gender-based violence, is crucial – and lifesaving – but it does not necessarily stop the violence from happening in the first place or prevent it from happening again.

National ownership is key, gender equality takes time and we believe that the issue should be raised in dialogues with Governments. Development actors have a central role in this and we would like to encourage closer cooperation with humanitarian actors, as well as early engagement in emergencies. Sweden is in a strong position to exert an influence, as a major humanitarian donor; we must do more and do better to improve the lives for women and girls in emergencies.

Therefore we will continue to set strong incentives that our partners must live up to and we encourage other donors to do the same.

Sweden will continue to only finance humanitarian projects that take into account the different needs of women and men, girls and boys according to UN's Gender Marker system. We find that creating financial incentives has significantly increased the number of projects designed to meet the needs of women and men, girls and boys. We are demanding gender segregated data from our partners. Humanitarian partners need to ensure that gender-based violence is included in cluster response plans, reports, projects, programmes and pooled fund. All humanitarian partners are required to apply the IASC Guidelines in order to mainstream gender-based violence across all humanitarian sectors. Gender norms surrounding violence must change. Men and boys can be drivers of change and needs to be involved, and take responsibility, in the work on gender equality as well in the fight against gender-based violence. Engaging men and boys directly to transform harmful beliefs, attitudes and behaviours based on gender norms is crucial in order to successfully prevent gender-based violence. Women and girls as actors; humanitarian efforts must recognise that women and girls have much to contribute in preparing for, and responding to, crises They should not be seen as helpless victims or mere recipients of aid. The importance of women's participation and partnership with women's organisations need to be further highlighted.

The World Humanitarian Summit

The World Humanitarian Summit must lead to political commitments that are

translated to concrete changes for women and girls on the ground. We will use the Call to Action to ensure that commitments are put into action.

I encourage all states and organisations to endorse the Call to Action and its Roadmap. There have been important progress to date, but a lot remains to be done.

This will be further addressed now by our distinguished panellists. I am also pleased to be able to present Jina Moore who is the international women's rights correspondent for BuzzFeed News and based in Nairobi. Moore has reported from Liberia at the height of the Ebola crisis and on women's issues around the world.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the World Humanitarian Summit Plenary

Published 23 May 2016 Updated 23 May 2016

I thank the UN Secretary-General for convening the World Humanitarian Summit, and Turkey for hosting it. With humanitarian needs and global displacement at unprecedented levels, the Summit could not be timelier.

Sweden welcomes the UN Secretary-General's report and I call on all actors gathered here to commit to decisive action that will turn the 'Agenda for Humanity' into a reality. Sweden is committed to strong progress on each of the five core responsibility areas as well as a strong supporter of the Core Commitments presented by the Secretary-General, to which Sweden has aligned itself.

Let us picture the 125 million people in humanitarian need as citizens of a country. This country, the world's 11th largest, is plagued by war, drought and natural disasters. There is not enough food or clean water. Many of its women and children die in childbirth. The children who survive their fifth birthday rarely have the opportunity to acquire a meaningful education.

The human suffering in many humanitarian crises is appalling, and the lack of access to people in desperate need of help something completely unacceptable. I confirm Sweden's commitment to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and to preventing the politicization of humanitarian aid. We reiterate that humanitarian action cannot be a substitute for political solutions. There is a more urgent need than ever before for decisive political action to address the conflicts causing massive displacement and suffering.

Every day humanitarian aid workers lose their life, are wounded or

kidnapped. I note that 90 percent of humanitarian workers killed, wounded or kidnapped are local staff. Similarly, the reports of attacks on medical personnel and hospitals are increasing. Sweden strongly condemns attacks, threats and violence against humanitarian staff as well as medical personnel and hospitals.

Sweden is the fifth largest bilateral donor and a devoted humanitarian actor. As such we are committed to constantly develop and adapt to the ever-changing world and new challenges which occur. In addition to the Core Commitments, we have therefore decided to present around 50 national commitments aiming at making our humanitarian work better and more efficient.

Sweden is committed to leaving no one behind and to putting people at the center of humanitarian action while fully taking into account their specific needs and capacities. We need to include and empower Women and Girls into all phases of the humanitarian work. Build a truly coordinated global approach with ambitious commitments to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in crisis context through the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies. As Chair of the Call to Action in 2016, Sweden commits to increasing the number of governments and civil society agencies by the end of its leadership term.

As a member of the High-level Panel for Humanitarian Financing, I am very committed to undertaking necessary reforms to ensure sufficient and efficient funding. The Panel's report and the Grand Bargain between donors and agencies is a very good step in the right direction towards better humanitarian financing. Sweden aims to provide at least 15 percent of Swedish funding for humanitarian response plans through Country-Based Pooled Funds, where such funds exist and are well-functioning, in line with the target of the UN Secretary-General.

Humanitarian crises develop from many different reasons, conflict being the most common one. Fragile states, inequality, climate change are some of the other underlying causes. It is of utmost importance to apply an overarching perspective to solve any crisis and to bolster better cooperation and coordination between humanitarian, development and other sectors. The humanitarian system alone cannot solve a conflict or a crisis.

The unique nature and mandate of the humanitarian work must be reassured; however we need to find common ways to reach common goals. In an attempt of concretizing this approach, Sweden has developed a Syria

Strategy, aiming at bridging the gap between the two. Through this strategy Sweden tries to finance projects which can fill gaps and create synergies between humanitarian aid and development, to the benefit of those affected by the crisis in Syria.

The World Humanitarian Summit is an opportunity to enhance the international community's ability to respond to increasing challenges. Sweden encourages other stakeholders to take concrete action to make our common humanitarian work more apt and above all, to cease the human suffering of people in need.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the UN High- level meeting on sustaining peace in Africa

Published 12 May 2016 Updated 12 May 2016

High-Level Meeting on Sustaining Peace: Mechanisms Partnerships and the Future of Peacebuilding in Africa
Thematic Session: Operationalizing the 'Sustaining Peace' Agenda and Review in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities. United Nations, New York, 12 May 2016.
Check against delivery

Under-Secretary-General Abdelaziz,

Assistant Secretary-General Fernandez-Taranco,

Distinguished Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to join you this morning.

Let me start by welcoming the resolutions on sustaining peace adopted last month, which comprise nothing less than a landmark.

By agreeing on the new definition of "sustaining peace", we are moving away from post-conflict peacebuilding, and putting prevention at the core of our actions. We have adopted a new bold agenda that goes far beyond the UN Peacebuilding architecture. It is an agenda for the entire system, for all

of us. Tackling the root causes of conflict is at the center. Equally important, it is an agenda that recognizes the inherently political nature of peacebuilding, and underlines the importance of national leadership and inclusivity in all peacebuilding activities.

This ground-breaking shift in mind-set must be celebrated. But not for too long, because we know that the real work is ahead of us, and I am eager to get started. I commend the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the African Union Commission for providing us with this timely opportunity to discuss how to put this agenda into practice in Africa.

Let me touch upon what I believe constitute three core commitments for operationalizing the 'Sustaining Peace' agenda in Africa:

1. First, we need to invest more resources in peace-building and conflict prevention.
2. Second, we need to commit to national ownership and inclusive processes, including women.
3. Third, we must enhance partnerships with regional organisations, in particular the African Union and Regional Economic Communities.

I will focus my remarks today on financing.

Ms Leymah Gbowee said two days ago that if we want peace, we must prepare for peace. I would like to add that we must invest in peace.

For far too long we have been spending billions of dollars on humanitarian and security responses after conflicts have broken out, while investing fractions of those amounts in prevention.

If we are serious about stepping up our collective ability to react before conflicts break out, we need to provide predictable and sustainable resources. Sweden therefore supported the recommendations in the peacebuilding review pertaining to assessed contributions for peacebuilding. We look forward to the Secretary General's options for sustainable financing which will be presented to Member States during the 72nd session of the General Assembly.

As a country that allocates 1 percent of our GNI in official development assistance, and one of the largest contributors to UN development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, Sweden will continue to be a

strong advocate and provider of core funding. But I am eager to go beyond this.

In Africa, we need to define concrete ways for how to provide resources upfront for regional and sub-regional organizations' efforts to respond. ECOWAS is a case in point. Their well-developed infrastructure for early warning and conflict prevention which has proved invaluable time and time again, should be sustainably supported. Similarly, securing predictable financing for AU-led peace operations must remain a priority.

Dear colleagues,

We know too well that money can drive fragmentation if done wrong, or drive coherence if done right. We therefore need to look closely at how we finance peacebuilding.

The current fragmented aid system is limiting our collective impact. A silo approach leads to duplication, unhealthy competition, chronic underfunding of crucial peacebuilding priorities and, perhaps most damaging, overburdening of host governments.

As donors, we have a big responsibility to help break silos. Only then can we effectively tackle the root causes of conflict.

Coherent and joined-up financing is the only way to ensure national ownership and leadership in practice. Somalia is an interesting example. The establishment of the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility has helped increase coherence in international engagement, and strengthened Somalia's ownership. Pooled funding mechanisms have enabled donors to come together behind national priorities, and putting the Somali government in the lead.

Co-moderators,

I could not end my remarks without mentioning the important role played by the UN Peacebuilding Fund, to which Sweden is a top donor. The risk-taking, political and catalytic functions carried out by the fund is now widely recognized. Yet it is a tragic irony that one of the most effective tools at our disposal has dwindling resources to allocate. I am therefore happy to announce that Sweden will help mobilize resources by co-hosting a high-level pledging conference for the Peacebuilding Fund in the margins of the Ministerial week in September this year. I look forward to continuing these

discussions with all of you.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by the Foreign Minister of Sweden in the Open Debate at the United Nations Security Council

Published 11 May 2016 Updated 11 May 2016

Statement by H.E. Ms Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in the Open Debate at the United Nations Security Council, Wednesday 11 May 2016.
Check against delivery

Mr President, Foreign Minister Shoukri,

Thank you for convening this important debate and for this opportunity to make some remarks on our common challenge of countering narratives and ideologies of terrorism.

This is no doubt one of the greatest challenges we face. Violent extremism continues to plague communities. Terrorism poses a major threat to peaceful, democratic and open societies. It tears apart the fabric of society.

While aligning myself with the statement made by the European Union, I would like to underscore the following:

Firstly, our response must be collective.

The threat of terrorism is transnational. And our response must therefore also be multilateral.

The United Nations has unique and important assets to join up and make available to counter narratives and ideologies of terrorism. Beyond measures

to enhance security, the UN should focus efforts on implementing its Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism, which Sweden strongly supports.

Regional cooperation and regional organisations play a key role. The UN can use its convening power and bring together relevant regional, intergovernmental organisations and mechanisms. It can also support and facilitate their work in other ways.

The African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the European Union, the Alliance of Civilizations and the Union for the Mediterranean – they all bring a clear value-added to the global efforts through established programmes, networks, counselling and cooperation.

And in the context of today's debate, I would like to highlight the priority these organisations give to issues related to the media, young people, education and migration. The UN should continue to provide support to this.

Secondly, we need more and different actors.

Governments and multilateral organisations will not suffice. We need to team up with civil society, the media, religious and community leaders, social workers, faith-based organisations and business.

Through them, we can safeguard a culture of peaceful exchange and dialogue – a multitude of actors creating resilience through inclusive dialogue. This will contribute to destructive discourses losing their appeal.

However, we must recognise that more research is needed into the psychology of violent extremism. The narratives – as abhorrent, violent and inhumane as they are – are attractive to some. Our understanding of radicalisation processes is still too poor.

The key to success will involve reaching out to young people. Sweden therefore fully supports Security Council resolution 2250 and the work of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Alhemdawi.

At home, Sweden has appointed a national coordinator to strengthen the resilience of democracy against violent extremism. We see clear and early benefits of this office, including at the municipal level where many possible preventive interventions can be made.

Thirdly, we must target the root causes.

Destructive narratives sometimes fester because of an abetting context. Terrorism and violent extremism feed on grievance – which they do not solve, but nurture. This is the logic of instrumentalisation that terrorist and extremist organisations employ.

Economic and social disenfranchisement, lack of dignity, corruption, democratic deficiencies, and human rights violations are sometimes part of the radicalisation context. And so we must tackle these challenges, resolutely, not least by implementing the 2030 Agenda.

But other threats that underpin ideologies of terrorism and violent extremism must also be addressed forcefully. These include racism, hatred, acts of violence based on Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and Afro-phobia.

We must refrain from all forms of scapegoating and fear-mongering. Targeting a certain religion, region, nationality or ethnic group plays right into the hands of the terrorist ideology that we seek to counter. Interfaith dialogue and education play a critical role in reducing such tendencies.

Mr President,

Terrorists seek to divide and spread fear. And our response – our counter-narrative and our actions – must be one of inclusiveness, unity and trust.

Real dialogue, based on the equality and dignity of all persons, is certainly the best antidote to racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia.

And therefore, the UN – as the guardian of global dialogue among nations and peoples – can and must be at the heart of our global efforts to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by the Foreign Minister of Sweden at the UN General Assembly High-Level Thematic Debate on Peace and Security

Published 10 May 2016 Updated 10 May 2016

Statement by the Foreign Minister of Sweden at the High-Level Thematic Debate at the UN General Assembly: “In a World of Risks: A New Commitment for Peace”. New York, 10 May 2016 Check against delivery

Mr President,

Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great honour to be here. I commend President Lykketoft for organising this timely high-level debate, adding political momentum to a new global response to peace, security and development.

Over the past year, landmark agreements have been reached on sustainable development climate change. This has restored confidence and trust in the multilateral system's ability to deliver solutions to pressing global issues.

However, progress in development has not been matched by our capacity to manage international peace and security. War and conflicts have led to hundreds of thousands of deaths, enormous human suffering and mass displacement. And the number of wars and conflicts is increasing.

Let us now use the opportunity provided by the reviews of peace operations to forge a new global commitment for peace – a commitment that restores confidence and trust in multilateral responses in the realm of peace and

security.

We must use the unique position of the United Nations to secure peace and security, and adapt to an evolving global landscape.

Mr President,

I would like to congratulate the General Assembly on the adoption of the milestone resolution on Peacebuilding. The notion of sustaining peace is a bold agenda, putting politics first, and prevention at the core of our work.

This paradigm shift should be celebrated – but without complacency. We have hard work to do. The shift in mindset requires corresponding shifts in our action, in our financial support, and in our partnerships.

My first point on a new commitment for peace is this: conflict prevention and peacebuilding need to be given sufficient attention and resources to be effective.

Sustaining peace is about addressing root causes of conflict and dealing holistically with non-conflict security concerns such as criminality and terrorism. In many ways, development is the best resilience builder.

Comprehensive efforts to sustain peace require long-term, predictable and sustainable financing. As a country that is committed to allocating 1 per cent of its GNI to official development assistance, Sweden – I can assure you – will continue to do its part.

Mr President,

Peacebuilding takes place at national level. Efforts to drive that process can thus only be undertaken by national actors. International actors can provide support, facilitation and accompaniment, but never lead.

Therefore, my second point on our new commitment for peace is that we must recognise the importance of national ownership and inclusion. Sustaining peace in the 21st century, must build on a national and inclusive process, which takes into account the views of the whole population of conflict-ridden societies. It remains particularly important to ensure the effective participation of women in peace processes.

As recent chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Sweden appreciated the fact that we talk with countries, not about countries, or at countries. As I see

it, this is national ownership in practice, and an approach that should be practised by all parts of the international system, in the support for peace.

Thirdly, the demand for UN peace operations is greater than ever. UN peacekeeping is a unique instrument to help countries foster conditions for lasting peace. Swedish troops are currently in Mali, and more than 80 000 Swedish women and men have served in UN peace operations since the first mission was launched by Dag Hammarskjöld.

But the UN cannot, and should not, act alone. It needs partners. Efforts to meet challenges to peace and security will not be successful without the context-specific knowledge, understanding and ability of regional and sub-regional organisations.

Strengthening the relationship between the UN and regional organisations, in particular the AU, as well as securing predictable financing for their efforts, is of utmost importance. As a long-standing partner of Africa, Sweden will continue to facilitate and support efforts to this end.

Mr President,

Sweden stands ready to do its part. We will remain active in UN peacebuilding, continuing to carry the new agenda of sustaining peace forward. We will remain a top donor to the Peacebuilding Fund.

Beyond the peacebuilding architecture, we will advocate that sustaining peace is the responsibility of the entire system, flowing through the three pillars of the UN's work: human rights, development, and peace and security.

- Sustainable resources for peace-building and conflict prevention.
- National ownership and inclusive processes for sustaining peace.
- Solid partnerships with regional organisations, particularly the African Union.

These should be the ingredients of our commitment for peace – a compact for peace. As a candidate for the Security Council for the 2017–2018 term, Sweden wants to take this agenda forward, with vigour and determination.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at high-level breakfast meeting on the centrality of the AU-UN partnership

Published 10 May 2016 Updated 10 May 2016

“Strengthening the global-regional peace and security partnership to respond to the crises of tomorrow – the centrality of the AU-UN relationship” Introductory remarks by H.E. Ms Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden Check against delivery!

Minister for Foreign Affairs Sameh Hassan Shoukry

President of the United Nations General Assembly Mogens Lykketoft

Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson

President José Ramos-Horta

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, friends,

I am honoured to be here today and proud to co-host this event, on behalf of Sweden, together with Egypt and the International Peace Institute.

The GA debate we will engage in today and tomorrow is timely.

Unprecedented numbers of people are fleeing violent conflict. The world is rife with massive human rights violations and emergencies. Violent extremism is threatening the social fabric of states and societies. Climate change, including associated natural disasters and shortages of farmland and

water, poses a real threat to many states.

But efforts to address these issues are under way. Over the past year, we have come together – in Sendai, Addis Ababa, Paris and here in New York – to reach agreements at the highest level on how to tackle these challenges.

Reviews of peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and the role of women in peace and security have been undertaken successfully. We now need to capitalise on the momentum generated by the commitments that we have all made.

Over the years, the United Nations has shown that it is uniquely placed to support efforts to prevent conflict and sustain peace. But we must also acknowledge that in an ever-changing environment, the UN cannot perform this role alone.

Efforts to tackle challenges to peace and security will not be successful without the context-specific knowledge, understanding and ability of regional and sub-regional organisations.

For some time now, we have professed our willingness to move forward on this understanding. We meet here today to discuss how we move from rhetoric to action.

I believe that the new commitment for peace, which will be discussed at the General Assembly today and tomorrow, also needs to contain a solid commitment for African regional and sub-regional organisations, particularly the African Union.

Let me make three points in this regard.

Firstly, an enhanced AU-UN strategic partnership should be mutually reinforcing. Both organisations would benefit from a closer and more predictable partnership.

Secondly, the partnership must encompass conflict prevention and peacebuilding – in keeping with the recent resolutions on the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. They signal a bold and much-needed change in mindset by establishing a new concept of 'sustaining peace'.

Indeed, convergence is evident in the African Peace and Security Architecture and the priorities spelled out in its Roadmap 2016–2020: conflict prevention, conflict management, and post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding.

And thirdly, the partnership should address the need for predictable and sustainable funding arrangements for peace operations conducted by regional organisations under UN mandates. Sweden is deeply committed to making progress on this.

Excellencies, colleagues,

I am honoured by the presence of so many distinguished guests. It will make for a fruitful discussion and demonstrates a political commitment to taking the next steps.

We are not often presented with opportunities to collectively create lasting change in the international response to challenges to peace and security. But we now have one. I look forward to our discussion and to taking our work forward – in partnership.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs on a seminar at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI)

Published 07 April 2016 Updated 07 April 2016

Arctic Sweden. Check against delivery!

Ladies and Gentlemen; Excellencies; Arctic Friends,

The Arctic is an integral part of Sweden as well as of our neighbourhood policy. It is a core interest for us to preserve the Arctic as a region of peace, stability and cooperation.

Today's conference is an occasion to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Arctic Council.

The success of Arctic cooperation probably has many explanations. I would like to highlight four of them.

1. Respect for international law.
2. The functioning and truly multilateral cooperation amongst Arctic States. This has historically been demonstrated in an ability and readiness to identify common interests and win-win outcomes.
3. Evidence-based policies.
4. And the Arctic Council as a functional body for regional dialogue. The Council gains additional strength and legitimacy through the permanent participation of six indigenous groups, including the Sami.

Twenty years of cooperation in the High North have taught us that functioning international cooperation – as is practised within the Arctic Council – can provide peace and prosperity.

The long-standing bilateral cooperation between Norway and Russia on fishery in the Barents Sea is a good example. There was a time when unregulated competition risked causing irreversible harm to the population of cod and other species in the Arctic. Now, following years of close cooperation between the two countries, a rational system of joint management of fishery resources has been put in place.

According to recent evaluations by ICES, (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea), they assess, and I quote, that "the largest commercially exploited fish stocks (capelin, cod and haddock) are now harvested at fishing mortalities close to those in the management plan and have full reproductive capacity." This is a positive development and will, in turn, give higher quotas for fishermen from Russia, Norway and other countries.

This example can inspire and lead us onwards. It shows the strong link between the cooperative spirit among the Arctic States on the one hand, and our commitment to sustainability and economic development on the other. Economic development and the sustainable management of the Arctic environment must go hand in hand.

Ladies and Gentlemen; Excellencies,

The Arctic Region is not an isolated land of ice. It is not only wild nature and harsh landscapes. It is a region very much defined by the people living there.

The Swedish Arctic is reindeer herding, important mining and top universities. It is breath-taking environments and popular tourist destinations, Facebook storage and space industry.

The North has the right to develop and its people have the right to lead good lives. Just like any other part of Sweden and our population. This underlines the need for sustainable development – economic, social and environmental.

I myself come from the North of Sweden, so I know what I'm talking about. Jobs and schools, well-functioning infrastructure and respect for nature are necessary. Tomorrow I'm going to Norrbotten to continue this discussion about the future of the Arctic.

Ladies and Gentlemen; Excellencies,

The theme of this panel is The environment and climate.

Last year, when I was at the Arctic Conference in Anchorage, Alaska, I was again reminded of the long-term effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989. The lingering impact of such a catastrophe has remained a burden for the recuperation of wildlife as well as vital microbial organisms some 27 years later.

The environment of the Arctic is magnificent, yet fragile. It is overwhelming in its importance for us – our planet and ourselves – and at the same time vulnerable to manmade disasters.

Environment and climate is an important topic on the Arctic Council's agenda. It is an undisputed fact that climate change, if not slowed down, will irreversibly change the Arctic as we know it. It will destroy living conditions and accelerate negative trends globally. The consequences would be devastating.

Now should therefore be the time, in the spirit of COP21, to further raise our level of ambition in the Arctic Council. To stop global warming and environmental degradation.

I am pleased to note that the US chairmanship has put the climate and COP21 in a prominent position on the Council's agenda. I hope that we will now take the next step and turn these intentions into concrete action.

We can look back on 20 years of successful cooperation in the Arctic Council. It gives us a solid foundation to build on when facing our common challenges.

Let's assume political leadership and get down to business. There is a lot to do, and by working together I'm sure we can continue to achieve a great deal.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at 2016 Stockholm Forum on Security and Development

Published 05 April 2016 Updated 05 April 2016

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at 2016 Stockholm Forum on Security and Development, 5 April 2016. Check against delivery.

Deputy Secretary-General, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Together with SIPRI Director Dan Smith and my colleague Minister Lövin, it is a great privilege and honour to welcome you to Stockholm and the third iteration of the Stockholm Forum on Security and Development.

Friends, we meet at a time of great unrest. Developments in Syria, Burundi, Sudan, Afghanistan and Europe – where some are investing in blankets and others are buying in all the barbed wire – are symptoms of a world order that has failed in its main task: to provide safety and security for all.

Currently, 125 million people have been forced to leave their homes due to wars and natural disasters. This is the equivalent of the eleventh most populous nation on Earth. More than USD 25 billion has been spent on lifesaving humanitarian assistance. While this amount is twelve times greater than fifteen years ago, never before have levels of generosity been so insufficient.

In 2015, global leaders committed to leaving no one behind. The 2030 Agenda is a pledge of solidarity between people, societies and nations. Its promise lies in its recognition that peace, security, climate change and development are closely interlinked.

Ladies and gentlemen, unfortunately many humanitarian appeals remain unanswered. Nevertheless, the solution to violence cannot be – and is not – humanitarian aid alone. The solutions must be political: political problems require political solutions. I will touch upon four key elements:

First, addressing the root causes fuelling conflicts.

The peace and statebuilding commitments agreed upon by the International Dialogue, which Minister Lövin and Minister Pires will speak about shortly, are aimed at making international development cooperation more effective, long-term and inclusive in fragile and conflict-affected states. As we move towards the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, I endorse these commitments wholeheartedly.

Second, empowering women and girls. Acting as feminists. Sixteen years since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, we can firmly state that the promotion of gender equality is not only a matter of women's rights, but more importantly a matter of ensuring peace and security for all.

Third, making conclusive, inclusive and sustainable peace. Almost half of all peace agreements fail within five years, and fragile states are the ones most likely to relapse into conflict. This is partly the result of flawed peace processes.

A successful peace process is not only a matter of reaching a cease-fire. It is also a matter of justice, education, health, reconciliation and fair distribution of resources. No warlord can achieve this. A sustainable peace process lays the foundation for resilient institutions that promote economic, political and social emancipation for all. Peace processes therefore need to be inherently inclusive. Nothing can be discussed about women without women.

Sweden has therefore initiated a network of women peace mediators. The goal is to support women peacebuilders wherever they are and increase women's effective participation in peace processes.

Fourth, stepping up efforts. States and international and regional organisations must focus resources and increase their cooperation in support of peaceful societies.

I welcome the Secretary-General's call to development banks and regional organisations to increase cooperation, improve livelihoods and strengthen

support to fragile and conflict-affected states. Fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda must be our main task.

Ladies and gentlemen, over the next two days you will be discussing the future of peacekeeping operations, how to ensure inclusive peace processes, the complexity of violence, sustainable cities and much more. I am sure that this discussion will assist us in advancing sound policy and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Thank you and welcome.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at Sipri Conference “Nuclear Disarmament: Revisiting the Legacy of Olof Palme” 4 March 2016

Published 05 April 2016 Updated 05 April 2016

Foreign Minister Wallström’s Speech at Sipri Conference “Nuclear Disarmament: Revisiting the Legacy of Olof Palme” 4 April 2016. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to this seminar on nuclear disarmament, a commemorative event marking the 30th anniversary of Olof Palme's assassination.

I am particularly pleased that Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson will deliver the keynote speech, given his personal experience of working closely with Prime Minister Olof Palme. I would also like to extend a special welcome to all the distinguished members of the panel, and a very special thanks to the staff of SIPRI for organising this event, in particular Dan Smith and Tariq Rauf.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a committed internationalist, Olof Palme believed that Sweden – a military non-aligned country with a high degree of credibility with nations great and small – could and should play a special role as mediator and honest broker for international peace and security.

One of Olof's last speeches was in New Delhi, in January 1986. It was his Indira Gandhi Memorial Lecture. He spoke about international security and devoted a large part of his speech to the threat of nuclear war.

He spoke about the devastation caused by the bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The terrifying immediate effects and the long-term, irrevocable consequences.

He pointed out, and I quote:

"A nuclear war can hit all peoples and all States, even those who are furthest away from the theatre of war. But this also means that all peoples and all nations have a right to have a say about these weapons of mass destruction."

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have met survivors from Hiroshima. They described the horrors of the bomb and the after-effects they themselves – and generations to come – have to live with. Nuclear arms are diabolic in their range. They spread pain and suffering over space and time. They reach over vast geographic spaces and further into the future than the human mind can grasp.

Today we see with great concern how new nuclear arms are being developed and used as a threat, and that there are no ongoing nuclear arms reduction negotiations involving the two largest nuclear-weapon States despite the attempts of the Obama administration.

As Olof Palme pointed out in New Delhi: We who live in nuclear-weapon-free States, and our future, are obviously threatened by the nuclear arms race.

It is therefore our right, as well as our duty, to make firm demands for nuclear disarmament.

Building on Sweden's proud tradition as a constructive actor in nuclear disarmament, our Government has re-engaged in the international work against nuclear arms:

- We have joined the Humanitarian Initiative, and re-joined the De-alerting Group. We actively pursue new disarmament measures in the re-established Open-ended Working Group under the UNGA.
- We work tirelessly to support verification of disarmament. Sweden is co-chair of the technical cooperation project initiated by the US, together

with Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), regarding exactly this.

- Recently we announced that we will appoint a special ambassador for international disarmament efforts.
- And I have just returned from the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) in Washington DC, regarding how we can strengthen international cooperation to secure and protect nuclear materials and prevent nuclear terrorism. This is important, urgent and prioritised.

These are just a few examples. We have appointed a Swedish Delegation on International Law and Disarmament, and one of its tasks is to suggest concrete steps for further efforts for international disarmament.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In New Delhi, 30 years ago, Olof Palme stressed the importance of stopping all nuclear tests.

Ten years later, in 1996, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the CTBT, opened for signature. So far 183 countries have signed and 164 have ratified it, including three of the nuclear-weapon States: France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom. It is high time that all States that possess nuclear weapons join the Treaty and that they make good on their NPT disarmament commitments.

The existence of the CTBT, and the legacy of Olof Palme, show that change is possible, even in difficult areas such as nuclear disarmament. So now it is time for us nuclear-weapon-free States to initiate the next step. There is a need for additional international rules and tools to make all nuclear-weapon possessor States disarm. This could include a prohibition, a convention or a framework agreement on nuclear weapons.

A sustainable future for humanity and our planet cannot include nuclear arms. One day, when humanity has achieved the elimination of nuclear weapons, future generations will look back on us, and call us crazy. They will wonder how we could even permit these weapons to exist.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude, as most of you know, Sweden has put forward its candidacy for a seat in the United Nations Security Council in 2017–2018. In the disarmament field, following our successful contribution for example to the Arms Trade Treaty, we think we can play an active role in the Council's

important work.

With these words, let me once again welcome you to this event. It is now my great pleasure to give the floor to Jan Eliasson, the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, who will give the keynote speech.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Georgetown University's Institute for Women, Peace and Security

Published 01 April 2016 Updated 01 April 2016

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the Georgetown University's Institute for Women, Peace and Security in Washington, 31 March 2016.
Check against delivery!

Dear President DeGioia, Dear Ambassador Verveer, Dear Guests,

It is my great pleasure to be here today. Thank you, President DeGioia, for hosting me and for having invited such a qualified and inspiring audience. Thank you, Ambassador Verveer with co-workers, for all the work that has been put in to organise this event today. It is an honour to be addressing this audience and in particular the students present here today. You represent the future of diplomacy and I view this as an important opportunity for me to convey my thinking on sustainable peace, the link between security and development and the role of women in peace negotiations. I know Georgetown students are wicked smart so I am looking forward to (and admittedly a bit nervous about!) your questions and comments.

I truly appreciate the important work carried out at Georgetown University and Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security! And I am very happy to be able to announce today that the links between the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security are growing stronger. We have just initiated closer cooperation in order to grow the evidence base on women, peace and security, and raise

awareness about critical issues in this field. This partnership will help shape the future of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and I hope that you, as representatives of future diplomacy, will be inspired to take an instrumental role in this important work.

The pursuit of peace and progress cannot end after a few years in either victory or defeat. The pursuit of peace and progress, with its trials and its errors, its successes and its setbacks, can never be relaxed and never abandoned.

Ladies and gentlemen, with the Syrian peace talks slowly unfolding in Geneva, the words of Dag Hammarskjöld remain as relevant as ever.

All of us gathered here today are all too familiar with the horrendous human suffering in Syria. Years of conflict have forced millions from their homes and left hundreds of thousands dead or wounded. A whole generation is growing up without proper access to education, security or healthcare. Syrians have become the largest refugee population in the world.

Yet the true tragedy lies in Syria being only one of many protracted humanitarian crises. Despite the continuous decline of poverty and inspiring technological advances, we increasingly live in a time characterised by conflict, terrorism, extremism and violence.

The rules-based multilateral order that we have come to rely upon for security stands challenged by those who question the most basic principles of peace and human dignity. The fall of the Berlin wall and the promise of liberal democracies was not the end of history.

As we recently marked the second anniversary of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, I reconfirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and its sovereignty over its entire territory.

Since 2011 the number of armed conflicts has increased. New conflicts have arisen in countries such as Syria and Ukraine, while old ones in Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan and Mali have intensified.

According to the UN Refugee Agency, these worrying developments last year resulted in more than 60 million people seeking refuge from war, persecution or other forms of violence – the highest number ever. The average length of conflict-induced displacement is an astonishing 17 years. To many, displacement has become a life sentence.

Rarely before have the links between security and development been so clear. Extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated in fragile and conflict affected states.

The global community is spending around USD 25 billion a year on life-saving assistance to 125 million people devastated by wars and natural disasters. While this amount is twelve times greater than fifteen years ago, never before has generosity been so insufficient. The current humanitarian funding gap is estimated at a staggering USD 15 billion.

Ladies and gentlemen, this cannot continue. Although many humanitarian appeals remain unanswered, the issue of increasing humanitarian needs is not a humanitarian problem. It is political. We desperately need to think innovatively and boldly how to address the root causes fuelling conflict and find means to support sustainable peace.

To do this, I will today discuss three main tasks. Firstly, we need to improve the means by which we prevent conflicts from materialising in the first place. Building societal resilience must be at the core of all our efforts. Secondly, we have to more effectively end conflicts and ensure that peace is sustainable and inclusive. Thirdly, states as well as international and regional organisations must increase their efforts in support of peaceful societies. Security is built together with others – and this is an area where I still see plenty of room for improvement.

Friends, how do we more effectively prevent conflicts? How do we build inclusive social, political and economic structures that constrain the forces of violence?

In 2015, global leaders committed to leave no one behind. The 2030 Agenda is a testament to impressive political will. Its promise lies in its recognition that peace, security, climate change and development are closely interlinked.

The 125 million people in need of humanitarian assistance –equivalent to the eleventh most populous nation in the world – are those who stand at the greatest risk of being left behind. This group is increasingly concentrated in fragile states where governance is weak, where many women die giving birth, where too few children are lucky enough to live beyond their fifth birthday and where those who do, especially girls, do not attend school.

As we prepare for the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul this May, we must recognise that the most cost-effective and sustainable means of

bridging the humanitarian funding gap is to address the root causes fuelling conflicts.

Humanitarian aid can never be a permanent solution. It must be followed by long-term development assistance and efforts to strengthen institutional resilience against both man-made and natural disasters.

International assistance has to increasingly be directed towards conflict and post-conflict situations. Prevention and peacebuilding have so far been systematically underfinanced.

In the report of the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing, we highlighted the value of country configurations, local ownership, improved accountability and flexible funding, as well as a broadening of the donor base. It is vital that greater wealth is also accompanied by greater responsibility.

Sweden recently adopted a new development strategy for Syria and a new regional strategy for the Middle East and North Africa. Key components are long-term and predictable funding, but also a focus on gender equality and civil society. Research shows that gender-sensitive approaches enhance the effectiveness of peace and state building. Societies where women are economically and politically emancipated are less violent.

The empowerment of women and girls is a true example of 'smart politics'. It transcends the divide between hard and soft security and enables effective as well as sustainable peacebuilding. Sixteen years since the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, one can firmly state that the promotion of gender equality is not only a matter of women's rights, but more importantly a matter of ensuring peace and security for all.

Ladies and gentlemen, almost half of all peace agreements fail within five years. Wars are inherently difficult to end and fragile states are the ones most likely to relapse into conflict. Nine out of ten ongoing conflicts were initiated in countries that have already experienced war. This is partly a result of flawed peace processes.

Recent research, and lessons from peace processes in Colombia and the Philippines, demonstrate that women's effective participation substantially increases the likelihood of peace agreements being reached and sustained. Yet even today, in 2016, we are all too familiar with women being

dramatically under-represented in peace and mediation processes.

Last week, during the peace talks on Syria in Geneva, 24 men and just 6 women were sitting at the table. Whilst there is still room for improvement, I am pleased that women played a more prominent role than before. Sweden has supported the opposition's women's advisory committee, which was effective and visible in Geneva and managed to obtain a commitment from the opposition of a 30 per cent quota for women in future governing structures.

A successful peace process is not only a matter of reaching a cease-fire. It is also a matter of justice, education, health, reconciliation and fair distribution of resources.

Peace processes therefore inherently need to be inclusive. Women must actively participate in all decision-making processes at all levels and be active in defining priorities and resource allocation, in times of peace and in times of war. To put it simply: More Women – More Peace. Nothing can be discussed about women, without women.

Wherever I have travelled in the world, from Ukraine to Colombia to DR Congo, I have met brave women who strive to de-escalate violence and promote initiatives for peace, often in very dangerous environments where the personal risks are extreme. The work of these women is commendable and deserves our full support and long-term commitment.

With the resumed talks on the Syrian crisis in Geneva, we have therefore taken steps to not only support Staffan de Mistura and the participation of civil society, but to also support the inclusion of women peacebuilders at the talks.

As part of my Government's broader Feminist Foreign Policy, we have also initiated a Swedish network of women peace mediators and are simultaneously taking part in the development of a Nordic women's mediator network. The goal of this process is not only to strengthen our national capabilities, but more importantly to cut across traditional divides and create cooperative networks with international women mediation teams from across the globe.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, security is built together with others. With several protracted conflicts, the continued scourge of terrorism, systematic sexual violence and the largest refugee crisis in modern history, it is clear

that the international order has not succeeded in its core task to ensure peace and security for all.

For too long the UN Security Council was unable to agree upon a roadmap towards peace in Syria. Despite early warnings, the international system has still not adequately responded to developments in Burundi. Yet at the same time, persistent and patient negotiations between EU3+3 and Iran successfully resulted in an agreement on the nuclear issue. Both the successes and failures of recent times demonstrate the primacy of politics and the importance of multilateralism.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to re-commit to international standards and norms. I call for a new global Compact for Peace. 2015 was an important year for global governance with worldwide agreements on disaster risk reduction, development financing, the 2030 Agenda and climate change – now is the time to allocate resources and shift the focus to implementation.

As the UN is reviewing its peace and security agenda, it is crucial that it assumes its leading role in ensuring international policy coherence for peace and security. I therefore welcome the Secretary General's call to development banks and regional organisations to increase cooperation, improve livelihoods and strengthen support to fragile and conflict-affected states. Fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda must be our main task.

Similarly, mediation must be recognised as the real weapon for peace. Although both the Security Council and the General Assembly have committed to strengthen the UN's mediation capacity, this has somehow not translated into action. Reform of the Security Council is long overdue. The world is in dire need of a more vigorous Council that fulfils its mandate as the ultimate guarantee for international peace and security.

A more capable UN is also a UN working in tandem with regional organisations. We need to promote processes that strengthen regional interdependence and constrain the forces of violence. I therefore welcome close cooperation between the UN, the EU and the African Union, as well as other regional or sub-regional organisations that might be the first to sense and understand early warning signals before conflicts.

It is necessary that the World Humanitarian Summit in May results in a global commitment to address root causes fuelling conflicts. Both short and long-term aid must contribute to strengthened resilience. Regional organisations and development banks all have important roles in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen, shifting resources to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, committing to inclusive peace processes and investing necessary political capital in international cooperation for peace is ultimately a matter of political will and proactive leadership. As Dag Hammarskjöld rightly pointed out, the pursuit of peace and progress cannot end in a few years in either victory or defeat.

If we are to prevent new conflicts from arising and effectively end ongoing wars, we need to redouble our efforts to promote peaceful and secure societies for all. It is precisely at times like these – times of crisis and unrest – that we must not hesitate, but instead be persistent in our efforts. Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs 2016

Published 24 February 2016 Updated 24 February 2016

Presented by Mrs Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs, Wednesday, 24 February 2016.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In these times of both hope and despair, Sweden's foreign policy must be active, fearless and constructive. With broad cooperation and diplomacy in our sights, we must affirm and build on the new and historic advances in international cooperation such as the Paris Agreement on climate change, and the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

But at a time when our world is characterised by aggression and division, we must also tackle the challenges. The war in Syria has been going on for five years. Over 125 million people around the globe are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance due to war, famine and poverty. If they were gathered in a single country, that country would be the eleventh largest in the world.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well, and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. It requires an active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy combined with credible national defence capabilities.

Threats to peace and to our security are best averted collectively and in cooperation with other countries and organisations. Sweden's foreign and security policy builds on cohesion in the EU, and on increased cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic region and the Baltic Sea region, together with Finland; in the UN and the OSCE; with NATO; and via a strengthened transatlantic link. Dialogue and confidence-building measures are important instruments to create stability and ease tensions.

Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. Our country must therefore be in a position to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military.

The defence policy agreement concluded last year is highly significant. It shows the broad political consensus on the need to strengthen our national defence capabilities.

The defining issue of our time – climate change – constitutes a global security threat. Climate change is a catalyst for war, conflicts and poverty. Sweden will vigorously tackle the tasks contained in the global climate agreement, with a view to achieving the goal of keeping global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius and seeking to restrict it to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

We are adapting the work of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to a broader view of security. Terrorism, climate change, migration, pandemics and human smuggling are foreign and security policy challenges. Migration issues in particular will demand a great deal of work in both the short and long term. At the Ministry for Foreign Affairs we are reinforcing efforts focusing on European security, the UN and global issues. We are also strengthening our organisation abroad. We are in the process of opening a Consulate-General in New York and embassies on three continents. The Government is working on a national security strategy.

The situation in the world calls for a feminist foreign policy that aims to strengthen women's rights, representation and access to resources. In 2015, Sweden helped ensure that the EU appointed a Principal Advisor on Gender, and that a network of women mediators was formed. We will continue our work to involve women in peace processes, in accordance with our action plan. By involving women in the Syrian peace talks, we can help ensure a more sustainable society.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The EU is Sweden's most important political arena. This year, a new EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy will be prepared. Sweden was one of the initiators of the strategy, and we are strongly engaged in the work. One important aspect involves developing the EU's external crisis management capabilities.

The Government will maintain its support for peace, democracy and economic development in Europe's neighbourhood. The European security order must be safeguarded.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and military presence in eastern Ukraine constitute flagrant breaches of international law. This is the greatest challenge to the European security order since the end of the Cold War. The sanctions against Russia must remain in place until the terms of the Minsk agreements are met. Ukraine must be allowed to regain control over its internationally recognised borders. It is important to help ensure a strong, democratic and stable Ukraine. Sweden supports the Ukrainian Government's reform work both bilaterally and through the EU.

Effective cooperation within the European Union is a prerequisite for peace and prosperity. We need a stronger EU that can continue to stand up for fundamental common values and principles, not least in our European neighbourhood. Internal divisions must be counteracted. It is crucial that the United Kingdom remain in the EU. The agreement struck between the EU heads of state and government paves the way for this. The Government is working to secure a social Europe where growth, a high standard of living and decent working conditions reinforce one another.

The EU needs a new migration system based on shared responsibility and international commitments, with respect for the right of asylum. This is possible if all 28 Member States take their share of responsibility, and if cooperation is improved. With 60 million displaced people, we cannot countenance a situation in which some countries buy blankets while others invest in barbed wire. Our EU policy and foreign policy have an important role to play in resolving these difficult issues.

Sweden will continue to stand up for peace and freedom in Europe, just as we did following the terrorist attacks in Paris last autumn. We were among the first to respond to France's request, and Sweden's support was among the largest. France has welcomed our contribution.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The Government welcomes the UN efforts to reach an agreement on the Cyprus issue. A solution would strengthen the UN's authority and the EU's ability to manage the challenges in its neighbourhood. Sweden has taken a unique initiative for cooperation between Cyprus's religious leaders, who have an important role to play in the reconciliation process.

Sweden is a driving force for the EU's Eastern Partnership. A strong neighbourhood and enlargement policy remains one of the EU's most strategic instruments for promoting peace and prosperity. Keeping the door open to EU membership fosters important reform processes, including in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The escalation of violence and the human rights situation in Turkey are alarming. Fighting between the Turkish Government and the PKK has intensified. Civilians, particularly Kurds, are being hit hard by violence and curfews. The escalating violence is an obstacle to peace and development not just in Turkey but in the entire region. Sweden is conducting a dialogue with both the country's government and the opposition. It is vital that Turkey and the EU are able to demonstrate tangible progress on the implementation of the joint action plan on migration.

The unimaginable human suffering in Syria is a disaster and a serious threat to the security of the entire region. Half the Syrian population is displaced within or outside the country. The bombing raids on the opposition by the Assad regime and Russia are unacceptable and threaten the fragile peace process. They must cease. All parties must now accept the agreement on cessation of hostilities that has been reached. Through the new Swedish strategy for the Syria crisis encompassing SEK 1.7 billion, we are working to enable people in Syria and its neighbouring countries to support themselves and get an education. We are also increasing our humanitarian support to the country.

We are part of the core group of the coalition against Daesh and are contributing a Swedish armed force to train Iraqi security forces, particularly Kurdish Peshmerga forces. Sweden is working in the EU for a long-term stabilisation mission in Iraq. We are supporting the reconstruction of the country, including by providing support to the areas liberated from Daesh.

Fear and desperation are spreading throughout the Middle East. We must offer hope for the future to young people in both Israel and Palestine. Sweden's recognition of Palestine aims to create momentum for the two-state solution. Renewed international efforts are needed. Sweden welcomes the

French initiative to convene an international peace conference. The objective is to ensure that both Israel and Palestine are able to live in peace and security within mutually agreed borders.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

In North Africa, the Government is providing increased support to the UN process concerning Western Sahara, with the aim of finding a fair, mutually accepted solution to the conflict that satisfies the right of the Western Saharan people to self-determination.

Sweden will continue to support and draw attention to the democratic forces in the region. We will open an embassy in Tunisia in June.

Sweden's ties to the countries in Africa are historically strong. These are now being further strengthened and we are working together in areas such as the economy, education and culture. Cooperation between the Swedish business sector and the growing economies on the continent is increasing.

The African Union is assuming an increasing share of the responsibility for peace and security. Sweden is supporting this process, both politically and financially. The focus of Sweden's commitment to security and development is mainly on the Horn of Africa, Liberia, Mali and the Great Lakes region. Sweden's contribution of personnel to the UN operation in Mali is appreciated.

The continued strong and dynamic economic development in Asia offers major opportunities. The Government is deepening cooperation with India, the world's largest democracy. We are opening an embassy in the Philippines. Contacts between China and Sweden are increasing. China's role in the international arena is growing. Along with this comes responsibility. The Government is continuing its candid dialogue with China on human rights.

Sweden will maintain its civilian and military involvement in Afghanistan. The Government is also strengthening cooperation with Afghanistan on migration issues.

The United States is an important partner for Sweden and we are developing and deepening our already broad cooperation with the country.

We offer extensive support to developing countries for adaptation to a more extreme climate and to sustainable technology. We are strengthening our

relations with the Caribbean nations which, like other small island states, are particularly vulnerable to climate change. During the year, the Government will adopt a regional aid strategy for Asia, including the Pacific nations, with a special focus on climate change.

In addition to our strategic partnership with Brazil, we are deepening our relations with a number of countries in Latin America, such as Chile, Colombia and Peru, where a new embassy will be opened. An action plan for our work with Latin America is being drafted.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Sweden's many years' experience of peace, gender equality and international solidarity have generated a curiosity about our country and what we stand for. The Swedish model attracts interest around the world.

A strong image of Sweden, highlighting culture and values, is important for our long-term relations with other countries. Promotion of exports, imports and investment in Sweden, in close cooperation with the business community, is an integral part of foreign policy and the responsibility of the entire Government.

The Government's export strategy helps strengthen opportunities for Swedish companies in the international market and increase the number of exporting companies. This helps create more Swedish jobs. Two thirds of Sweden's foreign trade goes to other countries in the EU. An effective internal market in the EU is therefore of the utmost importance.

Sweden's economic exchange with the rest of the world and long tradition of free trade has contributed to our prosperity. Free trade between countries lays the long-term foundations for peace and democracy. Consequently, we are opposed to protectionist tendencies in the EU and other G20 countries, particularly measures that affect developing countries.

Sweden is striving to reach a political deal this year in the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership between the EU and the US. An agreement will be of major importance for growth and jobs and will strengthen the transatlantic link. Respect for people and the environment must be factored into the agreement.

Sweden must be a model for free and fair trade. Corporate social responsibility is a part of this.

In these difficult times, we are one of few countries around the world to succeed in maintaining a generous level of quality aid. We achieve the one per cent target, which remains unchanged. In the course of this year, the Government will present the Riksdag with a new policy framework for Swedish development cooperation.

Our development cooperation is an expression of Sweden's conviction that prosperity around the world must be shared. Looking ahead to the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May, we are working for a stronger humanitarian system, with special focus on women's rights and influence. I am a member of Ban Ki-Moon's High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing, which has presented innovative proposals on how to meet the world's humanitarian needs.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

In a time of global threats, global cooperation is needed. Last year, world leaders reached agreement on the 2030 Agenda and its global development goals, and a new climate agreement. The UN is navigating through very difficult terrain, but progress is being made. The UN is the world's most important platform for international peace and security.

Sweden is an active member of the UN and a critical friend. Our engagement makes a difference and is sought after.

Sweden is pushing for a stronger link between development and peace, an increased focus on conflict prevention and a stronger role for women in peace processes. The Government is also making a long-term commitment to mediation.

This is the basis on which Sweden is now campaigning for a seat on the Security Council. We can provide knowledge, not least of our own neighbourhood. The Security Council must take greater responsibility for peace and security. We want to safeguard international law and limit the use of the veto. The Council must be reformed to better reflect the world of today.

We see with concern that the world's existing nuclear weapons arsenals are being retained and that new weapons are being developed. North Korea's nuclear test earlier this year underscores the necessity of international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

On the other hand, the nuclear deal with Iran shows that it is possible to make progress in the area of non-proliferation.

Sweden is active in the UN, the international Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation and other multilateral projects such as the Humanitarian Initiative. The Government has taken part in the preparatory work ahead of the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington this spring on enhanced efforts against nuclear terrorism.

The Government will appoint a special ambassador for international disarmament efforts.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Respect for international law is fundamental. The Charter of the United Nations confirms the principles of territorial integrity. Genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious international abuses and violations must be prevented and punished.

Journalists have become targets in armed conflicts around the world. Last year, more than one hundred journalists were killed, and far too many are in prison. This year, which marks the 250th anniversary of the Swedish Freedom of the Press Act, we are supporting imprisoned journalists and human rights activists and working for free media and strong civil societies.

Today, working conditions are a European and global issue. The Global Deal is the Prime Minister's international initiative in cooperation with the ILO, the OECD and others for improved social dialogue between employers and employees, aimed at creating better jobs, greater equality and increased productivity.

Safeguarding every individual's right to protection against discrimination is our common responsibility. This includes anti-racism and action against forms of intolerance such as anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Afrophobia and anti-Ziganism. Sweden is a global voice for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and for the rights of each individual regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Human rights, democracy and the rule of law are fundamental and the Government will therefore present a communication to the Riksdag on this subject, and will appoint a special human rights ambassador.

Support to Swedes who are in emergency or crisis situations abroad is always

a priority activity of the Foreign Service. We take care of consular matters 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The Charter of the United Nations asserts that it is "we, the peoples of the united nations" who are determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

This means that the responsibility belongs to all of us. We who make up the Swedish Government. The diplomats in the gallery. Members of the Riksdag who are preparing their statements. Those of you listening on the radio.

And it is also "we, the peoples of the united nations" who are determined to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights.

Time is of the essence.

But the global progress being made alongside the scourge of war reminds us of the power generated when we work together.

The Government will continue to shoulder its responsibility to help maintain international peace and security – in political consensus and with popular support.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Sherpa Meeting V, 16 February

Published 17 February 2016 Updated 17 February 2016

(Check against delivery)

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to Stockholm.

I am particularly pleased to be hosting the dinner here at the Vasa Museum – an opportunity for us as hosts to give you a glimpse into Swedish history. Sitting here next to the majestic royal warship Vasa, one cannot overlook the fact that throughout its history, Sweden has been a nation that has fought many wars. Swedish history from the 17th century to the present day can be summed up in three words: war, peace and progress. In 2014 we marked a milestone in Swedish history, as we celebrated 200 years of unbroken peace.

When King Gustav II Adolf commissioned the Vasa in 1625, he wanted it to be the most powerful warship in the world, a 'weapon of mass destruction' of its time. When we talk about the Vasa as a great warship, we often hear the question "Really?". Yes it did not get very far, and yes it was blown over by a light breeze. But for the record, many lessons were learned and the innovative craftsmanship did ultimately result in two-decker warships that sailed the world during the latter part of the 17th century, and throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

But on a more serious note, you have all gathered here in Stockholm to prepare for the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington. Our countries will continue to discuss, at the highest level, how to make our world safer – this is history in the making.

Sweden is strongly committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. And these weapons must never be used again. A terrorist acquiring such a weapon would be a nightmare. As stated by President Obama in his historic Prague speech in April 2009, securing all vulnerable nuclear material must be an immediate priority.

Over the past decades, Sweden has worked continuously to improve nuclear security and safety at home, as well as in our neighbourhood. This cooperation began as long ago as the early 1990s, with Lithuania. And we have subsequently continued, notably through cooperation with Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Estonia, Latvia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. We have emphasised the importance of international cooperation, transparency and active information-sharing to build confidence in the effectiveness of nuclear security and other non-proliferation measures.

For Sweden, it is important to make sure that all nuclear and radioactive materials are covered by security efforts – highly enriched uranium and separated plutonium, civilian and military material.

Much has been achieved since the first summit in Washington in 2010. But there is still work to be done. It is crucial that we uphold our strong commitment to improving nuclear security and to creating additional barriers to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and material. Political leaders and experts alike must make sure that the Nuclear Security Summit process maintains its legitimacy and results in lasting, concrete progress.

I wish you every success with your deliberations over the next few days. Your efforts are of the utmost importance to international peace and security.

Contributing to multilateral efforts to maintain international peace and security is in the DNA of Sweden. Sweden therefore stands ready to serve on the Security Council for the period 2017–2018.

Let me also take the opportunity to thank the US Government, in particular the US Sherpa Laura Holgate and her team, for their leadership, dedication and hard work.

And I would like to conclude by saying that I look forward to participate in the Summit in Washington next month.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Margot Wallström at the Meeting of the Small Group of the Global Coalition against Daesh

Published 02 February 2016 Updated 02 February 2016

Meeting of the Small Group of the Global Coalition against Daesh, Rome, 2 February 2016. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking Italy for hosting this important meeting and the United States for its leadership in countering Daesh.

Dear Colleagues,

Our starting point must be a human one – how to end the suffering of men, women and children. The situation in the city of Madaya makes clear what must be our absolute focus: to do all we can to alleviate the suffering of the people. There must be an end to the indiscriminate attacks on civilians and humanitarian access must be granted.

More needs to be done to meet the immense humanitarian needs in the region.

Sweden has received more than 130 000 Syrian asylum seekers since 2011, and over 20 000 from Iraq in the past year alone. We can only imagine the pain of having no choice but to leave your home in order to save yourself and your family.

Since 2011, Sweden has provided more than USD 350 million in humanitarian aid to Iraq and Syria.

Today, I am announcing an additional USD 12 million in humanitarian support to Iraq, to complement our recent USD 4 million contribution to the UNDP Stabilisation Fund and our military training component in northern Iraq.

In Syria, Sweden has provided USD 8.4 million to the Syria Recovery Trust Fund to be used for the stabilisation efforts in Syria.

This year, Sweden is significantly stepping up aid to alleviate the Syria crisis. At the upcoming donors conference in London, my Prime Minister will announce Sweden's new strategy for the Syria crisis to bridge the gap between humanitarian aid and long-term development. The strategy takes a unique, innovative, regional, five-year approach to the Syria crisis.

Dear Colleagues,

We all know that a political solution must be found to the conflicts.

Durable solutions need to rest on political settlements.

The role of the UN is key.

We are at a crucial stage for the political process for Syria. Yet events on the ground continue to undermine diplomatic efforts.

In Iraq, military and stabilisation efforts must be underpinned by an inclusive political process of national reconciliation, and Prime Minister al-Abadi has taken bold steps in this direction.

In Libya, too, a political solution is critical to ending the conflict and the expansion of extremist movements.

It is clear that our actions in the Coalition must be complemented by intensified efforts on the political track for Syria and for more inclusive governance in Iraq.

I commend the efforts to date by the Coalition in its mission to fight Daesh and provide long-term stability to the region. Sweden's commitment is long-term.

But what more needs to be done?

I would like to raise three points where I believe we should have a more in-

depth discussion and act more forcefully.

1) Firstly: What more can we do to counter the financing of Daesh? Funding is critical to its activities. We already know that Daesh is financing its barbarity through bank looting, extortion, control of oil fields and refineries, theft of economic assets and trafficking. We must push for immediate action, through the UN Security Council, the European Union and through cooperation in this Coalition, and other international forums, to stop Daesh's sources of financing.

2) Secondly: What more can we do to counter extremist propaganda?

3) Thirdly: What more can we do to ensure that women are included in the political processes and peace negotiations? In order to secure peace, women and men must be included in efforts to rebuild society. Sweden is facilitating the participation of Syrian women in the talks in Geneva and we are currently providing support to the women negotiators through training in negotiations and external communication.

Mr Prime Minister, Colleagues,

Civilian and military efforts must go hand-in-hand. Military means alone will not give us a solution. Sweden welcomes the proposal to enhance civilian-military cooperation in the Coalition.

As areas are liberated from Daesh, we should consider strengthening civilian and stabilisation capacities to foster four important Rs: resilience, returns, reconciliation and reforms. Sweden believes that the EU – through our long-term perspective on stabilisation – could play a greater role by making use of its crisis management and other tools.

Before ending, I would like to stress that Sweden is concerned by the recent reports on forced displacement and deliberate destruction of civilian homes and property by security forces on the ground. As military contributors to the fight against Daesh, we have a joint responsibility to ensure that such support does not contribute to violations of international humanitarian law and human rights.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the Folk och Försvar Annual National Conference

Published 13 January 2016 Updated 13 January 2016

Check against delivery.

Mr President, honoured current and former ambassadors, participants, congratulations to Folk och Försvar for 70 years of successful discussion and debate.

For a country like ours, foreign policy is, in many ways, the primary line of defence. By means of an active foreign policy – including cooperation, diplomacy, military operations and confidence-building measures – we contribute to security, together with others.

On Thursday, I came home from a trip to Mali. The Minister for Defence and I met the 250 Swedes on the ground there who are helping with security and protection for the civilian population. It is our largest contribution of troops to an ongoing UN mission, MINUSMA, and is in line with Sweden's commitment to peace and development in Africa.

It consists of an intelligence company and is greatly appreciated. We have sent these men and women into harm's way, to a country with major security, political and environmental challenges.

Mali is a difficult country to govern: it has huge desert areas in the north that are sparsely populated but with important smuggling routes. Ethnic tensions, corruption, internal instability and increasing terrorism, as well as non-existent infrastructure, make implementing last year's peace agreement difficult.

Timbuktu, the city we visited, was poor, sandy and full of litter. There were plastic bags in every tree and bush. The city is largely abandoned since the jihadists took over in 2012. But you can perceive the beauty and charm in the old buildings, including the 14th century mosque.

The link between development and peace is clear – it is vital that people in northern Mali gain access to both security and social services. And the peace agreement must be implemented in an inclusive manner, with women actively participating, with young people and marginalised groups given a voice so as to make reconciliation possible. MINUSMA plays a very important role in implementation of the peace agreement. Our support to the mission and to developments in Mali must be long term.

Mali is both far away and close at hand. If the peace operations fail, the Sahel region will be affected, as will Africa as a whole and also Europe. There is a risk that terrorism will spread and the refugee situation worsen. We must make use of both military and civilian tools. A long-term, stable solution naturally requires social and economic development.

We are currently reviewing how we can increase Swedish support to MINUSMA and the EU training mission EUTM, which we also had the chance to visit, as part of our response to France following the terrorist attacks in Paris. Sweden was one of the first Member States to respond to France, and some EU countries have still not responded. The support provided by Sweden is among the largest. The military components consist of strategic air transport, tactical air transport, support to crisis management operations and support in the form of military equipment, which is now being processed under a separate decision procedure. The support we are offering is requested, conforms with international law and is fit-for-purpose. France has welcomed our contribution.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen, here in Europe we see increasing concern. Social, economic and political. There are forces acting to tear Europe apart and weaken it. One example of this is the public debate in the UK ahead of the upcoming referendum. Our fundamental democratic values are being challenged by reforms that limit freedom of expression, as in Hungary and Poland.

The success or failure of European integration has direct bearing on the future of our country. As Angela Merkel is fond of saying, "We are united in

Europe – which is fortunate for us." We need a more effective and unified EU, characterised by solidarity.

EU's internal crisis management capacity has stagnated. We must reverse this trend. We must give new impetus to the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy. The global strategy – initiated and promoted by Sweden and expected to be adopted by the European Council in June – comprises an important contribution. Sweden's Government wants to see the EU do more to support Iraq with long-term stabilisation measures in the areas liberated from Daesh. For example, this might involve strengthening the judicial system, implementing democratic reforms or expanding the infrastructure. Europe is both a goal and a means. A united Europe is needed to promote peace and security. We see this in Ukraine.

We must not forget that an armed conflict is taking place there. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and military presence in eastern Ukraine remain flagrant breaches of the UN Charter and international law. And this represents the greatest challenge to our European security order since the end of the Cold War.

Ukraine must regain control of its territory. The Ukrainian government has conducted intensive reform efforts which have involved difficult decisions. At the same time, Russia has done far too little: Russian troops continue to operate in eastern Ukraine and the OSCE does not have access to separatist-controlled areas. In addition, we see increasingly aggressive propaganda in our region. We therefore support free and independent media in the Baltic countries, Ukraine and in the Eastern Partnership countries. Via the Swedish Institute and the Nordic Council of Ministers, we have supported the new independent Russian-language public service station in Estonia. Disinformation and outright lies must not go unchallenged.

In Europe's southern neighbourhood, not least in the Middle East, violence is raging and human suffering is extensive. I'm not sure that it's even possible to understand all the pain caused by the violence. All the hunger, all the rapes, all the distress and panic. More than a quarter of a million people have been killed in Syria. Half the Syrian population is displaced within or outside the country.

There is a risk that the deterioration of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia will obstruct the peace talks. What is needed is dialogue rather than confrontation. Russian involvement in Syria is a complicating factor and the daily Syrian and Russian aerial bombings of non-Daesh areas must cease. I

will soon invite Syrian women to Stockholm to give more of them a voice in the peace negotiations. As in Mali, there cannot be a sustainable peace process if half the population is excluded.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

Political dialogue and diplomacy, trade and international development cooperation are necessary components of Sweden's contribution to a more secure world. This is how true security, in the broadest sense of the term, is built. It is based on the realisation that security only exists if it is mutual – and not diametrically opposed to something else.

We work actively in the OSCE for arms controls, human rights, the rule of law and democracy. We support the OSCE's three independent institutions, all conflict prevention instruments and, since 2014, we have provided targeted support to the OSCE's practical measures in and around Ukraine. Twenty-five Swedes are serving in the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine – SMM – and we provide more than SEK 33 million to the budget.

In a time of global threats, global cooperation is needed. The UN is navigating through very difficult terrain, but progress is being made. Two examples of this are the most recent Security Council resolution on Syria and MINUSMA's mandate. The Government has raised Sweden's profile in the UN, not least through its candidacy to the Security Council for 2017–2018. We want to increase opportunities to act for security in our region and around the world, and to play a constructive role in the organisation. The following are some of the reasons why we are campaigning for a seat on the Security Council:

- Firstly, because ultimately our candidacy is a matter of Sweden's voice in multilateral cooperation. It is a mainstay of our foreign policy. The Security Council is the epicentre of international politics and the only UN body whose decisions are legally binding for all member states.

- Secondly, because Sweden is the sixth largest donor to the UN and a strong voice for global peace and development, as well as for UN reform.

- Thirdly, because a non-permanent member of the Security Council has, for two years, the opportunity to pursue and influence issues, and to contribute to the Security Council taking action where needed. The Security Council

carries out vital activities for peace, including management of the 16 ongoing crisis management operations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place.

As Prime Minister Löfven jointly writes today with his Finnish colleague Prime Minister Sipilä: both Finland and Sweden are outside military alliances. We believe that non-participation serves us well and is an experience to also take into account when we assess current challenges. It contributes to stability and security in northern Europe as a whole.

We stand united in the struggle for respect for international law and for every country's right to make its own security policy choices. We do not believe in abrupt shifts in security policy. Capriciousness and sudden changes are particularly poorly suited to issues that concern our countries' security.

Tensions in our region have increased. We have a difficult parliamentary situation. That gives us all the more reason to act sensibly – to act in a way that is responsible, takes a long-term view and enjoys broad support. Swedish membership of NATO would not help ease tensions.

Non-participation in military alliances rests on two cornerstones: cooperation and a credible national defence capability of our own. The Government is committed to both. I have given some examples of cooperation and as you know, the Swedish defence capabilities are now being considerably strengthened. This must include sustainable provision of personnel. I am among those who would welcome the reintroduction of a modernised, gender-equal version of national service, with both military and civilian components. This is important for reasons of security as well as for cohesion in our country. Imagine if, last autumn, we had had civilians prepared to be called in to help the Swedish Migration Agency, assist at asylum centres or to act as guides.

Based on a broad security analysis, we are now adapting work of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Government Offices:

- Migration, terrorism, climate and pandemics are major foreign and security policy issues. This will also be reflected in the MFA's organisation.
- At the same time, we are reinforcing efforts that focus on European security, our immediate vicinity, the UN and global issues.

- We are also reviewing our security policy analytical capabilities.
- In addition, work is also continuing on the national security strategy that the Prime Minister initiated last year. Those now calling for an expanded Defence Commission were invited to take part in the work on this new strategy last August. They declined. We appreciate that they have now realised the importance of this.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Active efforts for international nuclear disarmament are part of the Swedish security policy. This is constantly relevant, in the last few days on account of the North Korean nuclear test.

We view with concern how the world's existing nuclear weapons arsenals are retained and new weapons developed. Being led into a new arms race does not benefit Sweden or global security. The total impact of nuclear weapons affects us all. The doctrine of mutual annihilation undermines confidence and cooperation. The future cannot be built on fear; a sustainable peace cannot be built with nuclear weapons.

Sweden is working patiently to promote confidence and risk-reduction between the nuclear powers. We act within the UN for initiatives that promote nuclear disarmament. We contribute to technical cooperation to detect nuclear explosions and verify nuclear disarmament. The Swedish Defence Research Agency, FOI, together with the international Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organisation, CTBTO, plays an important role, including earlier in the week in identifying the North Korean nuclear explosion. In all these ways, we promote our own security and contribute to a more secure world.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

We truly live in an age of paradoxes:

World leaders met numerous times last year and agreed on impressive global sustainability goals, an ambitious climate agreement and important financing for development. At the same time the world has not seen such refugee flows since the Second World War, and in Europe we are finding it difficult to address the problem in a coordinated manner. Wars and conflicts, many fuelled by religion and identity, are plaguing mankind.

Last year, six billion of the more than seven billion people in the world had access to mobile phones. Information technology is spreading rapidly. At the same time we see how propaganda is increasing, how lies and rumours are confused with the truth and facts, and how free speech is constantly threatened.

Much is said about the increased number of conflicts around the world and vulnerable civilian populations. At the same time we see how countries that were previously ridden by conflict and ravaged by war rise up, and democratic elections are held in an increasing number of countries.

So it is a challenging time for Swedish foreign and security policy. With the situation around the world so serious, it is more important than ever to let our values form our political backbone. Swedish foreign policy must contain a combination of continuity and the ambition to make a difference.

Democracy and the fight for human rights always challenge strong interests. There are those who say that criticising punishing a young man for his blog, or acting to make two parties in a conflict less unequal, is undiplomatic. But modern diplomacy is not about being nice to everyone. This criticism shows that I belong to that group that still believes that politics is a tool for those of us who wish to bring about change.

* * *

Dear friends,

I wish to say this to all Swedes: the overall interests of this Government are peace and security.

Sweden is a country at peace. We will remain so. And we will help ensure that other countries can also enjoy peace. Just as we do under the UN flag, for both security and development, for example in Mali.

There are many Swedes who get up each morning and, through their profession and commitment, take part in Sweden's contribution to making a more secure world, and so also to Sweden's security. There are Swedes who stay up all night for this purpose. All of you here know this. This includes health care staff, soldiers, engineers, police officers, peace workers, diplomats, volunteers and many more. Mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters who work hard to make the world – and Sweden – more secure. In the interests of the entire nation.

Thank you for your interest and your kind attention.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Reply to interpellation 2015/16:258 by Jan Björklund (Liberal Party)

Published 12 January 2016 Updated 12 January 2016

Statement in the Riksdag 12 January 2016 in reply to interpellation 2015/16:258 by Jan Björklund (Liberal Party).

Mr/Madam Speaker

Jan Björklund has asked me which extrajudicial executions I was alluding to in the debate in the Chamber on 4 December 2015.

The interpellation debate on 4 December 2015 took place against the background of the developments in the two preceding months, which were characterised by violence of a type and intensity not seen in ten years in Israel and on the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. To repeat what I said in my interpellation reply: during these two months, 21 Israelis and 100 Palestinians were killed in connection with knife attacks, acts of violence, demonstrations and clashes. In October alone, 115 Israelis and 7 392 Palestinians were injured, approximately 5 000 of whom were injured in tear gas attacks.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein issued a statement already on 28 October where he indicated that the Israeli response has been reported as being disproportionate to the extent that extrajudicial killing could be strongly suspected. Human rights organisations and international law experts have also expressed similar fears. It is essential that thorough and credible investigations be conducted concerning these deaths with the aim of providing clarity and bringing about possible accountability.

I have, likewise, warned of the implications of disproportionate use of force. As I have made it clear previously in a number of contexts, including on 6 December in a joint statement with the Prime Minister, in that particular debate in the Chamber, I was making an argument based on principles of international law concerning the right of self-defence and the importance of the principles of proportionality and distinction. In this context, as on many other occasions last autumn, I was very clear in condemning the acts of violence carried out by Palestinians against Israelis.

The use of violence – also during occupation – is strictly regulated in international law. All those involved should do their utmost to avoid the use of disproportionate violence. The current situation is untenable. The violence must stop.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at a seminar on the EU integration of the Western Balkans

Published 18 December 2015 Updated 18 December 2015

Europahuset, Stockholm, 18 December 2015. "EU integration of the Western Balkans: Mission to be accomplished". Check against delivery.

Ministers, Ambassadors, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Warmly welcome to Stockholm and to this important discussion on the EU integration of the Western Balkans.

Sweden has always been a strong proponent of deepened democratic and economic reform through EU enlargement.

This line enjoys wide parliamentary and public support.

My late colleague and dear friend Anna Lindh was, as Swedish Foreign Minister, guided by the insight that enlargement matters. She once said:

"Enlargement will add political weight to the Union.

Enlargement will add cultural richness and diversity.

On enlargement, the European Union will not become less European, it will become more European."

In highlighting that enlargement makes the EU more European, this definition reminds us of the important cultural contributions of the countries of the Western Balkans.

Today, the diaspora in Sweden of people born in your countries is significant, roughly 160 000 people.

They have integrated successfully into Swedish society, bringing the Balkans closer to Sweden and Sweden closer to the Balkans.

This also proves an understanding of Europe as defined by cooperation rather than by conflict.

And perhaps most fundamentally, as defined by values.

Sweden's enlargement policy is based on Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union.

Any European State which respects the values referred to in Article 2 of the Treaty and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union.

Let me read these fundamental values in Article 2 to you all: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

* * *

During its EU presidency in 2001, Sweden played an important role in resolving the conflict in Macedonia.

The successful experiences in Macedonia, but also the failure of common action in Bosnia and Herzegovina, were important impulses for the creation of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Insights and lessons learned also showed that the only way to achieve peace and development in the Balkans was by giving unequivocal support to the European perspective for the Western Balkan countries.

This was later acknowledged in the Thessaloniki Agenda in 2003.

Croatia joined the Union in 2013.

Now, many of us are restless to make more progress in the Union.

At the same time, enlargement has always been controversial.

In 1989, Europe was divided.

When Sweden became a member of the EU twenty years ago, the issue of membership of the Baltic States and the states in Eastern Europe was not at all given.

The power of transformation in Eastern Europe came from the citizens' will to live in peaceful and democratic societies, a force that was channelled via the EU enlargement process.

Let this achievement remind us that the historic mission to bring stability, democracy and prosperity to the continent is not yet finished and must continue in the Western Balkans.

My vision is the following:

The question of EU membership for the Western Balkans twenty years from now will be as self-evident as it is for the Baltic States and Poland today.

* * *

Everyone in this room – Member States, Commission and enlargement countries – has key tasks and responsibilities in advancing and fulfilling the integration process in Europe.

The refugee crisis reminds us that the Western Balkans cannot be isolated from Europe.

It also reminds us that the EU process with these countries has proved to be central in addressing challenges related to the Western Balkan refugee route.

However, we must not be complacent, or confuse political stagnation with stability.

Only through dynamic EU integration processes can we build lasting stability.

Commitment needs to be shown by all EU Member States.

This commitment must bring all enlargement countries into meaningful processes towards EU integration during this Commission's mandate.

Individual Member States cannot use bilateral issues to block progress.

The pace of progress on EU integration should be based solely on the merits of reforms and EU alignment.

This is how we guarantee the credibility of a process that has been so successful thus far.

Strict, but fair conditionality.

The EU Commission is the key driver of the process.

We need engagement, commitment and leadership on a high political level, with accompanying resources.

Commissioner Hahn's work in Macedonia recently has shown just how important EU engagement is for the region.

However, and most importantly:

The enlargement countries, on their part, also need to show stronger determination in addressing the key challenges they face.

Just as rule of law, fundamental rights and economic development are at the heart of the Union itself, it is natural that they are now also central to your countries' accession process.

There are major challenges in respect of the rule of law, fundamental freedoms – such as freedom of expression – and organised crime and corruption.

For all of the countries in the Western Balkans, serious efforts are still needed in these areas on your path towards the EU.

* * *

Dear friends,

We need to address common challenges to the EU's fundamental values.

The act of aggression that Russia has committed against Ukraine is the greatest challenge to European peace and security since the end of the Cold War.

It is at times when our fundamental values are increasingly contested that we

need to be even stronger and firmer in our joint commitment to stand up for them.

The EU needs to provide the Western Balkans with a clear path towards membership and to our community of shared values.

New, objective annual country reports add to the credibility of the process.

With harmonised evaluation scales between countries, we are making the integration process more credible, more transparent, and we are adding greater political accountability.

Hopefully, this will also generate more interest among the general public.

Because at the end of the day it is the citizens who reap the benefits of EU membership.

The European Union is and must always be about its citizens.

* * *

In the enlargement process, each country is judged on the basis of its own merits.

However, the ability to cooperate and become reconciled regionally is what builds you a better future.

Therefore, strengthening regional cooperation is of tremendous value.

Much progress has been made over the past two years in the normalisation between Serbia and Kosovo, and in improved relations between Belgrade and Tirana.

Here, the High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission has played and needs to continue to play a key role.

The initiative for this seminar came jointly from the Western Balkan ambassadors to Stockholm – an admirable gesture.

An essential reason for Nordic prosperity is our peaceful neighbourly relations.

Throughout history, we have alternated between cooperating in unions and

fighting wars with each other.

Just like the countries of the Western Balkans, the Nordic countries are similar to each other, yet unique.

Our formalised cooperation is one of the oldest and most far-reaching regional cooperation arrangements in the world.

It is built on common values and a will to achieve results that contribute to dynamic development.

But more importantly, individuals working together, civil society, universities and NGOs have helped strengthen the bonds between our countries.

At the same time, I am aware of the challenges of confronting the recent history of war in the Balkans.

I visited Srebrenica this past summer for the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the genocide.

I have also met some of the women who were victims of systematic rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Security Council resolution 1325 and the principle of Responsibility to Protect are important tools developed through painful lessons of history.

However, to achieve peace and true reconciliation, we also need to bring to justice those who committed these horrible crimes.

We owe it to the victims of those atrocities to never forget.

Only in this way can we build true reconciliation.

* * *

Dear friends,

Many people have asked for 'more' Europe in response to the challenges that are arising.

As a former member of the Commission, I find this to be a very interesting debate.

In many instances 'more' Europe will certainly be needed.

But in addition to this, we also need to consider a 'better' Europe.

A Europe that is fit to address the challenges of today and tomorrow.

If we have learned anything from the history of our shared continent, it is that European integration has ended conflicts and wars, brought peace and prosperity, and taught large and small countries to live and work together.

This is, if we pause for a moment and think about Europe's history of wars and killing fields, nothing short of a truly remarkable achievement.

I have described this European path in the following way: bloodshed on the battlefield is replaced with patience at the negotiating table.

Therefore, keeping the door to Europe open for countries aspiring to join is not just a matter of strategic interest for the EU.

It is also a responsibility for the European Union as a whole.

And therefore it is, first and foremost, a responsibility with regard to all the people living in Europe.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Lund, 11 December 2015

Published 18 December 2015 Updated 18 December 2015

Check against delivery

We are living in turbulent times.

The world around us is changing rapidly, with disintegrating states, refugee flows and terrorist attacks.

There are many challenges. But it is important that we maintain our perspective and do not forget all of the things around us that inspire hope.

Political and economic developments mean that more people than ever before are able to enjoy their human rights. Since 1974, over 90 countries have transitioned to democracy – in a formal sense. Over time, the number of executions has decreased. More children are attending school and people are receiving better care.

Over the past 25 years, two billion people have gained access to sanitation facilities. And even more – 2.6 billion people – have gained access to better water. One in two people have access to mobile internet. Poverty has been halved.

If you are a politically engaged woman, your chances of getting into parliament have doubled compared with 20 years ago. If you live in Nepal they have trebled.

If you are a girl in South Asia today, you have equally good chances as your brothers of being able to attend school. If you live in Latin America, there are more girls than boys in your class.

If you are a new parent anywhere in the world, the chances of your child dying have halved compared with 25 years ago.

This is enormous progress.

Sweden has contributed to this development through its foreign policy and through concrete measures in development cooperation. Without our commitment and that of others, global developments would not have come as far or moved as quickly, whether it be with regard to the fight against the death penalty or efforts to promote education, democracy and women's rights.

Our shared commitment is particularly important today, when authoritarian regimes have gained greater influence, scope for democracy is decreasing and universal rights are restricted.

People in Nigeria who protest against discrimination on the grounds of their sexual orientation are silenced. Activists in Cambodia or Columbia who fight against environmental degradation and forced resettlement are threatened. Journalists who uncover abuses of power in Russia and secular bloggers in Bangladesh are murdered for the sake of their opinions. Women's rights activists in Iraq are subjected to political persecution.

Laws that restrict or forbid civil society organisations have spread throughout the world. Freedom of expression on the internet has declined for the fifth year in a row.

Authoritarian states are not the only problem. Even non-state actors such as ISIS/Daesh and other religious extremists aggressively claim that human rights do not apply.

After one of the most devastating wars that has affected humankind, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on 10 December 1948. It established the equal value of all people. Three fundamentals of freedom, justice and peace in the world were identified: human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The Universal Declaration states that: "Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law."

It also states that "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures."

These words created a new set of basic values for a ravaged world and they are more relevant today than ever before. They inspire us all as we stake out the direction of our future work.

In 2016, the Government will submit a communication to the Riksdag on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This will be our compass. It will be based on our values and make visible our tools.

We are now in the middle of this work. We are talking with civil society organisations, researchers and our missions abroad. We are analysing challenges and assessing where Sweden can be of greatest benefit. We must see human rights, democracy and the rule of law as a whole, in which each part is dependent on the other two.

So what should we do and how should we do it?

Let us start with how.

Sweden must be a strong voice and stand up for, defend and promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law throughout foreign policy.

People across the entire world who are fighting for their own rights and the rights of others provide great hope for the future. They must not stand alone.

And nor should Sweden. Networks and alliances are more important than ever. Sweden must work with states, political actors, civil society, businesses, foundations and individuals. We must be better at collaborating with many actors in broad alliances.

Human rights, democracy and the rule of law must continue to be priority issues in development cooperation. At times like these, support needs to be more flexible, dynamic and adapted to the new situation in the world.

We must dare to take risks, just like the courageous people and movements we support. Progress can mean that one voice is still heard. We must create scope for rapid action with targeted measures.

We must make a difference in individual countries. The Government's reports on the human rights situation in the countries of the world are being broadened to include democracy and the rule of law.

We must sharpen our tools. Work more strategically and pursue the right issues in the right forums. We must create platforms for cooperation with various actors where we jointly pursue issues in the international system. Global forums such as the UN and the development banks, the EU and regional organisations such as the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the African Union, and specialised collaborations such as the Community of Democracies and IDEA are all important arenas in this work.

So what shall we do? Some things are a given.

Sweden is pursuing a feminist foreign policy. The fulfilment of all women's and girls' human rights is crucial and a prerequisite for democracy and the rule of law. It is also a prerequisite for sustainable peace and security. Gender-equal societies run less of a risk of being affected by violence and conflict. These challenges require that we work on several fronts.

We must combat the abuse, violence and oppression that women are subjected to throughout the world. And we must work for women's political and economic participation and influence. We must continue to be a leading advocate for all people's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Sweden must stand up for and promote democratic institutions and processes. Parties, parliaments and other democratic institutions are weak in many countries. And yet they are crucial for channelling people's interests and resolving political differences in a peaceful way. This is why they must be strengthened.

In times when democracy is challenged and called into question as a social model, there is a greater need to deepen our understanding of the meaning of democracy and to find new ways of strengthening electoral processes with integrity. For every election that is manipulated and abused, there is a risk that the word democracy will come into disrepute. We must protect the meaning of democracy.

Sweden must strengthen the rule of law on a broad front.

We know that the rule of law is crucial for safeguarding human rights, for non-discrimination and for access to justice. Decent states are states under the rule of law. It guarantees access to ID documents, education and medical care, an independent and free media, rules for entrepreneurship – all of the things we take for granted and that characterise functioning societies.

The rule of law is essential to combating corruption. But corruption also infiltrates and undermines the rule of law. There are also serious consequences for democracy when positions become a way of obtaining money. Society's ability to realise its political intentions is weakened. Corruption challenges human security and is a cause of transnational crime.

We must work on norms, institutions and methods to strengthen the rule of law and combat corruption.

Sweden must fight discrimination in all its forms, regardless of the grounds upon which it occurs, be it religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, impairment or belonging to a minority. The rights of indigenous people must be defended.

LGBT persons human rights have been strengthened in many areas, such as marriage and adoption rights. But discrimination and violence directed at LGBT persons are among the great challenges of our time and must be combated.

The perspective of the rights of the child must be strengthened. All children have the right to a name, identity and citizenship. Today, only one in three children are registered at birth. The right to an identity is the key to a whole host of rights, such as attending school and receiving care or protection.

Poverty as a result of discrimination is, in itself, a human rights abuse. Economic and social rights must be strengthened. The fact that the UN member countries have agreed on a new, shared agenda for sustainable development, including seventeen new, global Sustainable Development Goals is a major step and inspires hope. Implementation of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and fulfilment of the new goals will be crucial for people's enjoyment of their human rights. Sweden must contribute to this work.

Sweden must defend people's opportunities to assert their rights and demand that both states and businesses take their responsibilities. This is important, not least with regard to working conditions and the right to organise in trade

unions, as well as the right to land and natural resources. Yesterday the Government adopted a communication on corporate social responsibility that will shortly be submitted to the Riksdag.

The Government is relaunching the Policy for Global Development. This means that we are strengthening the rights perspective and efforts to ensure that all policy areas make a coherent contribution to the new global sustainability agenda.

Sweden must also safeguard and strengthen the principle of 'the responsibility to protect', not least with regard to preventing conflicts. This does not apply only to conflicts between states. We must also help to prevent mass abuses by non-state actors and protect civilians. Accountability is a cornerstone. When states themselves cannot enforce accountability, the International Criminal Court is essential.

But in the turbulent landscape of today, these core issues are not enough.

We must also work on some of the challenges of the day in a new and strategic way.

In some areas we see the need for special measures. Today I can highlight two of these.

The first is widening the democratic space.

At a time when the foundation of human rights is being challenged, free voices are imprisoned and social movements are forbidden, special measures are necessary.

Certain values and rights must be defended.

Freedom of expression, association and assembly are key. Sweden must make a special contribution to protect freedom of opinion and expression, as well as the opportunities of civil society and political movements to exist and act. Regardless of whether people are fighting for freedom of religion or the environment, exposing corruption, pursuing land issues or advocating the rights of LGBT persons, Sweden will fight for their right to make their voice heard.

The courageous people who dare to express themselves and pursue

important issues are crucial for combating human rights abuses. In an increasingly digitalised world, this engagement is taking on new forms. Sweden must be at the forefront in order to understand and strengthen new forms of civilian and political movements.

In the digital era, the media landscape is changing at a tremendous pace. Independent news and opinion formation is essential to ensure the right of citizens to keep informed and thus be able to exercise their democratic rights. The safety of journalists and other media actors must be strengthened. The same applies to the possibility to express oneself freely through literature, film, music and art in all its forms.

We must stand up for people's opportunities to express themselves, organise and pursue their interests. These are the foundations of open societies – and this is how our democracy and welfare have been built.

We need to strengthen activists through networks and increased support. Protection for human rights defenders must be better. We must act more quickly and in a more concerted manner when developments take a turn for the worse. We intend to produce a handbook for work on promoting the values that lie at the heart of the universal rights.

This is both a short-term and a long-term undertaking. Investments in education for the coming generation are essential.

The second measure is a greater focus on Europe and our neighbourhood.

The European basic values are laid down in the Lisbon Treaty of the European Union: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights – including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. We must protect these basic values in Europe and in our neighbourhood.

But the challenges are growing. In Russia, civil society is being pushed back and freedom of expression is being increasingly restricted. This also has an indirect effect on the human rights situation in Russia's neighbouring countries, and ultimately on all of Europe. Russian propaganda risk depriving a whole generation of the opportunity to freely form their own opinions.

Europe and our neighbourhood must be a strong foothold for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Sweden must highlight in particular the

importance of independent judicial systems in Europe. Sweden must take forceful action against discrimination of people who belong to minorities. Racism and extremism must be combated jointly by the entire EU.

Sweden must support human rights defenders, brave politicians, journalists, and civil society in Europe and its neighbourhood. Sweden has played an important role in the establishment of two organisations that support democratic forces in the European neighbourhood in an innovative and flexible way – the European Endowment for Democracy and the Prague Civil Society Centre.

Education, exchanges and broad social contacts between countries in Europe and its neighbourhood are becoming increasingly important.

Sweden must continue to fight to ensure that all of Europe takes its responsibility for people fleeing from war and oppression and for people's right to seek asylum.

In order to give force and focus to these measures, they will be designed as individual projects with goals, resources and follow-up. The mandates will be for three years, but the aim is a long-term one.

We don't know what's waiting round the corner.

It could be solutions to long-term conflicts and democratic openings. It could be more repression and refugee flows.

But one thing we do know.

We no longer find ourselves in a world that lies beyond Sweden.

The rest of the world is here in our midst.

The seeds we plant today shape our own destiny and the future of our children.

I hope that you, too, sow a seed every day. Learn something new. Join an association. Do a good deed. Take issue with an unfounded statement on social media.

After winter comes summer. And you have to have planted your seeds in

time.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Margot Wallström at the high-level meeting on women's role in peace processes

Published 16 December 2015 Updated 16 December 2015

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at high-level meeting on women's role in peace processes 16 December 2015.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, friends and colleagues,

I would like to start by thanking Sven-Eric Söder and the Folke Bernadotte Academy for co-hosting this panel debate on the role of women as mediators and in mediation processes.

I am also happy to see gathered here today a distinguished group of remarkable men and women.

You have all dedicated your professional and personal lives to the promotion of peace.

Your actions remind us that life is about more than self-interest, and that service is about more than self-service. Thank you.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

We stand at a critical moment in time.

Last year, 40 armed conflicts were recorded, up by six from 2013.

This is the highest number of conflicts reported since 1999.

Last year, the escalation of conflicts, coupled with the extreme violence in Syria, resulted in the highest number of battle-related deaths in the post-1989 period.

Conflict and persecution forced an average of 42 500 people a day to leave their homes.

Instead they had to seek protection elsewhere, either within the borders of their own countries or in other countries.

UN-OCHA now reports that the average length of conflict-induced displacement is an astonishing 17 years.

This means that for many, becoming displaced is a life sentence.

We are also facing a 'conflict trap', whereby 90 per cent of conflicts were initiated in countries that have already experienced war.

The problem with war is not only the difficulty of preventing new conflicts from arising, but also permanently ending the ones that have already started.

This is partly a result of failed peace negotiations. Almost half of all peace agreements fail within five years.

Friends,

One reason why we are gathered here is because we know that these failures are not a law of nature.

Research and our own experiences clearly demonstrate that women's inclusion and participation is crucial to achieve effective, successful and sustainable peace and development.

Yet even today, in 2015, formal peace and mediation processes have too often failed to effectively engage and meaningfully involve women.

The statistics of the last two decades clearly show the need for change.

Out of 1168 peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2013, only 18 per cent made any reference to women and gender.

From 1992 to 2011, fewer than four per cent of signatories to peace agreements, and only nine per cent of peace negotiators, were women.

And when it comes to chief mediators the figures are extremely low: Only two per cent were women.

Just a month ago, at the talks in Vienna on the conflict in Syria, 18 men and just one woman – HRVP Mogherini – sat at the table.

Quite clearly, reality still offers considerable scope for improvement.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We need to address this issue at all levels and on all platforms.

We need to ensure that ongoing and upcoming processes result in increased support for women's participation in peace processes.

One step we have taken is to task the Folke Bernadotte Academy with establishing a Swedish network of women mediators, which is also part of the Nordic women mediators network.

The objective of this network is clear. We are not only seeking to strengthen our own capabilities and increase the number of Swedish women actively involved in international peace mediation efforts.

More importantly, we also aim to cut across traditional divides and create cooperative networks with other women mediators from around the globe.

There is a symbolism in the fact that this mission has fallen to the Folke Bernadotte Academy. In 1948, Folke Bernadotte himself was appointed as the UN's first mediator in the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

So, with both statistics and history as the backdrop, allow me to share three thoughts on why we need a Women Mediators Network.

* * *

Firstly, a successful peace process is not only about ending a conflict.

More importantly it is about building inclusive societies and promoting sustainable peace and development.

That is why women must take part in all decision-making processes at all levels and be active in defining priorities and resource allocation.

This must be the case in times of peace, and in times of war.

Wherever I have travelled in the world, from Ukraine to Colombia to DR Congo, I have met brave women who strive to de-escalate violence and promote initiatives for peace.

These women often work in very dangerous environments where the personal risks are extreme.

Their efforts are commendable and deserve our full support and long-term commitment.

However, these peacebuilding initiatives often receive little visibility and are seldom linked to formal peace processes.

Too often women are excluded from formal peace negotiations and we see all-male teams of experts analysing and defining priorities for peace and security.

This has to change, and I promise to do my part.

I will continue to always meet with women's organisations before the official bilateral programme starts during my travels throughout the world.

* * *

Secondly, many conflicts and peace processes are in need of mediators.

The key is often to provide an acceptable third party who can assist the involved parties in voluntarily reaching a mutually acceptable settlement of issues under dispute.

And recent research shows that there is a positive link between women's effective participation, and the likelihood of peace agreements being both signed and implemented.

However, according to the Global Study on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, many actors involved in mediation and conflict resolution remain resistant to including women.

One argument often used is that that they are "wary of overloading the process".

I am convinced that our Women Mediators Network will be a tool for change in promoting women's participation and contributing to sustainable peace and security.

And when our Network brings successful change, the arguments about overloading will evaporate.

* * *

Thirdly, the Women Mediators Network can be a platform for sharing experiences and exchanging information on good and bad practices.

The Network will provide a platform where members can support and learn from each other.

It will be a platform of competent women peace mediators. And by promoting powerful women, we will also promote powerful peace.

* * *

To conclude, I want to emphasise that the agenda on women, peace and security is a top priority for the Swedish Government.

We are committed to continuing to promote women's social, political and economic empowerment and to countering narratives that reinforce negative gender roles.

We believe that it is crucial to engage men and boys in this work – to change behaviour and attitudes.

Last month, the Action Plan for Sweden's feminist foreign policy was adopted.

With this Action Plan, the Foreign Service now has a roadmap to work for gender equality and to strengthen women's and girls' rights, representation and resources.

And one of the objectives of our Action Plan is to increase women's participation in peace processes.

For Sweden, the women, peace and security agenda is about promoting something as beautiful and important as political change.

For that to happen it takes committed and proactive political leadership.

We need to act differently to create peaceful and secure societies for all.

It is precisely at times like these – times of crisis and unrest – that we must not hesitate.

We live in a time when your values must be your backbone, which in turn will help you to do what is right.

So let us be persistent in our efforts to strengthen women as agents for peace.

Thank you.



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 Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Margot Wallström speech at the OSCE ministerial meeting in Belgrade

Published 03 December 2015 Updated 03 December 2015

Check against delivery

Mr Chairman, Mr Secretary General, Ministers, Excellences,

I would like to thank the Serbian Chairmanship and the Chairperson-in-Office, Ivica Dačić, for your efforts over the past year, and for hosting us here in Belgrade.

Sweden fully subscribes to the statement of the European Union. In addition, I would like to highlight some areas of particular importance to Sweden.

First of all, the OSCE plays a crucial role in European peace and security and continues to provide an important platform for dialogue.

This dialogue must be based on the core OSCE principles and commitments we have all agreed to.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 25th anniversary of the Charter of Paris. These documents, which laid the normative foundation of the European security order, are as relevant as ever.

Regrettably, the European security order as we have come to know it is now seriously challenged by Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine, its illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, and its involvement in destabilising military acts in eastern Ukraine.

These actions constitute a flagrant breach of the Helsinki Final Act and international law.

The principle that all states are fully sovereign and have the right to make their own foreign and security policy choices must be upheld and any acceptance of spheres of influence rejected.

Sweden supports OSCE efforts in and around Ukraine, notably the Special Monitoring Mission, which must be given full access.

Full implementation of the Minsk agreements is critical in order to reach a sustainable political solution in accordance with OSCE principles and commitments, and in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

For Russia to put itself back on the path toward improved relations with the rest of Europe, it needs to demonstrate, in a tangible manner, its commitment to OSCE principles and international law.

Secondly, an essential feature of the European security order is the concept of comprehensive security, which has at its core respect for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Therefore, the deteriorating human rights situation in parts of the OSCE region continues to be a cause for concern and a threat to our common security. We must not stand idly by while fundamental rights are violated and the space for civil society is shrinking.

The involvement of civil society in upholding OSCE commitments in this field is indispensable. I thank the civil society parallel conference for their valuable recommendations to the ministerial council.

Sweden remains a staunch supporter of the work of the autonomous institutions: the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the High Commissioner on National Minorities. They are key assets in early warning and conflict prevention.

We welcome the ODIHR and HCNM report on the deteriorating human rights situation in the illegally annexed Crimea. A group of us discussed this urgent matter with the Crimean Tatar representative Mustafa Djemiljov this morning. His account underlined that the OSCE institutions must get access to the peninsula immediately.

Dear friends,

Let me be clear: sustainable development and peace and security can never be achieved if half of the population is excluded.

Promoting gender equality in all spheres of life does not only mean promoting the economic, political and social empowerment of women. It also means promoting development and conflict prevention. The OSCE needs to further develop its capacity in this regard.

Particular attention and resources need to be directed towards the full implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

Thirdly, military developments from 2014 onwards have underlined the need for functioning conventional arms control regimes and confidence building measures.

Sweden advocates the updating of the Vienna Document to reflect lessons learned and the new politico-military realities.

Finally, as we move forward, our primary focus must be on re-establishing respect for the OSCE core principles and commitments and on how the implementation of these can be strengthened.

We must avoid a situation where the existing principles are allowed to be watered down.

We must withstand any attempts at new 'grand bargains' on European security.

If we give up on the core principles now, we will eventually have less security. Not more.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the Nato Foreign Minister's meeting in Brussels

Published 02 December 2015 Updated 02 December 2015

Check against delivery

Secretary-General, friends and colleagues,

- One year ago the Resolute Support Mission was launched in this very room. Afghanistan now stands at a crossroads and the international community needs to show continuous and long-term commitment to the Afghan people. If Afghanistan returns to a security vacuum, consequences will not only affect Afghanistan and its people but also all of us.

In this context, I would like to inform you that from January until October this year, Sweden has received 22 000 unaccompanied children from Afghanistan. We must prevent an exodus from Afghanistan. To have so many young people leave the country will be a great loss to Afghanistan.

**

And this is my first point: a peace process leading to a political settlement is the only viable option to end the conflict. We would like to commend President Ghani's outreach to all parties in the region to initiate a peace process with the Taliban.

**

Despite some setbacks along the way, the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces have stayed committed to their responsibility. However,

events such as the temporary take-over by the Taliban of Kunduz show that security built solely on military presence is not sufficient.

**

And this is the second point I would like to make: political and democratic reforms must go hand-in-hand with security efforts in order to build a stable and peaceful Afghanistan. Security and development are two sides of the same coin and Sweden is engaged in both tracks. A well-functioning state, at central, regional and district levels is key to ensuring stability.

**

- Thirdly, in order to ensure that democratic development in Afghanistan is consolidated, we must all do what we can to assist. We also expect the National Unity Government to work hard in pursuing its reform agenda concerning the economy, the electoral system, anti-corruption, and building an inclusive society with social justice and full and equal rights for women. We are worried by the reports of continued violence and discrimination against women and of sexual offenses towards children committed by members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. This must stop.

**

- Finally, Sweden has a long-term commitment to Afghanistan. The Government has proposed to the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) to extend our current contribution to Resolute Support Mission into 2016. In addition, our development support to Afghanistan for the period 2015-2024 has an indicative volume of approximately USD 1 billion. Gender equality is of particular importance for our efforts. We believe that this issue needs more attention now already, and that it has to be an integral part of the future Enduring Partnership – particularly since this will focus on the policy/ministerial level.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Margot Wallström at the University of Helsinki

Published 27 November 2015 Updated 27 November 2015

Check against delivery

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Swedish writer Stig Dagerman once wrote: “In times of no hope there is no worse prison than the future.”

And in times of worry it is a comfort to find strength in the best possible neighbours.

So I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to come to Helsinki and visit the Swedish School of Social Science.

And I would like to begin by stressing that we are living in times that are marked not only by worry, but also by hope.

* * *

Just think, technological developments have placed a mobile phone in the hands of half of all the people on Earth.

And just think, the world’s total GDP doubled between 2000 and 2013.

We achieved the goal of halving the proportion of the world’s population living in extreme poverty some five years ago.

This year we can add to that the fact that infant mortality rates have also been halved compared with 1990.

And the work continues.

Earlier in the autumn, 193 world leaders agreed on 17 global goals that will lead us towards sustainable development.

And keeping climate change as far below the two-degree limit as possible is the goal for the next major summit: COP21 in Paris.

The negotiations on our biggest common challenge begin in just six days' time. Among a series of key global actors, we see a Union made up of 28 countries in our part of the world.

This European Union has the goal of promoting peace, the well-being of its peoples and the Union's values.

These values are defined in Article 1a of the Lisbon Treaty as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights – including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

Society in these 28 countries is to be characterised by diversity, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and the principle of equality between women and men.

When these values are ruthlessly attacked while people in one of these 28 countries are having a Friday-night drink, attending a concert or watching a football match, the very same Lisbon Treaty contains a mutual defence clause:

Article 42(7) states the following:

If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

I will soon talk about the difficult challenges facing Sweden, Finland and the entire EU.

This sombre list includes terrorism, the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War, and Russian aggression.

But let us take on these challenges with an awareness of the relatively strong position that we have created through Nordic and European cooperation.

Let us take on these challenges in the knowledge that fear is poor counsel.

And let us remember that our love for a life based on the values of the European Union is stronger than the terrorists' love of death.

* * *

In recent times the skies have wept over Paris, but also over Ankara, Beirut, Sinai, northern Nigeria, Bamako in Mali, and other places.

At the weekend the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution drafted by France giving member states the right to take "all necessary measures" to combat ISIL.

All of the UN's 193 member states are now being urged to "reinforce and coordinate" efforts to prevent and repel terrorist attacks carried out by ISIL, al Qaida and other terrorist groups.

A united UN illustrates that the terrorist threat is not a battle of the civilisations, or a conflict between the West and the countries in the Middle East.

An entire world stands side by side against the terrorists' barbarism.

But our recent history has taught us that such situations call for global leadership.

We must keep a cool head and a warm heart.

And we must be able to hold several thoughts in our heads at once.

* * *

France has requested support in accordance with the mutual defence clause I cited earlier.

Sweden, Finland and the other EU Member States have given their full support to France's request.

The EU is a community of solidarity. We want to make an active

contribution to the concrete and credible implementation of the EU's solidarity agenda, including the mutual defence clause.

It is important for Sweden's security that this happens.

Support measures will be undertaken bilaterally, from each individual country in direct relation to France, and in line with the UN Charter.

This support may be political, civilian or military and does not affect Sweden's non-participation in military alliances.

Our support to France is also in line with what is known as Sweden's national declaration of solidarity, which is a complement to the EU's mutual defence clause.

The declaration of solidarity stresses that security is achieved in cooperation with others.

It also confirms that Sweden will not remain passive if another EU country or Nordic country is struck by disaster or comes under attack, and we expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is similarly affected.

It is too early to say what form Sweden's support will take.

Sweden is already making a concrete contribution to the coalition against ISIL in northern Iraq.

An armed force comprising 35 people is helping to train the Iraqi armed forces with the aim of strengthening its capability to fight ISIL.

Sweden is also a donor to the UNDP's Stabilisation Fund, which is supporting the rebuilding of areas liberated from ISIL.

But France is now going to consult the individual Member States. France will then make a more specific request for support.

Sweden takes a broad approach when we look at what we can contribute, not just militarily, but also from a range of possible civilian and political measures.

This includes supporting the political process in Syria – not least in attempts to unite the opposition – and a broad aid commitment.

Sweden and France had also already agreed on deeper cooperation on the more long-term task of preventing extremism and battling radicalisation.

As we now take new steps, I would like to stress that Sweden and Finland are maintaining ongoing contact with the aim of coordinating and complementing each other's support measures.

My visit today to my foreign minister colleague Timo Soini should be seen as an expression of the great importance that Sweden and Finland attach to coordinated action.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

A peaceful solution to the conflict in Syria is absolutely essential.

As a result of the conflict, Syria has become a safe haven for ISIL.

To eliminate ISIL in Syria it is of fundamental importance that we work towards a political solution that results in a transitional government to replace Assad's authoritarian regime.

The 'Vienna process' has now been transformed into the International Syria Support Group.

Progress was recently achieved on the role of the UN, a possible ceasefire, a timetable for the peace process and confidence-building measures.

The UN Security Council has a special responsibility in efforts to combat ISIL and achieve peace in Syria. This also applies to efforts to stabilise Iraq through dialogue and a policy of inclusion.

Sweden also supports the efforts of UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura to reach a political solution in Syria and I look forward to meeting Mr de Mistura in Stockholm later this week.

At the same time we must work even more actively on the root causes of terrorism throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

Peace and democratic development, like hope for a better a future for people who are struggling – not least young people – is absolutely crucial.

Sweden has contributed extensive humanitarian support to the region and the people affected by ISIL.

We must deprive ISIL and other terrorist groups of their recruitment base and draw attention to the breeding ground for violent extremism.

In this context, we must not forget all the people who are fleeing from terrorism, conflict and war.

This brings me to another of our challenges.

* * *

The Emigrants is the name of the first book in a series of novels by Vilhelm Moberg.

In these books we follow a few of the more than one million Swedes who sought a better life in America.

Do you remember what the second book is called?

It translates as The Immigrants. And it was followed by the third book: The Settlers.

The names of these books remind us that flight and migration have several dimensions.

Migration creates opportunities for development, both for the country of origin and the recipient country – and not least for our fellow humans who are fleeing or migrating.

We are currently experiencing the worst refugee crisis since the Second World War. Around the world, 40 conflicts are ongoing, of which 11 are full-scale wars. Over 60 million people are displaced.

For us in Sweden it is a given that we should help. It is an obligation, it is a matter of solidarity – but it is also about our positive experiences of the various facets of migration.

Immigration to Sweden has made us considerably richer as a country. This applies to all areas of society.

The newspaper Dagens Nyheter recently reported how the increased

reception of refugees is leading to increased consumption and growth in Sweden.

A little further down the road it will be absolutely crucial that those who come to us enter the labour market.

It is necessary that our social systems can manage to offer schooling to the young people coming here alone. That we have homes for the families who have fled from ruins. That there are education and routes into the labour market as people build a new future in our country, in line with the pioneering spirit in Vilhelm Moberg's books.

We need to achieve all of this on a scale that has already required an enormous effort, through which many people have already been helped.

But Sweden is currently receiving about 30 per cent of all unaccompanied refugee children coming to Europe.

Around 8–10 000 asylum seekers are arriving every week.

By the end of the year it is expected that over 160 000 people will have found their way to Sweden, of whom 35 000 are without a parent or guardian.

We have reached a point that requires a greater sense of community in the EU, including with regard to the refugee situation.

Sweden expects two things of our EU friends in the here and now.

Firstly: we expect all EU countries to demonstrate solidarity and ensure that we share the responsibility.

Secondly: we expect EU countries to stop hoping that temporary measures and old solutions that have already failed will be able to resolve a common and long-term challenge.

Giving protection to people who are fleeing from war is an international obligation under well-known conventions. And this must be done in a dignified and efficient manner.

If the EU has a common external border it is everyone's responsibility.

And when refugees come to this border they are everyone's responsibility.

The decision to redistribute 160 000 refugees that was recently adopted by the EU must be implemented in practice.

Centres known as hotspots must be established with the aim of registering and distributing the people coming to the EU via a permanent redistribution mechanism.

An orderly system also requires that those people who do not have grounds for asylum return home.

At the same time, the EU must continue to assist countries such as Jordan and Lebanon where the situation in the refugee camps is in some cases acute.

The EU must also strengthen its cooperation with the countries in the Western Balkans, and not least with Turkey, which has a crucial role to play in managing the flow of refugees to Europe.

And remember that these wars are constantly occurring. People will continue to flee.

The EU must therefore respond with solidarity and sustainable systems that guarantee both an orderly reception and the right to asylum from war and the barbarism of terrorism.

And remember that societies characterised by diversity are far from being a naive aspiration. They are the reality of our time.

Of course, it is a challenge to receive far more people than planned. I know that Finland has also seen a considerable increase in numbers of asylum seekers.

That is why the countries of the EU must become better at exchanging positive experiences and policy proposals that facilitate integration.

We must see today's challenges as an opportunity to develop the way we build our societies.

It is an opportunity to tell the story of how our Nordic model builds on openness and how 500 million people in the EU can indeed cope with receiving 1.5 million refugees.

The alternatives – attempts to close the borders, only a handful of EU

countries taking in the majority of all those fleeing, returning people to the hell of war in Syria – have one thing in common.

They are worse than the option of European solidarity, a more orderly system and shared responsibility.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

Hillary Clinton has described the job of foreign minister in the following way: “The problems we inherited... new, often unexpected events... opportunities presented by an increasingly networked world.”

And it is true that the situation in the world places great demands on the simultaneous capacity of the entire international community.

The act of aggression that Russia has committed against Ukraine is the greatest challenge to European peace and security since the end of the Cold War.

First Russia’s occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea were completed.

Then we saw how the Russian aggression continued through support to ‘separatists’ in eastern Ukraine.

Russia has not hesitated in the slightest to use advanced Russian units for this purpose, both across the border and in Ukraine.

All of this is accompanied by a propaganda machine at full throttle.

Although the refugee crisis and the terrorist attacks are demanding more of our attention, we must still focus on the east.

On the one hand we hopefully have the same goals as Russia in the fight against ISIL.

A responsible and cooperative Russia is an essential component if the conflict in Syria is to be resolved.

But it is still unacceptable to send soldiers into Ukraine, to contravene the UN Charter and to take another country’s territory.

This is why we must maintain the consensus in the EU – and also the transatlantic consensus between the EU and the US – in our view of Russia's actions in Syria and in Ukraine.

This is why, on both sides of the Atlantic, we must extend our sanctions regimes that are based on the Russian aggression.

This applies for as long as Russia does not live up to the Minsk Agreements.

It applies for as long as Ukraine has not regained full control of its internationally recognised border.

And at the same time we must remain steadfast in providing our support to Ukraine and its reform efforts.

I recently visited Ukraine with Lithuania's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Linas Linkevičius.

This trip strengthened my conviction that the EU has an obligation to help Ukraine to succeed, and that Ukraine can succeed.

There are strong expectations of change, not least from young people and from Ukraine's dynamic civil society.

This is perhaps Ukraine's greatest and most important asset.

Ultimately, it is about respecting the right of countries to choose their own future themselves. This is of course something that must apply to the EU's entire eastern neighbourhood.

At the same time, we must maintain both our bilateral relations and the EU's contacts with Russia, which remains our, and the EU's, largest neighbour.

We have to talk to one another and cooperate where possible.

The many contacts between Russian, Swedish and Finnish society – between individuals, between municipalities and counties, and between organisations – are hugely valuable.

A critical dialogue is essential between neighbours.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Centre for Climate and Security recently reported that in Pakistan today, more people die of heatstroke than in terrorist attacks.

And remember that the revolution in Syria was preceded by a four-year-long drought that was the worst in modern history.

This is the face of our modern world. Most things are linked.

The fact that climate change has a clear security policy dimension is just one of many examples of a broader security concept.

At the same time, we see crises and challenges in several directions, which as I said places demands on our capacity to act on several fronts simultaneously.

Navigating this landscape requires courage and patience.

Courage to stand up for the values that are the foundation of EU cooperation and that are contained in the solemn introduction to the Lisbon Treaty.

And patience, which allows us to manage to do several wise things simultaneously and over time, even if this may seem difficult in the short term.

European countries need to regain their self-confidence, because we need strong European cooperation.

And this means that we cannot have an EU à la carte where you choose when the EU's fundamental values apply to you specifically.

We need strong European cooperation where we act together and in solidarity, irrespective of whether we are facing aggression in the east, war and refugee flows in the south, an attack, a crisis or a disaster in an individual country, or climate change, which none of us can avoid.

Together, we are Europe.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

In times of worry and great challenges, security policy must be handled responsibly, with a long-term approach and with broad parliamentary support.

It therefore sent a clear signal to the world around us when five Riksdag parties – from the Government and the opposition – agreed on Sweden's security and defence policy earlier this year.

Sweden is sticking to its course. We remain clear. We do not participate in military alliances and will not apply for membership of NATO.

Non-participation in military alliances gives us freedom of action in standing up for Sweden's sovereignty and working for security in our region. We pursue the same line as previous Swedish governments, which I stressed most recently in the Swedish Riksdag just the other week.

An active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy is Sweden's primary line of defence. It is based on cohesion among EU countries and increased cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic region, the Baltic Sea region, the UN and the OSCE, with NATO and through the transatlantic link.

Sweden's defence capabilities are now also being strengthened. The Swedish Government is reversing a trend and investing a great deal in reinforcing our defence.

Exercise activities will be further developed and the capability of defence units enhanced. Appropriations will be raised by SEK 10 billion in 2016–2020. Together with previously approved increases this will mean a rise of SEK 17 billion, or 11 per cent.

The Swedish Government is deepening its bilateral and multilateral security and defence policy cooperation projects.

Among these cooperation projects, the Government values Finnish-Swedish cooperation very highly.

Sweden and Finland are currently developing defence cooperation both vertically and horizontally.

Let me also underline that in terms of security policy choices, consultations between Sweden and Finland are of course crucially important.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity of being able to speak once again at the University of Helsinki.

During the Swedish State Visit to Finland in March, I spoke in English about Sweden's feminist foreign policy.

But now it is of course nice to be able to speak in my own native language at the Swedish School of Social Science.

I would therefore like to finish by reading something beautiful in our Swedish language by the writer and poet Ragnar Thoursie.

This poem was written in 1951, but it places our current challenges in perspective:

Through the murmurs of time in the pines, through the flight of the years on
the cirrus wing, broad and strong,

yearns from night to day, from distress to freedom, away from fear, the
pursuit that binds us all.

An open city, not a fortified city, we build together.

Its light strikes up towards the solitude of space.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the ASEM meeting in Luxemburg

Published 05 November 2015 Updated 05 November 2015

Luxemburg November 5th 2015 Please check against delivery

Dear friends and colleagues from Asia and Europe,

The Asia-Europe Meeting process is entering its 20th year, and over these two decades it has evolved into a multi-faceted forum for exchange between our two continents.

I believe that a forum that involves the free exchange of ideas, as ASEM does, contributes to better and necessary understanding between peoples, and between states.

Today, I would like to take this opportunity to talk about climate change and the connection between climate and security.

Countries have now presented more than 150 Intended National Determined Contributions (INDCs) from all over the world, representing coverage of around 90 per cent of global emissions. This is unprecedented.

However, this first round of INDCs on the table clearly does not keep the global temperature rise well below 2 degrees.

The Paris Agreement needs to ensure that we do much more.

Climate change and security are intimately intertwined.

We may think we are facing many security challenges today, but unfortunately a great deal of evidence indicates that in the foreseeable future the less fortunate will face mass migration, while the well-to-do will have to invest enormous sums to secure cities and infrastructure.

In a globalised world, insecurity, disease, extreme weather, migration and depleted biodiversity will affect us all.

The challenges may seem insurmountable, but I am cautiously optimistic.

ASEM represents 63 per cent of the world's population and 60 per cent of global GDP. Asian growth has been double that of Europe for the past two decades, Asian investments in green tech are larger than the rest of the world's put together, and the rise of the Asian middle class may be one of the biggest changes over the next generation.

According to some projections the Asian middle class will grow to more than 3 billion by 2030, up from slightly over a half a billion today. Whatever the numbers, the trend is evident. This means that Asian growth will be key for global growth and in lowering global poverty, but it will also tax our environment if not managed well.

In a world that is becoming more and more affluent, a growing urban middle class will want clean air, safe food and cities that are safe from extreme weather. And they will hold their leaders accountable. I believe that Asia will have no less an interest in climate and security than Europe, and probably even more.

We are in this together: south and north, west and east.

Our global institutions and international forums, including ASEM, must be recognised as key parts of the equation. We can only solve global challenges together, be it through the Global Goals and Agenda 2030 or COP21.

Climate change has a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable and poorest people in the world. It adversely affects security in fragile settings where governance is weak and institutional capacity to deal with shocks and crises is low.

We therefore need to support capacity-building and strengthen resilience. Sustainable management of natural resources, livelihood programmes,

disaster risk management, and mechanisms for early warning and early action are equally important aspects in this regard – including here in the ASEM context.

A legally binding agreement in Paris is a crucial step towards a more sustainable and peaceful world.

We have to be concrete about what we need to do, and how to get it done. Adaptation and climate finance are essential parts of a new climate agreement. Sweden remains committed to the goal of mobilising USD 100 billion annually by 2020.

Furthermore, we need to provide extra financing to help fragile states build capacity. This is why Sweden has made the largest per capita commitment to the new Green Climate Fund.

Sweden is also one of the largest donors to the Adaptation Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Global Environmental Facility.

ASEM friends, we represent the bulk of humanity, the global economy and investments in green solutions. We are also on the receiving end of many of the challenges of today and tomorrow. We do not merely have an interest in working together on the climate and security nexus. We have a duty to do it: for ourselves and for our children.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs's speech at the Open Debate of the UN Security Council on the Peace process in the Middle East

Published 24 October 2015 Updated 24 October 2015

Check upon delivery.

Mr. President,

I would like to thank Spain for organising this timely meeting and Foreign Minister García-Margallo for presiding over it. I would also like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson for his remarks this morning.

I welcome the Secretary-General's visit to the region and as he said in Jerusalem earlier this week the terror attacks against civilians are deplorable. Such random attacks make every place unsafe and every person a potential victim. We are deeply concerned about the deaths on both sides, and almost two thousand injured, so far in October, a vast majority of them Palestinians. The Israeli response must be proportionate. All perpetrators must be brought to justice. Excessive use of force must not be used. A further escalation of violence would have unforeseen consequences. There is an urgent need for leadership, responsibility and restraint.

Mr. President,

One year ago, Sweden decided to recognise the State of Palestine. Our recognition aimed at making the parties to the conflict less unequal. It aimed at supporting moderate Palestinians and Israelis alike, providing a positive input into the dynamics of the dormant Middle East Peace Process, and to send a clear and convincing message of hope to younger generations that there is an alternative to violence and to the so called status quo. As we have

seen in recent weeks, the absence of hope is one of the greatest challenges facing the prospect of peace and the vision of a two-state solution.

It is not too late for initiatives for de-escalation, confidence building and peace in the region.

- Now it is time to create conditions for a results oriented peace process, including confidence building measures such as settlement freeze;
- Now it is time for the full implementation of agreements reached between Palestine and Israel;
- Now it is time to end the isolation of Gaza, and for all factions in Palestine to cooperate;
- Now it is time to remove obstacles for economic development in all of Palestine, including access to area C and Gaza;
- Now it is time for an international recommitment regarding clear parameters and realistic time frames for negotiations and an end to the occupation.

We must not lose track of the real goal: a negotiated two-state solution and an end of the occupation where both Palestine and Israel can live side by side in peace and security. This Council should lead the way.

Mr. President,

The recent escalation of the violence in Syria is deeply concerning. The present situation more than ever calls for complete, genuine and concrete support to the Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura and a political solution. This humanitarian crisis is the world's largest in modern time. Sweden shoulders its responsibility in three ways: Firstly, we now receive 3,000 Syrian refugees every week and we have so far received 100,000, although I know it is a small number compared to the neighbouring countries Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. Secondly, Sweden has so far contributed with more than 213 million US dollars in humanitarian assistance. Thirdly, in addition to our humanitarian assistance Sweden will allocate another 220 million dollars over the coming five years through a new Syria Crisis Strategy. I therefore encourage all others present here today to step up your engagement.

Throughout the conflict in Syria, women and girls have been targeted on the basis of their gender. Sexual violence is systematic and widespread amongst many warring parties, including used as a tactic of terror by ISIL. But Syrian women are not only victims but also actors. That is why I am hosting a meeting on Syrian women peacebuilders tomorrow morning.

Mr. President,

Lebanon is one of the most affected countries by the conflict in Syria. Domestic stability in Lebanon is key. Lebanese leaders need to set their differences aside and elect a new President without any further delay. But Lebanon also needs and deserves more international support. Lebanon, led ably by Prime Minister Tammam Salam, is hosting more than 1.2 million who have fled the war in Syria. Sweden's substantial humanitarian assistance and our contribution to the Trust Fund for Lebanon, managed by the World Bank, will soon be complemented by increased development assistance. I strongly encourage others to follow suit.

Mr. President,

As mentioned, the vicious cycle of direct and indirect violence has to be broken. Security cannot be achieved through bombs or rockets, war or violence, humiliation or threats. Genuine security can only be achieved through peace. We need to take our responsibility. We owe this to the children and future generations in Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and other countries in the region.

We need to restore the hope of a better future.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Opening Statement by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström: "Syrian Women Peacebuilders"

Published 24 October 2015 Updated 24 October 2015

Side event in the UN on Syrian Women Peacebuilders, 23 October 2015. Check upon delivery.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here this morning with Kvinna till Kvinna, our strategic partners and so many friends – Ms. Zainab Bangura, SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Mr. Yannick Glemarec, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women. I also wish to extend a warm welcome to Ms. Rabheb Alwany from the Badael Research Institute. And I am pleased that we will also hear from Special Envoy Mr. Staffan de Mistura, whom I know – in his challenging task that we fully support – is a key advocate for the inclusion of Syrian women in the political process.

We are here today to learn from the experiences of the brave and dedicated women from Syria who amid violence and terror – and despite the risk to their own and their families' lives – continue the struggle for peace and security. This is a fight that does not involve weapons or brute force – but dialogue and conflict resolution. Your bravery and commitment deserve our full support.

The escalation of the violence in Syria in recent weeks is deeply concerning. The crucial efforts towards a political solution are more important than ever. The present situation calls for complete, genuine and concrete support to the Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura and his efforts. The fact that the international community, including the Security Council, has failed to stop

this blood-bath for four harrowing years is simply disgraceful. None of the Security Council's resolutions on Syria have been implemented.

The humanitarian crisis in Syria is the world's largest in modern time. Parallel to intensifying our efforts in support of a political solution Sweden shoulders its responsibility in three ways. Firstly, Sweden is now receiving 3,000 refugees from Syria every week, amounting to 100,000 since the outbreak of the conflict. After Germany we have received the most Syrian refugees in Europe, although I know it pales compared to the neighbouring countries Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. Secondly, Sweden has so far contributed more than 213 million US dollars in humanitarian assistance to alleviate the Syria crisis. Thirdly, in addition to our humanitarian assistance, Sweden will allocate another 220 million dollars over the coming five years through a new Syria Crisis Strategy. The Syria crisis is unprecedented in recent times so our support needs to be unprecedented.

Ladies and gentlemen,

When I was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden a year ago, I was asked about my priorities, and my answer was clear: we will pursue a feminist foreign policy. This means that we aim to strengthen the human rights of women, improve women's access to resources and increase women's representation – in times of war, and in times of peace. It also means that we will apply a gender perspective in our political analyses and include and listen to the voices of both women and men. This event today is a good example of what a feminist foreign policy means in practice. It means combining our political and diplomatic work with development cooperation, and providing space for and giving a voice to women peacebuilders.

I welcome the unique report that is being launched today. It reveals how active Syrian women are in efforts to de-escalate violence and promote initiatives for peace, in a very dangerous environment where the personal risks are extreme. I applaud your work and look forward to hearing about opportunities for the growing women's movement for peace.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me take this opportunity to highlight three areas that Sweden prioritises in our work for women, peace and security in Syria.

Firstly, indisputable evidence, as highlighted by the recently launched Global Study, has shown that women's participation leads to more sustainable

peace. Women's organisations and women leaders have knowledge, experience and expertise that must be brought to the table. We simply cannot afford to ignore this in Syria. In the search of the political solution that Syria so desperately needs, political participation for all must be secured: both women and men must feel that they have a stake in their future. The importance of adequate representation of women in the political process is key and we are in close dialogue with the Special Envoy in this regard.

Local peacebuilding efforts carried out by women – often with great impact but little visibility – must be supported. The work of *Kvinna till Kvinna* in Syria, which Sweden supports, is crucial in building networks of agents at the grassroots level to drive change bottom-up. Sweden has worked with female peacebuilders, women's networks, women human rights defenders and lawyers and activists in Syria during the last three years, in strong partnership with *Kvinna till Kvinna*. The report launched here today is one example of our support.

Secondly, conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence is a core security challenge that must be firmly addressed. Throughout the conflict in Syria, women and girls have been targeted on the basis of their gender. Sexual violence is systematic and widespread amongst many warring parties, and used as a tactic of terror by ISIL. Women and girls from Syria are sold as commodities among extremist groups and are repeatedly exposed to horrendous acts. According to the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry, Assad regime forces have arrested female lawyers, journalists and peace activists. Women have suffered rape and other forms of sexual violence by regime personnel in detention facilities. It is time to speak up louder against these horrendous crimes, to support the victims, prevent stigmatisation and make sure that perpetrators are brought to justice. Sweden fully supports SRSG Zainab Bangura in her tireless efforts to address the issue of sexual violence in armed conflict and look forward to taking part of the details in her seven point plan.

Promoting women's participation in prevention, mitigation and peacebuilding efforts is imperative and key to countering radicalisation and terrorism. Empowering women and girls is an essential part of building peaceful communities that are less susceptible to the threat of radicalisation. Yet women's potential as peacebuilders to challenge extremist narratives, promote social cohesion and prevent radicalisation remains an untapped resource, in Syria and elsewhere. This needs to change.

Thirdly, I would like to draw attention to the plight of women human rights defenders. We know that fighting for peace and women's rights often comes at a high price. Women human rights defenders that Sweden has consulted have all spoken at length about the threats and risks they face. One of these women had a fresh bruise on her face – from an assault by unidentified men who wanted to frighten her into silence. Such acts are all too common. Women human rights defenders across the globe face threats, stigmatisation, harassment and violence. They are being persecuted, beaten and sometimes even raped or killed. This is unacceptable. We need to step up efforts to prevent these acts and protect those who struggle for peace and gender equality.

Sustainable solutions and measures to address root causes of violence are necessary. Sweden vows to continue promoting women's social, political and economic empowerment and to counter narratives that reinforce negative gender roles. We believe that it is crucial to engage men and boys in this work – to change behaviour and attitudes. We will also highlight the importance of supporting and finding better methods to protect women human rights defenders in our revised National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, which will be adopted next year.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Finally, I wish to mention that the new strategy for the Syria crisis that I mentioned will include efforts to strengthen the capacity of Syrian civil society and women's networks to contribute to peacebuilding. Gender equality, human rights, and prevention and rehabilitation of sexual violence will be top priorities in this strategy.

Last week, the Security Council adopted a new Women, Peace and Security resolution (2242). Let us use this resolution as an opportunity for all of us to do better and step up efforts to advance women's contribution to lasting peace and security. As a representative of a feminist government I can assure you that we are fully committed to do just that – do better – in our work to enhance gender equality and promote women as actors for peace.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs at UN Side Event on “Supporting Women’s Role in the Implementation of the Malian Peace Accords”

Published 22 October 2015 Updated 22 October 2015

Side Event initiative, by UN Women and Sweden, United Nations, New York, 21 October 2015. Please, check against delivery.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed extremely timely to meet here today to focus on women’s role in the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The Agreement, finally signed by all parties on June 20th, provides a historic opportunity to address inequalities, the distribution of resources, democratic decision-making, the rule of law and bringing those responsible for human rights abuses to justice. It must also be an opportunity to ensure the active involvement of both women and men. The low level of female participation during the Algiers negotiations must not lead to low female participation in the implementation process and institutions.

I welcome the commitments made to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security through the adoption of Mali’s second National Action Plan. The peace accord and the new National Action Plan are important first steps that lay the foundation for the work to come. But now is the time to move from policy to action, from

words to deeds. All parties must stand by their commitments to the peace agreement and the ceasefire if people are to experience a tangible peace dividend. Strong commitment to the political process is necessary to reach long-lasting reconciliation and prosperity.

The primary responsibility for delivering on the commitments made rests with the Malian parties. Nevertheless, the international community must remain firmly engaged and assist in making the implementation of the peace agreement and the National Action Plan transparent and effective. You can count on Sweden's continued support in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Enhancing gender equality and the contribution of women to peace and security are top priorities for the Swedish Government. We believe that promoting gender equality not only means promoting the economic, political and social empowerment of women – it also means promoting development and conflict prevention. When I was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden a year ago, I was asked about my priorities, and my answer was clear: we will pursue a feminist foreign policy. The aim of this policy is to increase women's representation, strengthen the human rights of women, and improve women's access to resources – in times of war, and in times of peace. Let me elaborate on these three key areas of common interest.

The first aspect is **representation**. Women need to be represented in decision-making bodies at all levels. Only through women's active participation can we transform agendas so that the needs and interests of women are truly reflected and addressed.

Peacebuilding needs to be *inclusive*. Indisputable evidence, as highlighted by the recently launched Global Study, has shown that women's participation leads to more sustainable peace. This is no less true in Mali. We welcome the fact that the overall objective of Mali's National Action Plan is to promote women's participation in the implementation of the Malian Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. The engagement of women in this critical phase of the transition will support the process of cementing a fragile peace and also contribute to expanding the basis for a more inclusive and democratic post-conflict Mali. Women have a key role to play in building trust and reconciliation, guaranteeing the provision of basic state services in rural areas and informing the population about the content of the peace accord. They can play key roles in the disarmament and reintegration process. Let us step up efforts to ensure that this opportunity – to ensure an inclusive peace

process – is not an opportunity missed.

The second key aspect is **rights**. It should be evident and go without question that women's rights are human rights. Unfortunately, this is far from a reality today. Women's rights are far too often seen as a separate and marginal optional extra. This has to change. We must continue our efforts to ensure equal social, economic and political rights. In Mali, increased access to education, to income-generating work and to sexual, reproductive and maternal health would not only bring a better socio-economic situation for women but also contribute to the economic growth of the country as a whole.

Gender-based and sexual violence remains a real obstacle to women's empowerment. Last year's report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence reported allegations of conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls in Mali. Progress in the investigation and prosecution of sexual violence was reported to be limited due to threats against local monitors and the constrained capacity of national justice institutions. Displaced women have faced an elevated risk of sexual violence due to the lack of community-based protection mechanisms and the proximity of armed groups to population centres, making it particularly dangerous to access isolated water points and forests.

It is of the utmost importance that the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali addresses conflict-related sexual violence by bringing perpetrators to justice. This is necessary to reach reconciliation. The reconciliation process also has to be careful when releasing individuals in custody, so as not to release persons linked to human rights violations, including conflict-related sexual violence.

We need to ensure accountability and strengthen legal mechanisms to stop impunity for these crimes. Nothing short of zero tolerance can be accepted. We welcome the fact that Mali's National Action Plan contains objectives and actions to build the capacity of institutional and community actors in preventing conflict-related gender-based violence.

The third aspect is **resources**. To achieve real change, political commitments need to be accompanied by sustainable financing. Women's organisations need our moral, political and financial support. Sweden is committed to continue to support and fund women's organisations in conflict and post-conflict countries. We have increased this support threefold over the last five years, but we will strive to do even more.

We foresee a commitment of 140 million USD in our development cooperation with Mali over the next five years to support peace, stability and sustainable development throughout Mali. Our continued support to development in Mali will be conflict and gender-sensitive and it will strive to support inclusive peace and state building.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to conclude by reaffirming my Government's commitment to support the Malian peace process and women's active participation long term. Sweden is present on the ground as a long-term cooperation partner to the Malian people, as well as contributing troops to MINUSMA. Around 250 Swedish men and women are present in Timbuktu, contributing to the implementation of the mission's mandate of bringing stability and protecting civilian women and men, boys and girls.

Recently my Government also decided to engage the Folke Bernadotte Academy in supporting peace and stability in Mali. The Folke Bernadotte Academy is the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development, and it has an overall mission to support international peace and crisis management operations. Contributing to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Mali will be one of its main objectives.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Now it is time to accelerate our efforts. Sustainable development, peace and security can never be achieved if half the population is excluded. Let us ensure that women's voices are heard and promote women's active and meaningful participation in building the future of Mali.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

European cooperation – Why we must stay united in times of internal and external challenges

Published 08 October 2015 Updated 08 October 2015

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at a public lecture for students and interested parties, at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius, in connection with the Swedish State Visit to Lithuania, 8 October 2015. Check against delivery.

Ladies and gentlemen,

“Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan.

It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.”

These were the words of Robert Schuman, one of the founders of what we now call the European Union.

The extraordinary enlargement of the Union in 2004 is one of the greatest achievements in modern European history.

Our Baltic Sea no longer divides us. It unites us.

I am proud that Sweden – and not least my predecessor and friend the late Anna Lindh – worked hard for enlargement.

Lithuania and the other Baltic States answered with impressive commitment to progress and reform and joined the EU as full members and equal partners. Back then, European politics were steeped in confidence.

The EU adopted a foreign policy strategy around that time, just a little over a decade ago. It began with the following words:

Never so prosperous, so secure, nor so free.

This description of our European continent was, at that time, a fitting one.

But we are now living in times of greater uncertainty, in which these words sound less convincing.

In the first draft of the EU's new foreign policy strategy, scheduled to be adopted in 2016, the wording has changed.

The world, it says, is "*more connected, more contested and more complex.*"

Our challenges are visible.

They are visible in our neighbourhood, in Russia's aggression in Ukraine, and war, terrorism and refugee crises in Europe's southern neighbourhood.

And they are visible globally, where shortcomings in our common institutions sometimes occur.

Our humanitarian systems are overstretched by the world's forty armed conflicts, of which eleven are full-scale wars.

Refugee flows are reaching the levels seen during the Second World War.

It is against this backdrop that we have to shape foreign policy.

This is why I will talk about the challenges we have to tackle together. I will begin with the EU, then move to the EU's neighbourhood and conclude with some global challenges.

* * *

In his State of the Union address a few weeks ago, President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker said: "*This is not the time for business as usual*".

The economic and financial crises have indeed been followed by political tensions, both within Member States and within the framework of the EU as a whole.

We need to regain a steady course forward, where cohesion, solidarity and a new dynamic will help us achieve the goals of peace and prosperity that are at the heart of our Union.

What Europe needs today is an EU that focuses on employment, sustainability, and security in our neighbourhood.

Our common goals must be lower unemployment, decent working conditions, higher growth and a better political climate in which people's frustration is not exploited, and populism and short-sightedness no longer triumph.

European countries need to regain their self-confidence, because we need strong cooperation for a Europe that is competitive.

Now, as before, this cooperation must be open to new members. And it must also be the basis of a strong common European foreign policy.

The new European Security Strategy must therefore build on sound analysis of changes in the rest of the world and changes to the EU's relative strength.

The Strategy, due to be completed next year, will guide the 28 Member States in shaping how the EU should best relate to the rest of the world.

Also, much of what we have gained from this cooperation sometimes seems to be forgotten or taken for granted.

So let's remember what Robert Schuman said: concrete achievements create solidarity. We need a strong Lithuania and a strong Sweden in a strong European Union.

* * *

Our second challenge is the European neighbourhood – our neighbourhood.

It has been our ambition to contribute to peace, freedom and stability. But we are now forced to deal with serious crises on several fronts.

I am deeply concerned about developments in Russia.

The act of aggression that Russia has committed against Ukraine is the greatest challenge to European peace and security since the end of the Cold War.

This is accompanied by a propaganda machine in full gear.

We have together agreed the fundamental rules that must apply to European peace and security. These must also apply to Moscow, now and in the future.

The right of all countries to determine their own future must be respected.

We therefore insist on the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The current cease-fire and the continued discussions in the Trilateral Contact Group are steps in the right direction towards achieving the purpose of the Minsk agreements: withdrawal of all Russian troops and military equipment, and re-establishment of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including Ukraine's full control of its border.

The EU needs to stick together to hinder and contribute to make more costly any form of Russian aggression.

We must also stand firm in the face of Russian trade sanctions and intimidation, despite the economic pain.

And we will remain one of the most ambitious countries in our efforts to help Ukraine succeed.

The success of the Ukrainian reform process is of enormous strategic importance to Ukraine, to the broader region and to the EU.

In at least three areas, the EU and its Member States could do more: additional financial support, support of energy reforms and support to reforms needed for visa liberalisation.

At the same time, we must maintain both our bilateral relations and the EU's contacts with Russia. It is, after all, our largest neighbour. We cannot give up on people-to-people contacts with Russia.

To the east, we also have the Eastern Partnership countries.

We will give our full support to the countries wishing to pursue the path of European reforms and European integration. The choice is their own, and there should be no place for threats or interference from any other nation.

At the recent summit in Riga, both the EU and the six partner countries reaffirmed their support for this joint project.

It will not be easy, but I am convinced that this is the right path to take.

During my first few months as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I visited Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.

I made the visit to Moldova with my close Lithuanian colleague Linas (Linkevicius). The young people we met there see the same future in and with Europe as the young people of Lithuania, Poland and Romania did 20 years ago.

Both Sweden and Lithuania have an important role to play in keeping these European prospects alive.

We must offer a path forward and ensure that the door is open to the countries that want and manage to make it all the way – that meet the requirements, regulations and conditions that apply to EU Member States in the future.

I am therefore very happy to announce that Linas and I will visit Ukraine together later this autumn.

* * *

However, external challenges and commitments are not limited to those in the east, as we are witnessing at an accelerating pace.

Our neighbours in the south also need our full commitment.

The war in Syria is no closer to resolution and the Russian air strikes in Syria risk derailing the UN-led political track. I strongly urge Russia to focus on the political process rather than on military escalation.

The barbaric atrocities of ISIL continue. The fighting in Libya is tearing the country apart. Sexual violence is increasingly used as both a strategic weapon and a source of income.

The human suffering is immense. As a result of these conflicts and other structural challenges in the region, refugees are looking for a way out.

Millions of people are fleeing to neighbouring countries. And many take the route across the Mediterranean or the Western Balkans to the EU.

Of the 60 million refugees worldwide, about one million are expected to seek

refugee in Europe in 2015. The crisis is acute and must be met through a comprehensive and united EU approach to migration.

The solidarity that Robert Schuman spoke about in 1950 is needed today. And perhaps more than ever before.

The European Union is a global actor with a strong commitment to human rights, democracy and rule of law.

The world expects us to respond to the current refugee situation according to our values.

And we should expect nothing less of ourselves. The right of an individual to seek asylum is a human right under international law.

In 2014 alone, Sweden offered asylum to 81 000 people – the highest per capita number in Europe. Since the outbreak of the conflict in Syria, almost 95 000 Syrians have fled to Sweden.

We will continue to do our part, but other Member States must do theirs – in the spirit of European solidarity.

At the same time, we must respect the historic and economic differences between EU countries.

Lack of immigration experience and structures for hosting and integrating refugees is an important aspect in this regard.

But immigration should never be seen as a burden. European countries with declining populations require an influx of workers from other countries. Today, one in six people living in Sweden was born in another country.

Many of the refugees from Syria are well educated. They will be able to join the workforce as soon as they have mastered the basics of the new language.

We Europeans should share our experiences in this current situation.

We need to discuss how to best integrate newcomers from different countries into the workforce and into our communities, how to provide them with opportunities and ensure their equal rights.

But above all, we need to work on two tracks simultaneously.

First, with winter approaching, the lack of resources for basic humanitarian work on the ground must be solved. Secondly, we need to address the underlying factors causing people to flee – be they conflict, oppression or economic vulnerability.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to say a few words about global challenges and the role of the United Nations.

In recent years, we have been forced to witness our collective inability to resolve major problems. And I wonder whether the gap between problems and solutions may, in fact, be growing.

Finding a way to reduce this gap must be a priority of Swedish and European foreign policy in the years to come. To succeed, it is especially important to develop our dialogue also with countries outside our own neighbourhood, many of which are making rapid headway.

For this reason, Sweden is now renewing old friendships with countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

We also believe that the UN, which remains the backbone of the international system, must be strengthened. Sweden's candidacy for the Security Council is an expression of our readiness to listen and act with integrity.

And let me be clear on this last point. The Swedish Government sees no contradiction between a firm commitment to EU foreign policy and strong engagement in the UN. On the contrary. The EU needs a strong UN just as the UN benefits from a strong EU.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to close with a quote by my colleague and friend, Lithuanian President, Dalia Grybauskaitė.

“(...) we together joined the European Union, becoming partners in a unified area of freedom, democracy and solidarity. An area founded on

respect for human rights and other freedoms. An area that brings down barriers between nations and people – where the challenges of your neighbour are also your challenges. And all of this is built on a strong foundation of solidarity.”

* * *

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak here today.

I have done so against a serious backdrop.

“Never so prosperous, so secure, nor so free” has changed into *“more connected, more contested and more complex”*.

Time will always change, but the foundation of our European Union must not.

As always, it is about solidarity.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs in round table discussion: "United in Combating Human Trafficking"

Published 08 October 2015 Updated 08 October 2015

Round table discussion in connection with the Swedish State Visit to Lithuania, "United in Combating Human Trafficking", Constitutional Hall, Seimas (Lithuanian Parliament), Vilnius, 8 October 2015.

Your Majesty,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to participate in this round-table discussion on an important topic. I represent a feminist government. As a feminist government we put gender equality at the heart of decision-making, in every policy area. Gender equality is an integral part of a modern welfare state and democracy. It is also key component in the pursuit of peace and security.

Gender and trafficking are interconnected at many levels.

Sexual exploitation is the most widespread form of human trafficking in the European Union, and women and girls make up the overwhelming majority of the victims. Trafficking of women and girls is a form of violence against women, rooted in gender inequalities and social structures that we need to acknowledge and address.

In Sweden, in our national work to counter trafficking we focus on the three Ps:

Prevention

Protection of victims

Prosecution of perpetrators.

Governments, in collaboration with civil society, must work to prevent trafficking and provide protection to those who fall victim to it. We need to improve instruments to detect the crime, identify those involved, protect and rehabilitate victims, and prosecute the traffickers.

Trafficking for sexual purposes and prostitution are closely related. In our view, the fight against trafficking for sexual purposes cannot be separated from the fight against prostitution. Where there is a market for prostitution, traffickers can profit from the sexual exploitation of women and girls.

In order to curb demand, Sweden criminalised the purchase of sexual services in 1999. It is a criminal offence to buy sex in Sweden. Sweden does not criminalise the seller of sexual services, because women and girls who are in prostitution or the sex industry are already in a vulnerable position and should not be subject to further stigma and double victimisation.

The sex trade is dehumanising and unacceptable, and this is reflected in the Swedish legal framework. Prohibiting the purchase of sexual services has proven to be an effective tool in the fight against human trafficking for sexual purposes. According to Swedish police and prosecutors, the law has made Sweden a less attractive destination country for traffickers. In addition, the law is believed to have a deterrent effect on demand. The number of men in Sweden who buy sex has dropped significantly, with an estimated decrease of 50 per cent since the introduction of the law.

For us, the fight against prostitution and sexual trafficking forms an important part of gender equality policy. As long as there is a market for prostitution, which in turn opens up opportunities for traffickers, we have failed to respect the human rights of women. Gender inequality makes women and girls vulnerable to traffickers. In order to end trafficking, we must build societies that offer women and men, girls and boys equal opportunities. The response to human trafficking – including the work of law enforcement authorities – must take into account the gendered nature of the

problem. The European Institute for Gender Equality is undoubtedly a relevant actor on these issues and I am looking forward to visiting it later today.

International cooperation is crucial to success in combating trafficking. We need to work together and learn from each other.

Trafficking in persons is a global concern. It is a transboundary multi-billion dollar industry that requires multilateral responses. The UN Office on Drugs and Crimes, UNODC, is mandated to work against Trafficking in Persons. UNODC provides capacity building to member states and helps increase visibility of successful prosecutions and convictions. Moreover, UNICEF works to prevent child trafficking which affects an estimated 1.2 million children each year. The United Nations is a powerful arena for cooperation.

The Task Force against Trafficking within the Council of Baltic Sea States is a good example of international cooperation. The Task Force is working on several projects to counter human trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region through preventive and protective activities. Activities aim at strengthening assistance to victims, promoting cooperation, abolishing gaps in existing approaches and improving legislation. To this end, the Task Force works to facilitate and promote coordination and exchange of knowledge, results and best practices between existing local, regional, national and international initiatives.

We must work together at all levels: nationally and internationally. Sweden and Lithuania must continue the work together. Our countries are already closely linked on this issue, and this has proved successful in our efforts to combat organised trafficking networks. I am convinced that this round-table discussion among our experts will lead to greater knowledge of this modern form of slavery and how we can stop it.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Commemoration of the Seventieth Anniversary of the United Nations

Published 01 October 2015 Updated 01 October 2015

United Nations, New York, 1 October 2015. Please check against delivery.

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, colleagues,

Events are often referred to as historic. This week, that description rings true.

We have set ourselves a new, universal agenda for sustainable development. We are in the midst of reviewing the peace and security work of the UN. And we are celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations – of our United Nations.

Anniversaries are, as pointed out in the invitation to this debate, an opportunity to both reflect on the past and to look ahead, to both learn from experiences and to think boldly and innovatively about the future.

I would like to limit myself to making three points.

The first one is partnerships. The UN has a unique mandate, scope, presence and resources. Yet, the organization must work with others to achieve sustainable peace and security. Cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations has developed impressively during past years, but there is room for further action. The presence of you, representatives of regional and sub-regional organizations, here today is very important, and I appreciate the perspectives that you have shared with us. We welcome that regional and sub-regional actors are increasingly becoming first responders to a majority

of the crises in Africa.

We need to further institutionalize this cooperation, define burden-sharing, and ensure predictable financing of regional organizations' capacity to respond to conflicts. Strategic partnerships are crucial to ensuring early warning – and, even more importantly, early action.

Partnerships are key also within the UN. We should promote a well-integrated UN family, with a common vision, and an integrated approach to security and development. The joint DPA and UNDP programme on building capacity for conflict prevention is one of many good examples.

Dialogue is needed also with civil society – in our own countries and in conflict areas, to deepen our analysis and explain our actions. By drawing on civil society actors' knowledge and experience, we gain a deeper understanding of local realities, which in turn is a prerequisite for effective UN engagement. I am pleased to see representatives of civil society here today.

Secondly, the women, peace and security agenda. Achieving gender equality and strengthening women's participation in decision-making at all levels represents one of the main outstanding issues of the 21st century. We must secure women's rights and active involvement, or fail to achieve development, peace and security. The global study on resolution 1325 will be a critical contribution. But let us not forget our responsibility as Member States. Sweden is currently reviewing its national action plan, to set priorities and intensify efforts. We are also looking in to ways of strengthening the role of women in mediation – as mediators, but also as representatives of the parties around the negotiating table.

The other two reviews – of peace operations and of the peacebuilding architecture – are also key in strengthening the peace and security agenda of our organization. Together, they form a great opportunity – and responsibility – to adapt our instruments and policies.

This leads me to my third point: a strong, modern and reformed UN, with an effective and responsive Security Council. Sweden would like to see a more effective Council, equipped to meet emerging forms of conflict in an increasingly complex world. We need a Council that reflects the geopolitical realities of today, where Africa, Asia and Latin America are adequately represented. Enhanced consultations with, and transparency in relation to troop and police contributing countries, as well as regional and sub-regional

organizations, not least the African Union, will undoubtedly lead to greater effectiveness and legitimacy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations once wrote “never measure the height of a mountain until you have reached the top. Then you will see how low it was.”

Perhaps these words could serve as inspiration when we face the global challenges ahead of us. We have made great achievements – of which we should be proud. We see fantastic opportunities ahead – which should be seized. But we still also face tremendous challenges – which we must face up to.

The conflicts in 2015 may be more complex and multifaceted than at the time when the UN charter was written. However, changed circumstances do not alter our responsibilities. But it challenges us to adapt our approach and response.

We must make our organization fit for these tasks, and ensure that it reaches its full potential – building on the organizational wisdom of the first 70 years of the United Nations.

Sweden, as one of the largest overall contributors to the UN, wants to do its part. Sweden’s candidacy for a seat on the Security Council for the period of 2017-18 is a concrete manifestation of this readiness and willingness to contribute and to take responsibility for meeting the challenges.

Let me end by thanking the General Assembly and its President for organizing this debate, and for allowing us to take a moment to reflect and commemorate, and to mobilize new energy and commitments.

Most people would probably see it appropriate to slow down by the age of 70. I believe that the opposite holds true for the United Nations. Work needs to be done. Or with Hammarskjöld’s words: there is another mountain top to climb.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs on "Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence"

Published 01 October 2015 Updated 01 October 2015

Swedish US Side Event, UNGA Week, New York, 1 October 2015

Secretary of State John Kerry, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

Transforming the way gender-based violence is addressed in humanitarian emergencies is a challenge which requires our strong, sustained and collective political commitment.

I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to Secretary of State John Kerry and the United States for the dedication and engagement shown as leader of the Call to Action. I am convinced that the Road map, which we are launching here today, will serve as a powerful tool in driving change.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the states and humanitarian agencies who, by joining the Call to Action, have committed themselves to making significant changes to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in conflicts and natural disasters. I truly believe that systematic and coordinated collective action is imperative in order to achieve real progress, both in policy and, most importantly, on the ground.

Gender-based violence is a global structural problem that continues to plague every country on earth, regardless of economic wealth, culture or geographical location, both in times of war and peace. At the global level, it is estimated that one out of three women are subjected to violence during her

lifetime, a completely unacceptable figure.

We know that in conflicts, natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies, the threat of gender-based violence increases.

In my previous capacity as the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict I met regularly with women and children who had been subjected to the most horrendous forms of sexual violence. In warzones, rape was often being systematically employed as a weapon of war. On my first visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo a young woman explained to me that in her country, “a dead rat was worth more than the body of a woman”.

But not only armed conflict leads to increased levels of gender-based violence. As natural disasters tear down the social structures of society and increase vulnerability *especially* women and girls face a heightened risk of exploitation and abuse.

What becomes clear is that despite increased international attention in recent years, adequate measures to prevent and respond to gender-based violence are still not undertaken.

We know that gender-based violence occurs in each and every humanitarian emergency. We also know that it is underreported due to fears of stigma and reprisals. Addressing gender-based violence from the onset of an emergency saves lives and must become an integral part of every humanitarian response. This is the promise and purpose of the Call to Action initiative.

Ladies and gentlemen, gender-based violence can be prevented and stopped.

Immediate preventive actions, such as ensuring that there is sufficient lighting in refugee camps, must be combined with more long-term strategies. We need to address the root causes of gender-based violence. Such an approach includes promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls.

Last week, here in New York, our leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Combatting gender-based violence will be of fundamental importance if we are to reach several of the development goals. For, ladies and gentlemen, let me be clear: there can be no sustainable development and no sustainable peace if women and girls continue to be systematically discriminated, excluded, abused and exploited.

I am pleased to be here today as the incoming leader of the Call to Action. Promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls are critical priorities for the Swedish government. Last year we adopted a Feminist Foreign Policy, which means that a gender perspective is applied to all foreign policy areas. Addressing gender-based violence constitutes an integral part of this policy and we will continue to give this high priority, not least in our humanitarian assistance.

Now is the time to act. Pledges and high-level political commitments on gender-based violence must be translated into funding and concrete actions on the ground. I assure you that Sweden is committed to leading and advancing the Call to Action initiative - by striving to expand the partnership, through strong political advocacy and by supporting the effective implementation of the Road map. We look forward to working with all of you in realising the Call to Action goal.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the Security Council Ministerial Meeting

Published 30 September 2015 Updated 30 September 2015

New York, 30 September 2015 Check against delivery

Mr President,

Sweden aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like to make a few additional remarks in my national capacity.

Let me first thank the Russian Presidency for organising this ministerial meeting on countering the terrorist threat in the Middle East and North Africa.

Mr President,

Allow me to focus on two issues of particular concern to us.

Firstly, we must intensify our efforts to find political settlements to end the civil war in Syria and the violence in Iraq.

In the case of Syria, it is unacceptable that the conflict is in its fifth year. The Security Council has to take its responsibility in accordance with the UN Charter. This bloodbath must end.

Special Envoy de Mistura deserves our support in his efforts to find a political solution and urgently implement the Geneva Communiqué of 2012.

The Security Council should endorse the establishment of an international

contact group in support of Mr de Mistura's four working groups. I encourage key actors, including the United States, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Iran, to participate. The EU should also be actively involved.

The ultimate goal is a genuine political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, including the women of Syria, and enables them to determine their own future independently and democratically.

In the fight against ISIL and terrorism, the Syrian regime must contribute by ending its attacks on civilians and committing to a genuine political transition. Let us not forget that the Syrian regime is responsible for the overwhelming part of the atrocities committed in Syria. Atrocities which may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, and which cannot be tolerated by the international community.

In Iraq, military and stabilisation efforts should be underpinned by a political process of national reconciliation and inclusive politics. Prime Minister Abadi has taken bold steps to include the Sunni community and all other groups in the governance of Iraq. Sweden will continue to play an active role in the Coalition against ISIL in Iraq. We are participating in the group on stabilisation – a key to a democratic, stable and unified Iraq. Yesterday my Prime Minister pledged USD 4 million to the UNDP Stabilisation Fund for Iraq. We are a major donor of humanitarian aid. And we are participating in the coalition's military training efforts in Northern Iraq.

Mr President,

Secondly, we need to counter the widespread and systematic violence against women and children. By using girls and women as sex slaves, and rape as a method of warfare, the Syrian regime and terrorist groups such as ISIL have committed flagrant human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law.

This matter is not new to me. When I briefed the Security Council in my previous capacity as the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflicts, I used to highlight that my visits in the field taught me that that sexual violence was often considered either as something inevitable, unspeakable or as a lesser crime.

And now, the use of sexual violence has been taken to horrific new levels, when sexual violence is not only condoned, but openly commanded as a method of warfare.

This issue should be kept on the agenda of the Security Council, as it is a matter of international peace and security. Sweden welcomes the announcement by the Secretary-General yesterday on the presentation of a comprehensive plan of action on countering violent extremism and terrorism. I urge fellow UN Member States to support Special Representative Bangura's efforts. Sweden is committed to strengthening our support to victims and survivors of sexual violence. There must be accountability for sexual violence and an end to impunity.

If we look at the broader Middle East, there are also other conflicts – in Libya and Yemen – that require urgent political solutions.

Today we are addressing the immediate threat from ISIL. If we also look beyond, we have to address the broader security challenges of the region. It is necessary to revive the Middle East Peace Process, support good governance, strengthen post-conflict restoration and peacebuilding, as well as tackle climate change and find solutions to water management issues.

In conclusion, Mr President,

The values of democracy, human rights and equality remain our best defence against terrorism. And they can only be achieved through political settlements based on reconciliation and inclusiveness.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at high-level meeting to commemorate the International Day for the Total elimination of Nuclear Weapons

Published 30 September 2015 Updated 30 September 2015

New York, 30 September 2015 Check against delivery

Chairperson,

Let me start by expressing my sincere thanks to the initiators, conveners and participants of this meeting. Arranging a meeting on the total elimination of nuclear weapons a little less than two months since the 70th commemoration of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki gives us a special responsibility to bring remembrance into action.

Chairperson,

A few days ago, I participated in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) ministerial conference here at the UN. The CTBT has been an issue close to my heart ever since I campaigned to end nuclear testing in the South Pacific some 20 years ago. I was encouraged by the fact that the voices against testing resounded as strongly in the UN as they did all those years ago in the South Pacific.

And yet a ban on nuclear tests is just the beginning. As we learned 70 years ago, the use of nuclear weapons brings catastrophic destruction to human lives, creation and the environment on a scale that no single country, nor the international community, can hope to address.

Sweden's position is clear: the only real guarantee that these weapons will never be used again is their total elimination.

Chairperson,

Today, around 16 000 nuclear weapons remain, with a destructive power able to undo human civilisation many times over. This is simply unacceptable. We cannot continue to commemorate the victims of nuclear weapons year after year while at the same time accepting that these weapons still remain. We need to do more, much more.

All States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty have committed themselves to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. That commitment has to be brought into practical measures, change on the ground. One avenue ahead is the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons agenda, which has gathered a great deal of support among UN Member States. Sweden would welcome another international conference on this subject; there are still a number of humanitarian aspects of nuclear weapons that merit further study.

Another road forward is the re-establishment of an Open-ended Working Group under the UN General Assembly that can take nuclear disarmament forward in an effective and structured way. Sweden would like the mandate of the OEWG to be to agree on recommendations on concrete legal and practical measures to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. We expect all States in possession of nuclear weapons to participate in the work of an OEWG to push the disarmament agenda forward.

Chairperson,

My country strongly believes in international cooperation. Time and again, great strides forward have been achieved by countries coming together with a unity of purpose. We believe that there is very much a unity of purpose in the international community regarding the subject of today's meeting: the total elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Sweden stands ready to contribute and support solutions that can bring us closer to making this goal a reality.

Thank you Chairperson.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the high-level meeting “Champions for a New Approach to Peacebuilding”

Published 29 September 2015 Updated 29 September 2015

International Peace Institute (IPI), New York, 29 September 2015. Please check against delivery.

Thank you all for coming. From short and hectic meetings to something that is inherently long-term in nature: peacebuilding.

Let me also thank our co-hosts, the International Peace Institute and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.

In your opening speech yesterday, Mr President of the General Assembly, you noted that “never before has such a large share of humanity enjoyed so good a life, yet never before have we been at greater risk of fundamentally disrupting the basic living conditions on our small globe”. You stressed the linkages between development, peace and security and respect for human rights, and to make progress in each of these areas. Yesterday, unprecedented pledges were made by member states to UN peacekeeping. To quote Ambassador Power’s closing words; “these commitments have the power to transform the enterprise of peacekeeping”.

For peace to endure, peacekeeping needs to be complemented by equally effective peacebuilding. This meeting is aimed at exactly that: to strengthen the UN peacebuilding capacities.

I would like to put forward a call for a more proactive UN with reinforced capacity to respond to conflicts. I want to see a United Nations that puts

sustaining peace back at the core of its business – through ramping up conflict prevention capacity, adopting a holistic approach to peacebuilding and ensuring that all engagement is built on thorough political understanding.

To create such a shift we need political courage and determination. And we need leadership from Member States. Sweden is deeply committed to do its part.

Let me touch briefly on three specific areas, where we need more action:

Firstly, effective implementation of Resolution 1325 is crucial to achieving sustainable results. We know that early investments in inclusive peacebuilding processes that empower women lay a stronger foundation for reconciliation, which in turn contributes to reducing the risk of relapse. Together, we need to ensure that the Women, Peace and Security agenda is placed at the centre of our discussions and mainstreamed into all aspects and phases of UN engagement: analysis, planning, training and implementation.

Secondly, we must acknowledge that the UN is far from the only actor in this field. For Sweden, finding ways to improve cooperation between the UN and regional, and sub-regional, organisations such as the African Union is a priority. This means institutionalizing cooperation, define burden-sharing and ensure predictable financing of regional organization's capacity to respond to conflicts. Such strategic partnerships are crucial to ensuring early warnings – and, even more importantly, early action. We also need smart and inclusive partnerships with civil society. By drawing on these actors' knowledge and experiences we gain a deeper understanding of local realities, which in turn is a prerequisite for effective UN engagement.

Finally, if we are serious about adopting a new approach to peacebuilding, we need to make sure that our allocations of resources are aligned with our rhetoric. We are currently spending billions of dollars on humanitarian aid and peacekeeping, we should therefore invest upfront in conflict prevention. The review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, as well as the report of the High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, put forward innovative suggestions on financing, which we look forward to discussing with all of you over the coming months. We also need do better in demonstrating the results of our efforts by conveying the success stories, where peace was maintained and an escalation of violence was averted. The Peacebuilding Fund has demonstrated its unique added value for early, rapid and flexible support to peacebuilding. As a significant donor to the Fund we urge other to step in to ensure that a critical shortfall can be averted.

As the current chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Sweden will do its utmost to make sure that the commission capitalizes on this momentum.

We also need to relate to other initiatives. The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, is one important platform for promoting sustainable peace in fragile societies.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the Article XIV Conference

Published 29 September 2015 Updated 29 September 2015

Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the Article XIV Conference, United Nations, New York. 29 September 2015. Check against delivery.

Chairpersons,

Let me start by wishing Japan and Kazakhstan every success for their two-year term as Article XIV coordinators, and by thanking the Secretary-General for convening this important conference.

Chairpersons,

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is close to my heart. Twenty years ago, when I was Minister for Cultural Affairs, I campaigned actively to end nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

I was therefore particularly moved by the statement at this year's NPT Review Conference by my colleague Tony deBrum from the Marshall Islands. As a nine-year old, sitting on his father's fishing boat, he saw the sky turn red and felt the shock wave when the 1954 Castle Bravo test detonated at Bikini Atoll, with a yield of 15 megatons. And he was 200 miles from ground zero.

The effects on humans and nature of the over 2000 nuclear tests carried out over 50 years are severe. Test sites remain uninhabitable for humans, and land and pristine coral reefs have been destroyed. These effects serve as a stark reminder of the unacceptable and incalculable humanitarian and

environmental consequences that would result if nuclear weapons were ever used again. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty gives us hope that such a horrific scenario will not be repeated.

Nuclear disarmament remains a top priority of my Government. One of my first actions as Minister for Foreign Affairs was to add Sweden to the countries that support the Humanitarian Initiative. Sweden's strong support for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains steadfast. Indeed, the entire European Union is united behind this goal, which would be an important milestone on the path to achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons. And it is a step to which all States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty are committed.

Sweden's support for the CTBT was expressed through our hosting of the first substantive meeting of the CTBTO Group of Eminent Persons (GEM) last year. Among the participants were Dr Lassina Zerbo, Dr Hans Blix and High Representative Federica Mogherini, who will speak later today. In terms of technical support, the Swedish Defence Research Agency FOI recently began the development of a third generation of the SAUNA system for noble gas detection. We are pleased that the SAUNA system has proven its worth, most recently at the IFE on-site inspection exercise in Jordan. It is being installed at radionuclide stations around the world as part of the International Monitoring System.

Chairpersons,

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty gives us hope that my dream from all those years ago, and our shared vision of a more humane world in which nuclear testing remains a thing of the past, may come true. Today, we renew our call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular the eight remaining Annex 2 countries, to join us in realising that vision.

Thank you Chairpersons.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the UN High-level event about South Sudan

Published 29 September 2015 Updated 29 September 2015

Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the UN High-level event about South Sudan, on September 29.

Mr President, Mr Secretary General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The people of South Sudan have seen too much hardship and struggle for so young a nation. They deserve not only an end to the civil war, but a secure, peaceful and prosperous future, with equal and sustainable development benefitting all.

The meeting today is very timely, since it gives us an opportunity to welcome the signing of the new peace agreement and allows us to commend this step by the country's leaders. We now enter a critical phase where the agreement needs to be implemented in good faith and without delay. This will require hard work and commitment by all.

The mediators and partners of South Sudan deserve full recognition and gratitude of the international community. The efforts of neighbouring countries, the African Union, and in particular IGAD and its member states, have been key in bringing about this agreement. We must give these efforts our full support and I want to assure you that Sweden will continue to stand by the people of South Sudan.

As a priority, the signatories must do all in their power to ensure that the ceasefire holds. All levels of society and all ethnic groups must be involved in the implementation. This concerns not least women, who are important actors and agents of change. There needs to be active involvement and

participation of both women and men in formal as well as informal processes. Sustainable development, peace and security can never be achieved if half the population is excluded.

The successful implementation of the agreement also depends on ending impunity, again with a particular focus on violence against women.

Let us not lose sight of the still ongoing humanitarian crisis. Sweden was the fourth largest bilateral donor of humanitarian aid to South Sudan in 2014, with a total contribution of approximately 62 million US dollars. We continue to follow the situation closely, and have disbursed 22 million dollars so far this year.

Still, fragile as the situation is, we need to look ahead and bridge humanitarian aid with long term development. Sweden has therefore adopted a strategy for development cooperation with South Sudan to help rebuild critical basic institutions, with a particular focus on the health sector.

But, in our support, we also need to find ways to strengthen the cooperation between the UN and the African Union. Synergies need to be further developed in order to effectively address all aspects of conflict. We need to enhance regional capacities, including with adequate resourcing. Something we have made a main priority in our chairmanship of the UN Peacebuilding Commission.

In concluding, I would like to reiterate Sweden's commitment to work with South Sudan to help improve the quality of life of its people – fulfilling the great expectations that we all held at independence. Echoing President Kiir's conclusion in his Address to the Nation on 15 September: "Remember that it is our collective responsibility and love of our country that will make us succeed and feel respected always as 'One People, One Nation'."

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström in the Arctic conference in Alaska

Published 31 August 2015 Updated 02 September 2015

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström
at the GLACIER Conference in Anchorage, Alaska on
August 30-31, 2015.

Dear colleagues and friends,

The views you see on arriving in Anchorage are stunning.

In northern Sweden we have a suitable expression: “*Unnecessarily beautiful*”.

Looking at this landscape, I came to think of the late Rolf Edberg, a Swedish author and politician. Describing the role of the atmosphere, he wrote:

“Yonder, the blue mountains. Below them, a veil brushed across the continents, so thin that not even the finest brush could trace its like on any globe. But this veil is the precondition and home of all we understand by the concept of organic life”.

* * *

I would like to say a few words about science and climate change, then about the Arctic, and finally about political priorities.

* * *

As we are speaking, a joint US-Swedish polar expedition is exploring the retreating Peterman Glacier in Greenland. It is led by the icebreaker Oden.

Last year a US-Russian-Swedish research expedition – also led by Oden – travelled along the Russian Arctic coastline, all the way to Alaska and back.

These are fine demonstrations of Arctic cooperation, securing invaluable scientific data and observations, fundamentally necessary for international climate work.

And science is clear: the main cause of climate change is our emissions of carbon dioxide. We are already feeling the consequences.

Carbon dioxide emissions also lead to ocean acidification – a fact we sometimes overlook. Action to reduce emissions is thus the backbone of any climate change mitigation strategy.

The year 2015 *is* crucial. We, the members and observers of the Arctic Council, have a special responsibility to push for a ground-breaking outcome in Paris.

To succeed, we need to secure trust between rich and poor nations.

Our deliberations today have one overriding goal: to galvanise our efforts in this direction. Thank you, Secretary Kerry and your super-Arctic team, for inviting us.

Let me also thank president Obama for his leadership in combating climate change during this critical year.

* * *

In Sweden, the Arctic is a region of the future.

Sustainable green mining and forest industry aside, the northern part of our country is also about space industry, research, advanced car testing...

Facebook recently set up a 28 000 square metre server facility outside the city of Luleå. The reasons were cool weather, a secure supply of renewable energy, and state-of-the-art broadband connections.

Looking at the Arctic as a whole, it truly is an irreplaceable asset of local, regional and global importance.

It is also one of the fastest changing regions of our planet.

It is a region where we can literally hear and watch the melting ice and snow with our own ears and eyes.

And it is a region first and foremost of people. Talking about climate change, the Sami people are the first in our country to notice its effects.

Theirs is an experience shared by indigenous people across the Arctic.

As elected leaders, it is our duty to act.

We need a resilient Arctic because it gives us a resilient planet.

So let me describe the four pillars underpinning Sweden's Arctic Policy.

1: Strengthening climate work

Since a large proportion of the global emissions of greenhouse gases comes from the Arctic states, we have a special responsibility.

While welcoming the Council's agreement on soot and methane, Sweden would like to see a *wider scope* and *further action* within the Council when it comes to climate and renewable energy.

2: Providing legal protection for sensitive nature

In particular the marine environment – opening up as the ice melts – needs protection.

Sweden is promoting the idea of a network of protected areas.

We welcome a framework for a Pan-American Network of Marine Protected Areas and support the American initiatives for a Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC).

Nationally, we are increasing financial support for protection of our own Arctic areas.

3: Arctic oil and gas exploitation

Dear friends,

If we are to end up as far below the two-degree limit as possible, a large part of the world's fossil energy reserves should be left in the ground.

This is a scientific fact, and we all know it.

We need robust regulations, ensuring the highest possible level of security of exploitation.

To get permission for operations, oil and gas companies should take full responsibility for any costs related to a possible accident.

The vision is fossil-free societies.

4: Protection against overfishing

We welcome an inclusive process leading to robust protection of the central Arctic Ocean from unregulated fishing.

The recent initiative of the Arctic coastal states in this regard is timely.

* * *

Dear friends,

These four pillars have a common thread: resilience.

Resilience provides us with the capacity to deal with change while continuing to develop.

To respond, adapt, and transform in situations of abrupt change.

We see an increasing risk of large-scale threshold effects in the fast-changing Arctic.

But we still need to understand the nature of these critical thresholds much better.

To have an impact, adaptation must be mainstreamed into our policies, plans and programmes.

I am therefore very pleased that the US joined us to co-chair an important Swedish initiative in the Arctic Council: the *Arctic Resilience Assessment* led by Professor Johan Rockström.

We will continue to prioritise this work so that the Council can take decisions at the 2017 Ministerial.

But we will also continue these discussions with Professor Rockström himself, as I have the honour to introduce him to you all in a moment.

If Alaska is *unnecessarily beautiful*, I hope you will find Professor Rockström *necessarily educational* about the challenges we face.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the Sciences Po joint graduation ceremony for the Paris School of International Affairs (PISA) and the Master in European Affairs Class of 2015, Paris

Published 06 July 2015 Updated 06 July 2015

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the Sciences Po joint graduation ceremony for the Paris School of International Affairs (PISA) and the Master in European Affairs Class of 2015, 2 July, UNESCO's headquarters, Paris. Check agains delivery.

Graduates and faculty, parents and relatives, partners and friends,

It is an honour to say the following words: *Congratulations to the class of 2015!*

I wish I could say that preparing this speech reminded me of how I wrote papers at university.

You start when the deadline is only 48 hours away.

But first there's a party you have to go to.

It's a great party and it goes on a little longer than most parents here would like to know about. You get into very deep and meaningful discussions. You get close to solving all the world's problems.

So you have to sleep in the next day. And when you finally get up, you have to clear the dirty dishes and old copies of *The Economist* off your desk.

You open your internet browser, your books, your energy drinks. The paper actually turns out well, and life rolls on.

The problem with this analogy is not the parties, the discussions or the desperate attempt to meet deadlines. I have all that at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Instead, it is that one of the biggest regrets of my life is that I never went to university. I have never experienced the excitement you feel today.

I'm the first to admit that my career has gone well anyway. After many years in politics, I have been awarded honorary doctorates by four universities.

I have been chair of the board of one of the most prestigious universities in Sweden.

I am the mother of two wonderful sons who know everything about writing term papers at the last minute.

And thanks to your kind invitation, my life now also includes a graduation ceremony in Paris for students from over 100 different countries.

So, dear class of 2015,

It's an honour to share a few experiences with you, right before you step out into the life that awaits you beyond the doors of this hall.

Since Sciences Po was established in 1872, many of its students have graduated in times of peace and progress. Others have graduated in difficult times. You will start your careers at a time when the state of global affairs is challenging, though with some important and positive exceptions.

The act of aggression that Russia has committed against Ukraine is the greatest challenge to European peace and security since the end of the Cold War.

Our humanitarian systems are overburdened by the world's forty armed conflicts, of which eleven are full-scale wars.

Refugee flows are reaching the levels seen during the Second World War.

Terrorist attacks call for continued efforts to fight terrorism, here in France and around the world.

And climate change poses a threat to our very existence.

But at the same time, extreme poverty and infant mortality are declining. Technology is advancing. Our interdependence is growing.

My job is to use these opportunities to tackle the challenges.

However, I came here to tell you that although I am a Minister for Foreign Affairs, you are the future VIPs – the Very Important People.

Thanks to your extremely hard work, you are graduating from a university that is ranked among the best in the world in politics and international studies.

The list of degrees awarded here today resembles an agenda at my meetings in the EU Foreign Affairs Council: international security, energy, human rights, development – to give a few examples.

And I'm perfectly confident when I say that many of you will be future leaders of governments, global organisations and companies.

My French colleague in the Foreign Affairs Council, Laurent Fabius, is a graduate of Sciences Po, of course.

And to be sure, Monsieur Fabius and I still have a lot of work to do. But my point is that the responsibility will gradually move to your shoulders.

Therefore, I would now like to do my duty as a graduation speaker: it's time for three pieces of personal advice.

First: Remember that life is more than self-service.

I understand that a vast majority of you has already gotten a job before graduation. That must make a lot of parents happy. But even when success and decent pay checks arrive, don't forget the value of doing something for

someone else.

If you would like to be remembered for who you are rather than for the title on your business card, do something that benefits others.

After a decade as a European Commissioner, I moved to New York and started working for the United Nations. Sounds like a dream, of course.

But the combination of a huge city and a huge bureaucracy made me sometimes feel very small. I started volunteering at a soup kitchen, where we distributed food packages to elderly citizens.

When you feel that you are losing sight of who you are, put yourself in a situation where you are *not* the centre of attention. Because life is more than just self-service.

My second piece of advice is this: Unlock the frozen sea within you

Every evening when I leave the Ministry, my staff gives me a thick binder full of things to read.

These documents are important, but not always inspiring. So I have always made a point of alternating the binders with novels, short stories and poetry.

Franz Kafka puts it brilliantly: “*A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us*”.

Whatever your jobs demand in the future, I am certain that you will perform better if you continue to feed your imagination, your sensitivity, your knowledge, your language skills, and your ability to both persuade and understand others.

And remember that just a few words can stimulate and inspire your imagination – this was true even before Twitter.

When it comes to Ernest Hemingway, we can never be 100 per cent sure that a story is true. But as many of you know, Hemingway is said to be the author of the following six-word story:

“For sale: baby shoes, never worn.”

These six words can send your thoughts flying in many directions. My experience is that an unexpected few words, like unwelcome events, can

change your whole world very quickly.

Then people will look at you as a future leader, expecting *you* to act. **This leads me to my third piece of advice:**

Let your values be your backbone.

I have lived long enough to understand that courageous people have something in common.

Their values are their compass, showing right from wrong.

I have also lived long enough to know that being anxious, or even afraid, can make things difficult when choosing between the right way and the easy way.

But strong values will help you.

So let me tell you about some of my values and what I believe in.

I believe that women's rights are human rights. Gender equality is among the great unfinished business of our century.

With ISIL selling naked women and girls at actual slave markets, it is obvious that sexual violence is a weapon of terror and a source of income that is used worldwide.

Yet of the 585 peace agreements signed since 1990, only 17 mention this type of crime. Of 300 ceasefire agreements, only 6 consider that sexual violence entails a breach of the agreement.

Research shows that women's participation in peace processes increases the likelihood of achieving sustainable peace and security.

This means that everyone benefits from the feminist foreign policy that the Swedish Government is pursuing.

I believe in solidarity across borders. Because if you live on a planet with billions of people, it doesn't matter which direction you choose to take.

The world is round. You will inevitably meet fellow citizens, and eventually you will be back where you started. We share a common destiny. We must act for the common good – not just for ourselves.

And if you need an example, I will answer with science: Last year the world was warmer than at any time since records began in 1880.

And don't believe the populist and xenophobic groups claiming that Europe's problems are caused by immigration.

Our industries are not moving to low-income countries in Southeast Asia because of refugees fleeing the wars in the Middle East.

Cuts to the welfare state are not made by people fleeing economic hardship in Africa.

And your local post office did not disappear because of the arrival of unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan.

Instead, I believe in the primacy of politics. The levels of poverty that we once had in Europe were not a law of nature.

Decent lives, universal suffrage and eight-hour working days were goals that could be achieved.

We are not helpless victims just because globalisation has made national politics more difficult for the time being.

It's up to us to make the European Union stronger, to make the global world order better, and to build more equal, tolerant and sustainable societies.

Dear class of 2015,

Welcome to the best years of your lives!

On the other side of the doors to this hall, there is a world waiting for new leadership and strong values.

If you go into politics, remember that values are more important than opinion polls.

If you go into business, remember that values are more important than profits.

Work hard. Look after others. Read books. Make your values your backbone.

And fantastic things will happen.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs

Published 09 June 2015 Updated 09 June 2015

Check against delivery.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Never so prosperous, so secure, nor so free.

So begins the foreign policy strategy adopted by the European Union just over a decade ago. The strategy is imbued with the confidence we all felt then.

Peace seemed self-evident in our part of the world. Bloodshed on the battlefield had been replaced by patience at the negotiating table. The scars of Europe's division were healing. European cooperation was growing strong and expanding eastward.

European development was closely linked to global progress. The world's total GDP doubled between 2000 and 2013. We achieved the goal of halving the proportion of the world's population living in extreme poverty.

At the same time, technological developments placed a mobile phone in the hands of half of the world's population. For a time, Western democracy emerged as the natural social model of the future and there was talk of the end of history.

The description of our European continent never having been “so prosperous, so secure, nor so free” was, at that time, a fitting one.

But we are now living in times of greater uncertainty, in which these words ring hollow.

For although Sweden remains one of the most free, secure and prosperous countries in the world, the world – including Sweden – has entered a more uncertain time.

It is visible in occasionally uneven European cooperation.

It is visible in our neighbourhood, with Russian aggression in Ukraine and war, terrorism and refugee disasters in Europe's southern neighbourhood.

And it is visible globally, where deadlocks in our common institutions sometimes occur. Our humanitarian systems are overburdened by the world's forty armed conflicts, of which eleven are full-scale wars. Refugee flows are reaching the levels seen during the Second World War. In 2014 more than 100 million people needed humanitarian assistance. More than 50 million were forced to flee their homes. Inequalities within and between countries are increasing.

It is against this backdrop that the Government has to shape its foreign policy. This is why I am now going to talk about the challenges we have to tackle together. I will begin with the EU, continue with the EU's neighbourhood and conclude with the global challenges.

* * *

Our first challenge concerns developments within the European Union.

The economic crisis has been followed by political tensions, both within Member States and within the framework of the EU as a whole.

We need to regain a firm forward course, with cohesion, solidarity and a new dynamic leading us towards the goals of peace and prosperity that are to be at the heart of our Union.

As you know, Sweden aims to have the EU's lowest unemployment rate by 2020.

And in all EU Member States it would, of course, be preferable for more citizens to find a job that offers decent working conditions. Our common goal must be lower unemployment, decent working conditions, higher growth and a better political climate in which people's frustration is not exploited, and populism and short-sightedness no longer triumph.

European countries need to regain their self-confidence, because we need

strong European cooperation. Cooperation for a Europe that is competitive. For a gender-equal and social Europe that also garners respect for its ambitious environment, energy and climate policy.

Now as before, this cooperation must be open to new members. And it must also be the basis for a strong common European foreign policy.

The new European Security Strategy must therefore build on sound analysis of changes in the rest of the world and changes to the EU's relative strength, internally and externally. The Strategy is due to be completed next year and will serve as a good guide for the 28 Member States in shaping how the EU should best relate to the rest of the world.

* * *

EU cooperation – not least in the wake of the financial crisis – does pose several significant challenges.

But today – 20 years on from our national referendum – I believe that most Swedes feel that the EU is fundamentally positive and that Sweden must naturally be a member. The young people who are now finishing upper secondary school were born citizens of the European Union. European cooperation has finally become a matter of course.

Against this backdrop, I feel some unease about the European project increasingly being called into question in some parts of the EU, and about much of what this cooperation has given us being forgotten or taken for granted.

The Government has a clear conviction: we want a strong Sweden in a strong EU.

And, I might add, we therefore want all of the countries that are currently members of this Union to remain members.

* * *

Our second challenge is the European neighbourhood – our neighbourhood.

It has been our ambition to contribute to peace, freedom and stability. But we are now forced to deal with serious crises on several fronts.

I am deeply concerned about developments in Russia.

The act of aggression that Russia has committed against Ukraine is the greatest challenge to European peace and security since the end of the Cold War.

First Russia's occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea were completed. Then we saw how the Russian aggression continued through support to separatists in eastern Ukraine. And finally, we saw how Russia did not hesitate to send advanced Russian military units across the border to support the separatists. All of this accompanied by Putin's propaganda machine, which is at full throttle.

The fundamental rules that we have together agreed must apply to European peace and security must also apply to Moscow, now and in the future.

Sending your soldiers into other countries is not permitted.

Taking other countries' territory is not permitted.

And the right of other countries to determine their own futures must be respected.

We will therefore insist on the full implementation of the Minsk agreements: on the withdrawal of all Russian troops, on the return of Crimea and on the re-establishment of Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Geopolitical spectres have no place in modern Europe.

Sweden will, if necessary, continue to hinder, condemn and make more costly any form of Russian aggression. And we will remain one of the most ambitious countries in our efforts to help Ukraine succeed.

At the same time, we must maintain both our bilateral relations and the EU's contacts with Russia, which remains our, and the EU's, largest neighbour.

We have to talk to one another and cooperate where possible. The many contacts between Russian and Swedish society – in the research community, between counties and municipalities, between organisations – are hugely valuable. A critical dialogue is essential between neighbours.

* * *

To the east, we also have the Eastern Partnership countries. We will give our full support to those who wish to pursue the path of European reforms and

European integration.

At the recent summit in Riga, both the EU and the six partner countries reaffirmed their support for this joint project.

It will not be easy, but I am convinced that this is the right path to take.

During my first few months as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I visited Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. The young people I met there see the same future in and with Europe as the young people of Estonia, Poland and Romania did 20 years ago.

Sweden has an important role to play in keeping these European prospects alive.

We must offer a path forward and ensure that the door can be opened for the countries that want and manage to make it all the way – that meet the requirements, regulations and conditions that apply to EU Member States.

Our support for the Eastern Partnership is a matter of these countries' right to choose their own path and their own future.

* * *

We are also very strongly committed to our neighbours in the south. We are progressively strengthening and emphasising this, for example through the European Neighbourhood Policy and in our own relations with these countries.

Here we see countries such as Tunisia that are implementing reforms, holding democratic elections and seeking cooperation. They deserve our full support.

But there are also enormous problems in the region.

The civil war in Syria is no closer to a resolution. The barbaric atrocities of ISIL continue. The fighting in Libya is tearing the country apart.

The human suffering is enormous. As a result of these conflicts, and all of the structural challenges the region is facing, there are also refugees looking for a way out. They are fleeing to neighbouring countries but also to Europe.

Some of these refugees take the route across the Mediterranean. They make

their way to Europe with the help of refugee smugglers who time and again place hundreds of human lives in peril while making money off the desperation of fellow human beings.

And far too often, we have been forced to witness the dreams of the refugees and the ruthlessness of the human smugglers ending in unspeakable disasters at sea.

Sadly, there are no simple solutions to this complex problem.

Nonetheless, we must act. The Mediterranean must not become a burial ground for people who flee. We must help save lives.

What we need is concerted European action, in close cooperation with the relevant countries and international organisations.

Above all, we must do more to get at the underlying factors causing people to flee, whether conflict, oppression or economic vulnerability.

We must combat the smuggling networks. Our action against the smugglers must be undertaken within the framework of international law, and clearly observe human rights and international humanitarian law.

We must also push for more legal channels into the EU. Asylum law must be upheld while, at the same time, internal EU solidarity must be strengthened and the division of responsibility made clearer. More countries must do more as the EU takes joint responsibility.

Concerted action is also needed to manage the conflicts in the region.

Sweden, like other EU Member States, is making a considerable contribution to the coalition against ISIL. We are taking humanitarian action and, following the approval granted in the Riksdag last week, we are now also sending military training personnel to Iraq.

We are also contributing extensive humanitarian assistance and aid in other parts of the region. But fundamentally, it is the political tensions that must be tackled.

We are therefore supporting the mediation efforts under the leadership of the UN in Syria and Libya. We want to see a functioning and inclusive Iraq.

We also want to see renewed talks between Israel and Palestine. Sweden's

recognition of Palestine also places a responsibility on us. We want to support a political process for lasting peace. We want to strengthen EU engagement and we will work tirelessly in the EU and the UN to help ensure that negotiations get under way and that they are concluded equitably and as quickly as possible.

The EU can do much more. The United States and engaged countries in the region must also push for progress.

We want to support lasting peace, based on a two-state solution and the 1967 borders. This is the only way to guarantee real peace and security for the people of the region.

An end to the occupation and the implementation of a just solution could also influence developments throughout the Middle East region. The lack of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is currently used as a recruitment tool by ISIL. This must stop.

At the same time, the humanitarian needs and the situation in Gaza are desperate. Sweden's bilateral development aid to Palestine will therefore increase to SEK 1.5 billion over the coming five-year period. Naturally, Sweden places demands in the implementation of its aid, which has an underlying strategy with three main areas: democracy, environment and private sector development.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our third challenge is global.

The international community is not currently living up to its responsibilities for peace and security.

In recent years we have been forced to witness our collective inability to resolve major problems. And I wonder whether the gap between problems and solutions may, in fact, be growing.

Finding a way to reduce this gap must be a priority of Swedish and European foreign policy in the years to come. To succeed, it is especially important to also develop our dialogue with countries outside our own neighbourhood, many of which are making rapid headway.

For this reason, we are now renewing old friendships with countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. During my trips to countries such as Mozambique, Colombia and Indonesia I have encountered respect and expectation. Respect for what we stand for, and expectation of cooperation to make the most of our common opportunities and tackle our common challenges. I will be continuing this work at the end of this week, when I attend the African Union Summit in South Africa.

Meanwhile, China, like India – whose President has just paid a State Visit to Sweden – has an increasingly important role and increasingly important responsibilities.

Together this year, we must also work to secure a new, strong climate agreement in Paris and new global development goals. We might be the last generation that can fight climate change, and the first that can wipe out extreme poverty.

Together we will pursue international disarmament and non-proliferation, despite the failure of the recent NPT conference. Indeed, this is precisely why we must highlight and address the nuclear threat together with others.

Together we will defend democracy, international law and human rights.

And together we need to tackle a global refugee problem of which the disasters in the Mediterranean are just one example.

“The system is broken,” said the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on a visit to Stockholm. The system has broken down. The funds are inadequate. The needs are too great. We are hardly likely to see any clearer warning signs of the state of the world.

Our collective inability to resolve the world’s conflicts is leading to severe and needless suffering. It is also leading to our resources having to be used to alleviate suffering rather than to build for the future.

We must therefore strengthen the United Nations, which remains the backbone of the international system.

Our candidacy for the Security Council is an expression of our readiness to take responsibility.

Our outlook is not at all uncritical. In turbulent times we need global solidarity more than ever, and it is for this very reason that we must do what

we can to ensure that the UN becomes better at tackling global challenges, security issues, climate threats and inequality. Ultimately, it is of course up to the Member States, and particularly the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

We would, for example, like to see the Security Council put an end to the carnage in Syria, act decisively to safeguard Ukraine's territorial integrity and establish a framework for renewed talks between Israel and Palestine. We also believe that a more legitimate and effective Security Council requires more adequate representation from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

But we are convinced that the way forward is not to coolly distance ourselves, but rather to increase our engagement. We, and other countries, must do what we can to ensure that the United Nations functions as effectively as possible. This ambition can be summed up in the words of Dag Hammarskjöld:

“The UN was not created to take humanity to heaven, but to save it from hell.”

* * *

In recent times, there have been more frequent discussions in our country on security and defence policy. These have taken place against a backdrop of changes in the international situation following the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and increased tensions also in our immediate neighbourhood.

It is very important that serious issues concerning peace and security are handled prudently and with broad support in the Riksdag. It therefore sent a positive signal – including to the rest of the world – when five Riksdag parties representing more than 70 per cent of the Swedish electorate recently agreed on the direction of future defence policy.

Sweden is not a member of any military alliance. With broad support in the Riksdag, we are also strengthening our various forms of regional and international defence cooperation. A modern Swedish security policy is built on cooperation in the EU and on greater cooperation with several partners on a broad front: with Finland and the other Nordic countries, in the Baltic Sea region, in the OSCE and in the UN. The Government also wants to deepen our cooperation with NATO within the framework of our partnership. A strong transatlantic link is of vital importance to Europe's

security.

This is all good and important. And it underlines the fact that we must remember that foreign policy is the primary line of defence.

All of the things I have talked about – our internal EU cooperation, our efforts to support our neighbours, global cooperation – are ultimately also about our Swedish security.

Our means of stopping the Russian aggression are primarily political and economic, not military. Probably the best way of preventing provocative Russian conduct on and over the Baltic Sea is to curb Russian advances in Ukraine.

Sweden's security policy is based on a broad perception of security. Respect for fundamental values such as democracy, rule of law and human rights and freedoms is directly linked to international security, and is the basis of the European security order.

Threats that cannot be met with military means must also be dealt with. With this, I mean everything from international terrorism and cyber threats to pandemics and the heavy, complex threat of climate change. As is widely known, the Government intends to produce a national security strategy to identify goals and means.

* * *

Security threats in the globalised society are so much broader and more multifaceted than they were just a few decades ago. So how should Sweden act in such a landscape? My response is that we must show leadership and take responsibility.

Naturally, on our own we cannot manage all the challenges we are now facing.

But I want everyone to know that Sweden is doing its part, and more, whether at national level, as a member of the EU, or as one of 193 members of the United Nations.

We will demonstrate this by continuing our generous reception of refugees, through our extensive aid, our support to climate action, and through our readiness to send Swedish personnel to peace operations, primarily under the leadership of the UN and the EU, but also together with others.

And I am proud of the Swedes serving abroad, whether in Timbuktu, Donetsk or Mazar-e-Sharif.

* * *

I want Sweden to use its voice.

There are occasions when we must dare to speak up when others are silent. But 'Alone we are strong' has never been a social democratic principle.

Thus our ambition is that our voice will join with others so that it will be heard more clearly.

We will work closely with our Nordic and Baltic neighbours.

We will be a driving force for a clear and united European foreign policy.

We will build alliances with countries throughout the world to pursue important issues.

And we will restore Sweden's role in the United Nations precisely so that we can work with other countries for gender equality and equality in general, disarmament, conflict resolution, decent working conditions and the many other global issues that require solutions if the state of the world is to improve.

Let me be clear on this last point. This Government sees no contradiction between a firm commitment to EU foreign policy and strong engagement in the UN. On the contrary. The EU needs a strong UN just as the UN benefits from a strong EU.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

We will stand up for our values.

Sweden should be associated with a principled defence of human rights and democracy. We seek a world in which everyone's rights are respected. We will stand up for freedom of expression and free speech. We will protect all rights: political, civil, economic, social and cultural.

We will dare to influence other countries, for example in work on the great

unfinished business of the new millennium: human rights are women's rights. This is a dimension that I want to introduce into the traditionally male-dominated foreign and security policy domain.

This is why I have said that a feminist foreign policy will focus on women's rights and representation, and on increasing women's access to social resources.

I recently met with Zainab Hawa Bangura, my successor as the UN's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. She spoke about systematic prostitution, forced abortions and human trafficking perpetrated by ISIL, and about women being forced to undergo surgery after being raped. They are then given a piece of paper certifying that their virginity is intact.

The fact that ISIL sells naked women in actual slave markets makes it obvious that sexual violence is a weapon, a strategy and a source of income that is used worldwide.

However, of the 585 peace agreements that have been signed since 1990, only 17 mention this type of crime. Of 300 ceasefire agreements, only 6 consider that sexual violence means that the agreement has been broken.

Research shows that women's participation in peace processes increases the likelihood of achieving sustainable peace and long-term security. This means that everyone benefits from a feminist foreign policy.

* * *

Ladies and gentlemen,

More connected, more contested and more complex. This is how the world is described in the first draft of the EU's new foreign policy strategy.

The tone differs from the corresponding strategy of just over a decade ago. *Never so prosperous, so secure, nor so free* was the wording then.

For Sweden to be able to operate in this new and complex world and assert our interests and our values, we need a broad consensus in our country.

This is why I have said that our foreign policy must have public support and must be discussed throughout Sweden, far beyond the walls of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and my office there.

And this is why I thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. About a world that is becoming more connected, more contested and more complex. Where Sweden is increasingly becoming part of the world, and the world increasingly a part of Sweden.

Let us continue the conversation.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Uppsala University

Published 03 June 2015 Updated 03 June 2015

Uppsala University, 2 June 2015 Check against delivery

Honourable President,

Your Royal Highnesses,

Vice-Chancellor, Rectrix Magnifica,

Excellencies, friends and students,

It is a privilege and a pleasure for me to introduce the Honourable President of India, Mr Pranab Mukherjee. And it is particularly gratifying to do so here in Uppsala, at the University.

Among the many factors that draw our two countries together are our cooperation on science, research and technology, and the meetings of students, minds and ideas. During this historic State Visit – the first ever from India – we have deepened our relations in these and numerous other areas, such as trade and people-to-people contacts, renewable energy, sustainable development and health. A Memorandum of Understanding on Sustainable Urban Development has been signed, as have various agreements between universities.

Uppsala has been the host and home to some of the greatest Indian and Swedish voices of peace and global dialogue. Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore is, as we have heard, one of them. He embraced humanism and universalism. He was an idealist, an internationalist and an environmentalist. He was also, as you know, the first non-European to receive the Award.

During his first visit to Sweden, in 1921, he was guided around Uppsala by Archbishop Söderlund, who, less than a decade later, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Alva Myrdal, another Nobel Laureate and the first Swedish

ambassador to India, called Uppsala home, and former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld had this University as his Alma Mater. As we keep our eyes on the road ahead, I believe we should also once in a while glance back, to learn from these women and men who preceded us.

Mr President, you have had a long and outstanding career in Indian and global political affairs representing the people of India, the world's largest democracy. I have learned that you draw strength and inspiration from the great Indian civilization and way of life, and from the fundamental principles and ideas about peaceful coexistence between humans.

I will soon leave the floor to you, Mr President, to speak to us about *Tagore and Ghandi – do they have contemporary relevance for global peace?* Before doing so, I would like to briefly address three areas, to which I believe India and Sweden share a commitment. They all centre around the topic of your speech, that of global peace.

First, global peace calls for global dialogue.

The world knows India as a strong advocate of global collaboration within the framework of the United Nations. Our two countries have a steadfast confidence in multilateralism, and in the belief that the nations of the world can meet collective challenges only by working together.

In this increasingly uncertain world, effective multilateralism – with the UN at its core – is perhaps of greater importance than ever before.

Tagore spoke about the necessity to see the world as one. Globalisation offers great opportunities. It brings individuals and nations closer together. People trade and travel, they exchange ideas and information. But the challenges have also become more complex: climate change, pandemics, food insecurity, intolerance and violent extremism.

These changes are putting the UN system to the test. Sweden will continue to take an active part in the continuous process of reforming the UN, to ensure that it is fit for purpose. This includes the Security Council. For the Council to be more legitimate and effective, a more adequate representation from Africa, Asia and Latin America is required. It is inconceivable that an important global actor such as India would not be part of an enlarged Security Council.

Second, global peace needs equality.

We need to respond to one of the most critical and as yet unresolved problems of our time: the fact that women and girls are systematically denied the full enjoyment of their human rights. Violence against women is a global scourge. More than 700 million women are exposed to domestic abuse or sexual violence.

Gender equality is not simply a goal in itself, but also a precondition for achieving our wider foreign and security policy objectives.

No matter what you set out to achieve, change inevitably faces opposition. This also holds true for gender equality. Ghandi's famous words on the stages of non-violent activism lend support and encouragement: *First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.*

Third, global peace depends on our ability to instil hope and meet the aspirations of young generations.

Our success in building prosperous, sustainable societies and in preventing social unrest and youth radicalisation will depend on whether or not coming generations believe they have a future. A future in which they can study and find a job. Where their human rights are guaranteed and protected by their governments and leaders. And where they can realise their full potential as individuals.

Tagore knew this. He used his Nobel Prize money to found a university, Visva Bharati, in your home state (West Bengal), Mr President. And he wanted it to be a meeting place for the East and the West.

With these words, I have the great honour to leave the floor to you, Mr President, to share your reflections on the timeless and ever relevant subject of global peace.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech in the Iraq bill debate

Published 03 June 2015 Updated 09 July 2015

Check against delivery

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Last autumn, the Government began exploring whether and how Sweden could expand its efforts to support democracy and human rights in Iraq, including in the Kurdish region in northern Iraq.

Along with all other EU Member States, Sweden is part of the international coalition of some 60 countries that has been formed to fight ISIL in various ways, stabilise Iraq and manage the consequences of this terrorist organisation's advances.

To date, Sweden has acted in three ways:

Firstly, politically, to achieve a long-term solution to the underlying political problems in the region that have allowed ISIL to gain a foothold. We are supporting political processes aimed in the long run at eliminating the breeding grounds of terrorist organisations such as ISIL.

This support takes the form of backing UN efforts to find a solution to the violence and civil war in Syria. And it involves promoting an inclusive and cohesive Iraq, in which strengthened democratic institutions will enable the country's many different religious and ethnic groups to influence developments.

The emergence of a society under the rule of law is necessary to fight terrorism in the long term. A long-term sustainable solution in Iraq must be political and be based on full respect for all population groups and religious minorities and their participation in political life.

Secondly, we are seeking to solve the urgent crisis on the ground to alleviate

suffering and distress. This is, not least, a matter of humanitarian assistance. We have provided – and continue to provide – extensive humanitarian assistance to those who have been forced to flee from their homes in Syria and Iraq. In all, Sweden has contributed SEK 1 653 million in humanitarian aid to Syria since 2011. In Iraq a total of SEK 422 million has been disbursed in support of humanitarian operations since 2012. And we support the stabilisation efforts the international community is planning. Swedish contributions are long term and include support for local governance in Dohuk in northern Iraq and Al-Qadessia in southern Iraq. Sweden is one of the last countries still engaged in long-term development cooperation with the Iraqi Government. Like others, we are also taking steps to prevent possible sympathisers from travelling to the region to take part in terrorist actions or terrorist training.

Thirdly, we have a generous refugee reception policy. Since the outbreak of the Syria/Iraq crisis, Sweden has received approximately 70 000 refugees. Sweden has received more refugees than any other EU country except Germany.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

It is clear that Iraq is in a position where military support is also needed to stop ISIL.

The Iraqi Government has requested support from the international community for the Iraqi defence forces, including the Kurdish Peshmerga units, and this is what the international coalition is now providing in the form of aerial support, equipment and training.

Since last winter, the Government has explored the possibility of Sweden also participating in the joint military training operations, just as Finland, Norway and Denmark have decided to do.

In early April, the Government presented a bill to the Riksdag proposing that Sweden participate in the military training operation in Iraq, more specifically in the part of the training conducted in the Kurdish region in northern Iraq.

The Government proposes that a Swedish armed force consisting of 35 persons be made available in 2015 to participate in the military training operation being carried out by the international coalition against ISIL in Iraq. Should the security situation deteriorate, it is proposed that the Swedish

Armed Forces be able to make temporary reinforcements to a level of 120 persons for evacuation and reinforcement operations.

The Government's decision is based on the consent of the Iraqi Government. This has been expressed through Iraq's concrete request for assistance to stop ISIL.

The United Nations Security Council has concluded that ISIL, and several other groups, represent a continued threat to international peace and security. *[UNSCR 2170]*

In light of the serious threat ISIL represents to the people of Iraq, Iraq requested the international community for urgent help to combat ISIL in a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations *[25 June 2014]* and a further letter to the UN Security Council *[20 September 2014]*. More specifically, Iraq said it would welcome military support provided in accordance with international law and without compromising the security of the civilian population. This request was responded to by the countries that are now assisting Iraq, and our aim is to meet Iraq's request to the best of our ability.

This demonstrates that the operation has a solid basis in international law.

The main tasks of the planned Swedish contribution will be training and advice to the Iraqi security forces, the Kurdish Peshmerga units, in northern parts of the country.

This may involve staff duties, weapons training, health care, defensive battles, urban warfare and detection of improvised explosive devices, as well as international humanitarian law and gender issues. As in all Swedish contributions, the gender perspective is a natural part of the work.

The Swedish Armed Forces will put together an all-round, fit-for-purpose force to manage the tasks included in the operation.

While Sweden's contribution will not, in principle, involve armed action, it must be able to provide protection for itself and for others. The Swedish forces may need to act in a way that goes beyond self-defence in order to protect material, locations and other units.

The Swedish force will be under Swedish national command and control during the operation. Necessary coordination will take place within the international coalition against ISIL, primarily with other actors in the area of

operations, including the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Finland.

* * *

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The Swedish women and men who are sent out into the world must feel that they have our full and undivided support.

I have listened to the speeches in this debate and, first and foremost, I appreciate the unity that I perceive. It is a fine Swedish tradition and a great asset to have political consensus on these matters. I hope that this is also the message we are now giving to those we intend to send on this very difficult mission to the complex and challenging situation they have to face. They should know that we are united, we stand behind them and we thank them for the duties they will perform.

* * *

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

ISIL's acts are merciless. Their aggression and hatred appear to know no bounds. Their objective is to inspire fear so that resistance gives way and violence can triumph. This must not be allowed to happen.

That is why the efforts of the international coalition against ISIL are crucial.

Cooperation against terrorism is the key to success.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Margot Wallström, at CARICOM's Foreign Ministers meeting in St Lucia

Published 22 May 2015 Updated 25 May 2015

CARICOM's Foreign Ministers meeting, St Lucia 22 maj 2015 Check against delivery.

Minister Baptiste, esteemed host of this meeting, Secretary-General, Ambassador LaRocque, fellow foreign ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me first of all to thank you for the kind invitation to address you here today on the beautiful island of St Lucia. Our vision is to expand and deepen our relations with the Caribbean countries - bilaterally, multilaterally and regionally. For the long term.

We share many views and challenges. As small and medium-sized countries we promote a transparent and rules-based international system. We see the need for a strong and effective United Nations fit to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. And I believe we all see the need for more collaboration, more solidarity and more dialogue.

Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott wrote in *The Odyssey* that: "The future happens. No matter how much we scream."

This is indeed true. So, we have a collective responsibility to work for a better future. To tackle the challenges that we face together and strive to make the world a better place for our children.

I wish to use this opportunity to touch upon several areas where we see

opportunities for greater cooperation with you.

Firstly, climate change.

Climate change is the challenge of our time. Hurricanes, floods and landslides. Droughts, food insecurity and sea-level rise. The effects of climate change are already taking a heavy toll on many countries, not least here in the Caribbean. We are seeing the effects already - it is not a question of effects in the distant future. These effects could shatter the important gains that have been made to combat poverty and build sustainable development. We have a responsibility to do everything in our power to change this trajectory.

Like you, the Swedish Government has made combating climate change a top priority. Cooperative responses are needed, including actions both at home and abroad. A global, fair and legally binding agreement at COP21 later this year is a crucial step towards a safer world that respects the boundaries set by our planet.

To achieve a positive outcome in Paris, we need to work together. Sweden is working both in the European Union and through the UN climate change negotiations to show that making the transition to a low-carbon development pathway should be seen as an opportunity, rather than a burden.

The important voice of the States in the Alliance of Small Island States must be heard in the UN climate change negotiations. When I visited New York in connection with the opening of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in April, I met and discussed this issue with colleagues from AOSIS. Their testimony made clear that the issue of climate change is an existential one for many island states. It is essential that the rest of the world fully understands this. Sweden has recently made a financial contribution to AOSIS in order to strengthen this voice in the UN climate negotiations.

Climate finance is another key issue in the negotiations. Financing is needed to support vulnerable and developing countries in their efforts to combat climate change and adapt to the impacts. Through our support to the Green Climate Fund - USD 580 million, making us by far the biggest per capita donor to the Fund - Sweden has shown that we are serious when we talk about this. This has also inspired and leveraged additional funding from other donors.

Our support to many of the global climate change funds has also given us the opportunity to influence the rules and practices of these bodies. Sweden has strived to increase access to climate finance for vulnerable and developing countries. We have listened to, and acted upon, the information we have received from your countries regarding the obstacles to accessing international climate finance, and we intend to continue to do so. Those most in need should be the first in line.

Along with Barbados and others, Sweden has successfully argued for the Green Climate Fund to set a floor of at least fifty per cent of the allocation for particularly vulnerable countries. And together with Grenada and others, Sweden contributed to the recent adoption of modified procedures for the Adaptation Fund for smaller implementing entities. This should increase access to climate adaptation finance for all small island developing states.

I am pleased that Sweden is collaborating with the SIDS DOCK (sustainable energy initiative) and the Caribbean Climate Change Community Centre in Belize on a project to facilitate enhanced resilience of the energy systems.

Secondly, the ocean.

Our lives depend on the health of the ocean. Understanding the ocean is essential to protecting our planet.

The ocean binds us together. All over the world, women and men depend on the ocean for their livelihood and well-being. Protecting and preserving the marine environment and its resources is one of our greatest challenges. After decades of pollution, habitat degradation and overfishing, now climate change, ocean acidification, marine debris and increased pressure from mineral extraction, the health of our oceans is threatened in unprecedented ways.

This is a defining moment to honour the commitments we made in Rio. I believe Sweden and the Caribbean countries can work together to make a difference in the process for a global and legally binding instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources beyond national jurisdiction.

Thirdly, the international efforts to combat illegal trade in arms.

Two years ago, the negotiations on an international Arms Trade Treaty were concluded successfully. This was an important achievement for the world.

Sweden has declared its support for Trinidad and Tobago's offer to host the Secretariat. We believe in spreading international cooperation geographically as a means of achieving a broader sense of ownership. We believe that locating the Secretariat in Port of Spain will reinforce the role that CARICOM can play in fostering South-South cooperation. Your experiences are much more relevant than those of many other countries, including my own. We must work for a strong Treaty that can contribute to effectively addressing the scourge of irresponsible, unregulated and illegal international trade in arms.

Fourthly, a word about recent developments in the region.

I believe that all of us welcome the improvement in relations between the United States and Cuba. My deputy, the Vice Minister, recently visited Cuba with the aim of re-establishing the bilateral dialogue between Cuba and Sweden. The visit underscored the historical ties between our countries and demonstrated Sweden's commitment to strengthening the relationship and accompanying Cuba on the path of reform and modernisation.

Colleagues, friends,

Thank you once again for allowing me to address you today. I sincerely look forward to deepened exchanges between us. I have touched upon several potential areas for closer cooperation. Let me conclude by highlighting a fifth area in which I think we could cooperate, namely gender equality. Twenty years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration, we see significant, but still limited, global progress with regard to eliminating gender discrimination. Women's rights are still violated in the world. My Government has launched a feminist foreign policy in order to ensure that these issues will figure prominently on the global agenda. I look forward to close cooperation with all of you also in this regard.

Only global solutions can meet the global challenges we face. We need to find these solutions together. Sweden is committed to contributing to these efforts. And this commitment is the foundation of our candidacy to the UN

Security Council for the 2017-2018 term, for which I hope we have your support. If elected, Sweden would once again have a seat on the Council after twenty years of absence. Sweden's candidacy is also a joint Nordic candidacy, and thus has the support of the other (four) Nordic countries.

We have a great deal of work to do together.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Margot Wallström, at the Asian African Summit, Jakarta, 23 April 2015

Published 23 April 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Asian African Summit, Jakarta 23 april 2015 Check against delivery.

Co-chairs, Excellencies,

It is an honour and a privilege to be here today, as you mark 60 years of Asian-African cooperation. Let me express my sincere appreciation for the invitation, and for the opportunity to be part of a meeting that gathers representatives of half of the countries of the world.

I am also happy to rediscover the beauty, hospitality and diversity of this vast country Indonesia, and to experience the consolidation of democracy and the progress made since my last visit in 2002.

Coming here, I travel in the footsteps of Sweden's late Prime Minister Olof Palme. In the early 1950s, a few years prior to the Bandung conference, he spent three months in Asia. From here, and from Indonesia in particular, he brought back ideas of non-alignment and international solidarity. Strong ideas that influenced the Swedish Social Democratic Movement and our international policies.

Co-chairs,

This is a summit of south-south cooperation to promote world peace and prosperity. I would like to add a perspective from the north. In many ways,

this is however a perspective that I believe is rather similar to yours.

Let me give three examples.

First, our solidarity with Palestine.

Among the first decisions taken by the new Swedish government was that of recognizing the State of Palestine. It was a decision taken with pride and joy. It aimed at making the parties to the conflict less unequal, to support moderation, and to provide a positive injection into the Middle East Peace Process. And it was a natural step to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people of self-determination.

My government will continue to work hard, with you and others, to do what we can to bring the peace process back on track and to create conditions for a two-state solution where Israel and Palestine can live side by side in peace and security. We want to contribute to regional security and stability.

Sweden and Indonesia yesterday agreed to deepen our cooperation to contribute to the social and economic development of Palestine. We will exchange knowledge and best practices in areas such as democracy, good governance, human rights and gender equality. For us, this is part of our long-term significant – and now substantially increasing - development assistance to Palestine.

Some have said that the Swedish recognition of Palestine was premature. I say it might be too late. Young women and men in the Middle East are about to lose hope. They need to see an alternative to violence, status quo and continuously negative developments on the ground.

This leads me to the second example of perspectives that I believe we have in common: addressing global challenges and meeting the aspirations of the youth.

We live in a globalised world where the threats to our security of course are rather different from the ones we faced 60 years ago. The interconnectedness, the ability to travel and to trade, and the constant flow of information and ideas have made the globe smaller and more prosperous. But it has also brought more complex challenges: climate change, pandemics, foreign terrorist fighters, food insecurity, and organized crime.

Non-state actors kidnap school children and behead journalists. Conflict and disasters force an incomprehensible number of people to leave their countries and homes. Democracy and freedom of speech are under pressure,

and the multilateral system with its rules based order is being challenged. Extremism and radicalization illustrate that the problems we face have no boundaries.

While some countries are more severely affected than others, these are truly global issues. As political representatives of our countries we need to show leadership and courage to address these issues, to increase our international cooperation, and to do so in a way that installs hope in the youth.

We need inclusive socio-economic development that allows both young women and men to study, to find a job and to shape their own future. This is as true for Sweden and the rest of Europe, as it is for Africa and Asia. Educational and economic empowerment is also the best antidote against radicalization and terrorist recruitment. And as someone said: If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.

We need to be clear on our principles and obligations. Democracy and human rights are universal values and important tools in the creation of vibrant societies. They are also indispensable in the fight against extremism and radicalization.

And we need to involve both women and men. Gender equality is not only a goal in itself, but also a precondition for our wider foreign and security policy objectives.

My third example of a shared perspective brings us back to the theme of this summit. It is the need for dialogue. South-south cooperation is an important part, I see great value also in strengthening the relations between the EU and the African Union, ASEAN, the League of Arab States and other regional organisations.

At the heart of the global dialogue is the United Nations. Strong support for the United Nations has always been – and will always be – key to Sweden's foreign policy. Our candidacy for a non-permanent seat at the Security Council 2017 to 2018 is an expression of this. It's been 20 years since we last served at the Council – and we are ready to assume the responsibilities that a seat on the Council implies. As a member, we would continue our engagement for the issues I just mentioned: Palestine, the youth and global dialogue.

You – the African and Asian leaders of this room – represent countries with some 75 per cent of the world population. This needs to be reflected in the

composition of the Security Council. Sweden believes that emerging powers of Africa, Asia and Latin America must be provided with adequate representation in a reformed Council.

Co-chairs, Excellencies, Friends,

It is an honour to be here today. I am looking forward to continued dialogue and exchange of views in a spirit of solidarity, and wish you the best of luck with the meeting.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The intended speech of the Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the meeting of the League of Arab States in Cairo 9

Published 09 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Cairo, Egypt 9 mars 2015 Published below is the intended speech of the Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the meeting of the League of Arab States in Cairo 9 March 2015.

Secretary General, Excellencies, dear friends,

It is a great honour for me to be standing here today. To be here in Egypt, in Cairo, in this building - the House of Arabs, is special. Egypt has always played an indispensable political, economic and cultural role in the region. And it is here that the Arab world, Africa and Europe meet.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Secretary General for inviting me to address this meeting. Your invitation is proof of the excellent relationship between the League of Arab States and Sweden - a longstanding relationship built on respect and commitment to serve the interests of the States and peoples that we represent, also in times of huge challenges.

In 1933, a time of crisis and depression for Europe as well as for the Arab world, a young Tunisian poet wrote about "The Will to Live":

"Those without passion to climb up the mountains,
must live forever among holes in the ground"

I have always been inspired by the passion and energy that I see in the many

bright and highly motivated young people that I meet during my trips, especially in this region.

It is our responsibility, as leaders of our respective communities, to offer young members of our populations the means to fulfil their dreams and the possibility to live their lives in freedom, peace and security.

Excellencies,

The League of Arab States is a key partner for Sweden, as are your members. I highly appreciate the accreditation to the League of our Ambassador in March 2012.

The Swedish Government will put increased emphasis on the Southern leg of the EU Neighbourhood Policy that is being developed. North Africa and the Middle East are our neighbours and we will work together with EU partners and with you to make this shared region prosperous and peaceful.

Our destinies and paths are intertwined, through geographical proximity, history, economy and family ties. One fifth of all Swedes have a background outside the borders of Sweden. We have for example a large Iraqi diaspora - close to 2 per cent of our population - that is a vibrant part of our society.

Sweden is also extending a hand in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance throughout the region. Palestine, of course, is a case in point. So are those affected by conflict in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen and elsewhere.

We have in relative terms received more asylum seekers from Syria than any other Western country - approximately 65 000 in the last three years. Yet, of course, this is nothing compared to many of your countries. I especially admire the responsible approach of Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey towards Syrians fleeing the war. Efforts of others are equally important.

Excellencies,

As you are all well aware of, as the first EU member state, Sweden recently decided to recognise the State of Palestine. The Swedish government took this decision with joy and pride.

Our decision to recognise Palestine fully complies with international law. It is a natural step to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to self-determination. The hard work of the Palestinian Government, state-

building and reforms have made Palestine ready to perform the duties of a state.

The recognition aims at making the parties of the conflict less unequal. It aims at supporting moderate actors in both Palestine and Israel. And it aims to provide a positive injection to the Middle East Peace Process.

Some say our recognition was premature. I say it may have been too late.

Young women and men in both Palestine and Israel are about to lose hope. They need to see that there is an alternative to violence, to a depressing status quo and to a continuously negative development on the ground.

I am heartened by the fact that our step is inspiring a renewed debate in Europe and beyond on what the international community can do to provide them with preciously needed hope.

We are very concerned to see how the economy of Palestine is being squeezed from several ends. Jointly with other EU member states we will do our utmost to try to alleviate the burden and to convince Israel to change its actions, in particular to fulfil their legal obligations to transfer Palestinian money to the Palestinians.

And we will work hard, with other members of the EU and the international community, and with you, to do what we can to bring the peace process back on track and to arrive soon at a two-state solution with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

Excellencies,

Together we face growing extremism and radicalisation. ISIL or Da'esh is an example in the extreme. We need to work together to fight this scourge, to identify and deal with its root causes and to do this while paying full respect to human rights and international law.

I wish to express Sweden's solidarity with all innocent victims, in so many of the Member States of the League of Arab States, that every month, every week, every day - suffer from the brutal violence that Da'esh and other terrorist organisations create.

Terrorism and foreign terrorist fighters illustrate that the problems we are facing have no boundaries. International cooperation is crucial while we still need to address these issues in parallel on local and national levels.

Tirelessly.

Excellencies,

Democracy, security and economic development are interrelated. Without progress in one of these fields, sustainable results in the other cannot be expected.

Inclusive socio-economic development is particularly important. Educational and economic empowerment is the best antidote to radicalisation and terrorist recruitment.

Employment is crucial, especially for our youth. Youth unemployment is a key challenge, in Europe and in this region.

Excellencies,

Human rights are a priority in Swedish foreign policy. Freedom of association, assembly, religion and expression are not only fundamental rights and important tools in the creation of vibrant societies. They are indispensable in the fight against extremism and radicalisation. So is a vibrant civil society.

Yesterday was International Women's Day. This is a day to celebrate women's achievements, recognise challenges, and focus attention on women's rights, women's representation and their adequate resources. Our experience is that women's rights do not only benefit women, but society as a whole.

More than 20 years ago, in 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development met here in Cairo to discuss various issues, including education of women and protection of women from all forms of violence, including female genital mutilation and sexual harassment. Many of these issues are still very much in play today and I urge you to contribute to upholding the agreements made here in Cairo 20 years ago.

Excellencies,

Many of you here today have the privilege of representing large young populations. They are a valuable asset. It is for their sake, and their children's sake, that all our efforts must be concentrated.

Many of them were not born 15 years ago when my predecessor and friend

Anna Lindh came to inaugurate the Swedish Institute of Alexandria together with Amr Moussa. Let me invite you to commemorate Anna Lindh and celebrate 15 years of the Institute this autumn. It will be a great opportunity to strengthen our ties and make use of this unique platform for dialogue and instrument to dispel dangerous ignorance.

Let us together break the negative spiral of war, conflict and terrorism into a movement towards democracy, respect for human rights and socio-economic development. We have to continue to create hope.

Thank you. Shukran.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Helsinki University

Published 03 March 2015 Updated 10 August 2015

Speech given at Helsinki University, 3 March 2015.
Check against delivery.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Professor Laakso, Students,

One million, forty-two thousand and sixty-six. That is the estimated number of internally displaced persons in Eastern Ukraine. Recent reports about the humanitarian conditions highlights the increase in gender-based and sexual violence against women. Many women are forced to live in public places, such as train stations, where some of the perpetrators are men who have fought in the ongoing conflict.

Twenty-seven. That is the number of times the word ‘rape’ is mentioned in the latest report to the UN from the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. The report describes crimes committed both by government forces and ISIL. Regarding ISIL, it says the following:

"Information collected recently indicates that groups of dozens of girls and women have been transported to various locations in Syria (...). There, the girls and women are raped and held in sexual slavery."

I am here to talk about why Sweden is the first country to declare that we will pursue a feminist foreign policy. Given these two examples, I hope it is obvious why we must include 100 percent of the population when we face war and conflict.

* * *

I am honoured to address you at this prestigious research institution. I would

like to thank the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the University of Helsinki and the Finnish Institute of International Affairs for hosting us.

Thank you, Professor Laakso, for your introductory comments. I look forward to a discussion with you, Dr Jauhola and your students.

This year, the University of Helsinki will celebrate 375 years of learning and intellectual endeavour. It is a very fitting place to highlight one of the most acute challenges facing us today: How to effectively combat persistent, and in many places growing, human rights violations against women and girls.

I have divided my talk on this broad topic into three parts. First, I would like to set the agenda and discuss the need for gender analysis in international politics. I will then move on and describe the concept of a feminist foreign policy in more detail. Lastly, I will talk about areas where we can achieve real change.

* * *

1. Setting the agenda

Gender analysis is as complex as it is crucial. It entails mapping, understanding and ultimately transforming norms, power structures and gender relations.

Traditional and narrow concepts of security still dominate the global agenda. There is a clear gap between what people in conflict zones experience – not least women – and the high-level discussions in the UN and elsewhere.

This gap is adequately captured by the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Leymah Gbowee in her book “Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer, and Sex Changed a Nation at War”. Gbowee speaks about the multitude of sensitivities and risks of discrimination surrounding international peacebuilding efforts, and the challenges of ensuring inclusive processes:

"You cannot go to another country and make a plan for it. The cultural context is so different from what you know that you will not understand much of what you see. (...) People who have lived through a terrible conflict may be hungry and desperate, but they are not stupid. They often have very good ideas about how peace can evolve, and they need to be asked. That includes women. Most especially women. To outsiders like the UN, these soldiers were a problem to be managed. But they were our children."

The history of women and girls in conflict and war is one of silent suffering in the face of overwhelming insecurity. This is true also after peace agreements have been signed – by men of course – challenging the very definitions of peace and security.

It is often through personal biographies and fiction that we gain knowledge about massive violations against women in war and conflict zones. And there are many eye-opening accounts. One of the most exceptional writers of her generation, Sofi Oksanen has in a painfully effective way described the extreme vulnerabilities of women in the face of conflict, and their limited choices in structures defined and controlled by men.

Even today, when the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust have been mapped out, we still have only scant knowledge of the sexual violence that Jewish and other women were subjected to. The record of the Nuremberg trials comprises 42 volumes. Not one heading in these 42 volumes includes the words ‘rape’, ‘prostitution’ or ‘women’.

Impunity has reigned supreme for these crimes.

A huge and very welcome legal shift took place in the 1990s, notably through the Rwanda and Yugoslavia Tribunals, and later the International Criminal Court, recognising sexual violence as a war crime under international humanitarian law.

Enormous academic and political efforts have paved the way for progress. Finland’s contributions in this regard have been as outstanding as they have been crucial. Hopefully some of you in this room will carry that tradition forward.

Today, women in Syria, Iraq and Ukraine are under siege – in sexual slavery or in a train station, for example. Today, these crimes may have a name, but the road to justice still remains a long and uncertain one. When we travel down that road we must remember that women are not only victims or survivors, but most importantly strong actors for change in their societies.

* * *

2. Some steps along the road: What a feminist foreign policy can do

Sweden’s feminist foreign policy aims at ensuring women’s rights and participation in central decision-making processes, including in peacebuilding efforts and peace negotiations. Gender equality is not just the

right thing to do. It is the necessary thing to do if we want to achieve our wider security and foreign policy objectives.

Feminist foreign policy will be an integral part of activities throughout the Swedish Foreign Service. Our methodology can be summarised in four words, all beginning with the letter “R”.

Reality check is about getting the facts right from the outset. What is the situation on the ground, if we want to include a 100 per cent of the population?

Rights – the simple fact is that human rights are also women’s rights. Here, two fundamental tracks must be followed when pursuing a feminist foreign policy. Firstly, there are areas where we must aim for prohibition, such as gender-based discrimination, forced marriages and female genital mutilation. Secondly, there are areas where the aim is progress, for example equal rights to inheritance and access to education and health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights. These areas are key to women’s empowerment.

Resources refers to Sweden’s ambitious international work, for example in development. The most basic starting-point here is the need to apply a gender perspective when distributing aid and resources.

Representation, which includes influence over agenda-setting, starts by asking a simple question: Who conducts foreign policy – at all levels? It starts at the highest level at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, where all the four top positions – two ministers and two state secretaries – are held by women.

I am very proud that Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven has made it very clear that gender equality is a whole-of-government priority. The Prime Minister himself will pursue the agenda in all facets of the Swedish Government’s work – in Sweden, in the EU and globally.

On the same note, I am grateful for a strong ally in Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja, who consistently makes the case for gender equality as a prerequisite for progress. We would like to work even more closely with Finland to push forward at the global level.

I am convinced that the Nordic countries have experiences to share. We have set a global example of how ensuring women’s rights has benefited

both women and men, and our societies at large. Step by step. Parental leave by parental leave. Pushing forward in all areas, we have started to transform norms and values.

3. How can we achieve real change?

In order to discuss what a feminist foreign policy can mean practically on the ground, let me return to one of the countries I mentioned initially: Ukraine. Women represent the largest group of internally displaced persons in Ukraine. A large number of women – exact numbers are unknown – remain in the conflict zone.

A recent visit to Eastern Ukraine by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency brought to light that women were more or less invisible in the humanitarian work, and in the reporting of the conflict.

No disaggregated data was available. Overall, very few of the international humanitarian organisations on the ground had considered the different needs of women, girls, boys and men. As I have already mentioned, there were several testimonies to the increased risks of sexual and gender-based violence, and trafficking.

Building competence and capacity in humanitarian and military structures is paramount to addressing these shortcomings.

15 years ago, the ground-breaking UN Security resolution 1325 on women peace, and security was adopted. Without a doubt, 1325 has impacted global policies and forced the issue of gender-based violence onto the global agenda. However, 1325 has so far failed to bring about real transformative change in how we operate with regard to gender in peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

In some cases, national action plans under 1325 have proved to be potentially important vehicles for this to happen. But, ultimately, what it takes is political will. No matter how many documents we sign. If the will to act is not there, we will not move forward.

To date, only 46 UN Member States countries have adopted National Action Plans. This is way too few. And even when national plans have been adopted, too little concrete action has been taken. Accountability mechanisms are clearly too weak and must be given greater consideration.

Together with Finland and Denmark, Sweden has proposed the establishment of a high-level position in the European External Action Service, responsible for promoting gender equality and ensuring effective implementation of 1325 in EU operations. We believe such a function would be instrumental in strengthening the EU's gender approach to peace and security.

And secondly: Over the past 20 years, only 8 per cent of the mediators in UN-led peace processes have been women. Of all the peace treaties signed during 2011 and 2012, only 20 per cent contained language on women's security, which raises the question: Security for whom? Therefore, Sweden is considering how to support a network of women mediators.

* * *

Dear friends,

A feminist foreign policy aims to respond to one of the greatest challenges of this century: The continued violations of women's and girls' human rights – in times of peace and in conflict. Failing to do so will ultimately undermine our overarching foreign policy and security objectives.

Fifteen years into the 21st century, the world is torn by conflicts that are more complex and more difficult to solve than ever before. Today, 1.5 billion people live in fragile states and conflict zones, placing far-reaching demands on international peacekeeping and crisis management. International actors are under pressure to adapt – moving towards the protection of civilians rather than observing ceasefires.

Applying routine gender analysis, strengthening the collection of gender disaggregated data, improving accountability and bringing women into peace negotiations and peacebuilding will be key in moving forward.

When doing so, let's remember how the Swedish feminist and author Elin Wägner compared values and ideals to old-fashion bicycle lights: They don't light up until you pedal forwards.

In our work for global gender equality, Sweden and Finland can do great deal in together. I am confident that many of you in this room will help us when we pedal forward.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at the 28th regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Published 02 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

United Nations Human Rights Council, Geneva 2 mars 2015 Check against delivery.

Thank you Mr President. High Commissioner, Excellencies.

My friend and predecessor Anna Lindh once said: “Human rights are praised more than ever, and violated as much as ever.” We truly live in troubled times of unrest where good news are too rare, and reports of human rights violations are too many.

When Boris Nemtsov was shot in Moscow two days ago – those bullets also hit the Russian people and affected the rest of the world.

All human rights are indivisible and mutually reinforcing. It is through cooperation, dialogue and with mutual respect that we can ensure compliance with human rights law.

We stand up for the human dignity, integrity, freedom and inviolability of the individual. That includes taking a stand against states claiming the right to execute, torture or imprison people in contravention of international norms. We are deeply concerned over the excessive application of the death penalty and call on governments to halt executions and introduce a moratorium on capital punishment.

It is true that women’s rights are human rights, and human rights are women’s rights. These can never be set aside with reference to culture, tradition or religion. The Swedish Government wants to strengthen gender

equality, improve women's access to resources and increase women's representation - we call it a feminist foreign policy. Furthermore, a key focus is to help protect female human rights defenders – “femdefenders” who often are particularly at risk.

All discriminatory barriers to women's economic empowerment must be removed. Equal right to inheritance is crucial in this context. Likewise, women must be allowed to control their own bodies. Sweden will continue to increase respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights and strive for their inclusion on the new global development agenda.

We must increase our efforts both to take preventive measures and to combat impunity for gender-based violence. This is true both in times of peace and in connection with armed conflicts such as in Syria and Iraq. Gender-based violence can also be part of atrocity crimes. Let us make our most to prevent genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious international crimes, and make sure that the perpetrators are held accountable.

The economic, social and cultural rights are crucial for the survival and health of millions of people and for their working conditions. Sweden will fight different forms of forced labor and child labor, and defend a person's right to form and join trade unions, negotiate and take industrial action.

Safeguarding human rights also implies a responsibility to fight racism and discrimination. Building sustainable societies requires inclusive participation of all individuals, regardless of their origin, religious beliefs, political opinion or sexual orientation. This remains a challenge and priority also in Sweden. Our experience is that civil society often plays a key role in promoting and protecting human rights.

Free speech, free media and active journalists play a key role in ensuring human rights. We cannot stand idly by while freedom of speech is threatened. We cannot stand idly by while journalists are imprisoned, kidnapped and killed. Last year at least 60 journalists were killed. We must ensure a stronger protection of these vital voices.

We witness the barbaric offensive by ISIL. Events such as those in Nigeria, Middle East, Paris and Copenhagen prove that we all face the challenge of violent extremism. However, efforts to counter extremism must be in line with our democratic values and our conviction that we can all live side by side regardless of religion and ethnicity. The fight against terrorism must

always fully respect human rights.

The new challenges show that it is time for us to sharpen our work. Sweden will present a new strategy on human rights, democracy and rule of law which will guide our efforts in these fields.

Sweden attaches great importance to the work of the Human Rights Council, including the Special Procedures, to address specific country and thematic situations. Sweden will continue with our strong support for the mandate of the UN special rapporteur on human rights in Iran. The EU continues to follow the situation in Palestine with close attention and we call on Israel to fully cooperate with the Human Rights Council, including through issuing a standing invitation to all UN Special Procedures.

In conclusion, we need to work together and ensure that the UN delivers. 2015 is a key year for global efforts. Through the UN we can take concrete steps for human rights and democracy, to achieve peace and security, gender equality and sustainable development.

I repeat “Human rights are praised more than ever, and violated as much as ever.”

Let us rise to that challenge.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement to the Conference on Disarmament

Published 02 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

United Nations, Geneva 2 mars 2015 Check against delivery.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies.

I am glad to be here in Geneva today, to address the Conference on Disarmament on issues of top priority for Sweden.

Setsuko Thurlow, one of the survivors of the Hiroshima bombing, visited the Swedish Parliament a few months ago. She gave voice to the great concern that she and other hibakushas feel: that the bomb, also today, affects her children and grandchildren, and will affect her future great-grandchildren and also their children.

Compared to the nuclear weapons of today, the bombs that were dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki were simple and crude; still, they killed 200 000 people outright or in the aftermath, maimed many more, and brought complete devastation on two cities.

Today, more than 16 000 nuclear weapons remain. This is unacceptable. The call from the men and women of Hiroshima and Nagasaki rings clear: We need to move further and faster on nuclear disarmament. All nuclear weapons must be abolished.

There are positive developments. Three international conferences have been held, highlighting the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons for men, women and children. Human beings have once again been put at the heart of our discussions.

A humanitarian perspective on nuclear weapons helps us bring disarmament

forward. Sweden will work actively with all stakeholders, at the upcoming NPT Review Conference and beyond, to pursue effective measures to eliminate all nuclear weapons.

Today, I am pleased to announce that Sweden is returning to the de-alerting group. There is widespread agreement that hair-trigger alert multiplies the risks associated with nuclear weapons. De-alerting is an important risk reduction measure on which real progress can be achieved in the short term. We look forward to working with our partners Chile, Malaysia, Nigeria, New Zealand and Switzerland on advancing this issue.

Mr. President,

Important work is done here in Geneva in the wider field of disarmament.

Questions of life and death must never be delegated to machines. We welcome the continued discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems at the CCW (Convention for Certain Conventional Weapons). We are actively preparing for these discussions and have asked SIPRI, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, to study possible ways forward on central issues, such as definitions and transparency.

The Ottawa Convention that bans anti-personnel landmines is one of the most successful conventions in disarmament. Mine clearance and assistance to survivors have brought relief to affected people, countries and regions everywhere. But much remains to be done. Sweden will do its share and continue its longstanding and active engagement in mine action worldwide.

I am glad to announce that Sweden will soon have decommissioned all its cluster munitions, in accordance with our obligations in the Convention that bans this inhuman weapon. For the ban to become effective, it is important that also the world's largest manufacturers and users of cluster munitions join the Convention.

We are deeply concerned about reports of the use of cluster munitions against civilian populations in South Sudan and in Syria. The use of cluster munitions is unacceptable, and Sweden calls on all actors to strictly observe International Humanitarian Law.

Mr. President,

Contagious disease used as a weapon continues to be a major global security threat. To understand the potential dangers we need only to look at the

Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Sweden is a major contributor to the fight against Ebola, and will continue to help strengthen states' capacity to prevent, detect and respond to epidemic outbreaks in Africa and elsewhere.

Sweden will do its part in promoting a constructive and tangible outcome at next year's Review Conference for the Biological Weapons Convention. The universal adherence to the Convention is of particular importance, as well as the strengthening of confidence-building measures.

Mr. President,

The peaceful uses of outer space have contributed immensely to the welfare of people around the globe. This has to be safeguarded and strengthened so that more countries – and people – can benefit from space services.

Sweden welcomes that discussions are moving forward on how to update the international rules on outer space. I would especially like to highlight the International Code of Conduct for Activities in Outer Space, which will provide voluntary "rules of the road" to counter the pressing issue of space debris and help prevent conflicts in outer space. The Code will also be a complement to and help achieve a legally binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Mr. President,

I warmly welcome the initiative to hold a CD Civil Society Forum. Civil society organisations represent our people and contribute with expert knowledge, and should be allowed to participate in all non-negotiating sessions.

I regret that no new negotiations have been undertaken by the CD despite many vigorous efforts. A Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, an FMCT, should have been concluded many years ago. We call on countries to remedy the blockages and stop linking items. If the Conference remains unable to fulfil its mandate, we will need to consider other possible avenues for bringing disarmament work forward, including the UN General Assembly. The key word is progress – not process.

This year, it is 70 years since nuclear weapons were used in armed conflict for the first and, I very much hope, the last time. In light of the worsened security situation in Europe, the abolition of nuclear weapons is more important than ever. It is only through their total elimination that we will

have a real guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again. We owe it to Setsuko Thurlow, to all hibakushas, to their and our children and grand-children, to pursue and conclude this work with vigilance.

Thank you.



Speech

Statement of Foreign Policy 2015

Published 11 February 2015 Updated 11 March 2015

Mr/Madam Speaker,

We share a common destiny, and we do so at a time of greater insecurity.

When this chamber debated foreign policy a year ago, the Russian aggression against Ukraine was beginning – the greatest challenge to European peace and security since the end of the Cold War.

In 2014, the civil war in Syria deepened and ISIL commenced its barbaric offensive.

State violations in the east and state breakdowns in the south also have repercussions for Sweden.

They lead to tension in our neighbourhood, flows of refugees and a growing proportion of our population who bear the painful memories of war and conflict.

And the defining issue of our time – climate change – also constitutes a global security threat.

But increased insecurity must not overshadow global progress. Extreme poverty and infant mortality are declining. Technology is advancing. Our interdependence is growing.

Our common destiny confers two main tasks on Swedish foreign policy. We must make the most of the benefits, which are so significant. And we must manage the risks.

Our foreign policy is therefore focused on broad international collaboration and cooperation:

with our neighbours, within the European Union, and as a more active member of the United Nations.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's voice in the world is stronger when joined with those of the other EU Member States.

We welcome the fact that the European Union has presented a united response to the developments in Russia and Ukraine. Sweden will continue to strive for a policy that is as clear in its demands for respect for international law as in its support for the right of every country to determine its own future.

We support the efforts being made right now to find a political path towards easing tensions.

And perhaps most importantly: we must help Ukraine to be successful, just as we will contribute to the continued development of the EU's Eastern Partnership as a lever for those countries that have chosen the European path, whereby bloodshed on the battlefield is replaced with patience at the negotiating table.

In this spirit, Sweden is pushing for an open EU that is committed to Turkey's accession process, to the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, and to continued reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a view to future EU membership. Sweden supports the UN-led negotiations for the reunification of Cyprus.

The EU needs broader international engagement, a concerted global strategy and strengthened crisis management capabilities. Sweden will soon command the EU naval operation Atalanta, and a Swedish-led rapid reaction force – the Nordic Battlegroup – stands ready for deployment by the EU during the first half of 2015.

We cooperate within the EU – and the EU must cooperate with others. Strong and concerted EU action is in our interests. Sweden will strive for better European dialogue with other regions and countries. In more uncertain times, close transatlantic collaboration between the EU and the United States is particularly important.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Threats to peace and to our security are best averted collectively and in cooperation with other countries. Sweden does not participate in any military alliance. It is impossible to imagine military conflicts in our region that would affect only one country. Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. Our country must therefore be in a position to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military.

While the situation in our neighbourhood makes it necessary to strengthen Sweden's defence capabilities, we are continuing to develop our military cooperation: with Finland, with our other Nordic neighbours, with the Baltic countries and with NATO. In the latter case we, together with Finland and others, are now taking new steps as part of an upgraded partnership. Sweden will continue its active engagement and participation in international operations under the aegis of the UN, the EU, NATO and the OSCE.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

At global level, the United Nations plays an absolutely crucial role for peace and security. It therefore needs to be strengthened – and the UN's place in Swedish foreign policy is therefore now being restored. We want and are able to take responsibility for joint solutions through the UN. Sweden's candidacy for a seat on the UN Security Council in 2017–2018 is a concrete expression of the Government's desire to influence the course of global politics.

One expression of our belief in a global peace policy is our contribution to the UN operation in Mali. This will be our first major contribution of personnel to a UN-led operation since 2006. We are also participating in a number of other operations, many under the aegis of the UN, including in South Sudan, Liberia, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Middle East. The Government believes that Sweden should take part in more UN-led operations.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Together with other members of the UN, the EU, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, we defend the human rights that apply to every individual. We do so wherever these rights are attacked, and regardless of whether the people affected are in a magazine's editorial office or a supermarket in Paris, in a market in Nigeria, or on an idyllic island in Norway.

International law demands respect for the Charter of the United Nations and for the principles of territorial integrity and prohibition of violence enshrined in it. Genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious international crimes must be combated and punished.

The work of the International Humanitarian Law Delegation must be reinforced, and should also focus on disarmament.

Safeguarding human rights is a cornerstone of Swedish foreign policy. A strategy for human rights, democracy and the rule of law is now being drafted.

Economic, social and cultural rights are crucial to people's working conditions and welfare. But in today's global economy, human rights are frequently violated in working life. Sweden will fight different forms of forced labour and child labour, and defend a person's right to form and join trade unions, negotiate and take industrial action.

Safeguarding human rights also implies a responsibility to fight racism and the collective labelling of various groups, for example in terms of religion. At the same time, freedom of expression and freedom of the press must be defended. We cannot stand idly by while freedom of speech is threatened, or while journalists are imprisoned, kidnapped and killed. Defending human rights includes taking a stand against states claiming the right to execute, torture or imprison people in contravention of international norms.

For decades, Sweden has led the way on sexual and reproductive health and rights. We want to increase understanding of these rights, and strive for their inclusion on the new global development agenda. Oppression on the grounds of people's sexual orientation must be countered.

In 2014, more than 100 million people needed humanitarian support and more than 50 million were forced to flee their homes. This is the most serious situation since the Second World War.

The international community must take action by improving the situation of refugees and ending the conflicts that force them to flee. Sweden is one of the largest donors to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and will contribute SEK 640 million in non-earmarked core support in 2015.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs now has a strong and evolving crisis response organisation. Protection of and support to Swedes abroad is a

priority, whether it is a matter of a lost passport, a serious illness or detention.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The distinction between foreign and domestic policy is becoming blurred. In a connected world, policy areas are intimately linked and the concept of security has become broader.

Through the UN we can take a number of important steps, and 2015 is a key year for global efforts. To achieve peace and development, we need initiatives for democracy, sustainable development, gender equality and prudent use of our natural resources. At a time when the ecosystems that support life are being depleted and a changing climate poses a threat to our future, it is crucial that fresh progress is made.

At this year's climate conference in Paris, Sweden's goal is to reach a global, fair and legally binding climate agreement that will keep the average increase in global temperature below two degrees.

By strengthening our climate ambitions in Sweden and the EU we can contribute to reduced emissions and impacts from climate change throughout the world. This year, Sweden will contribute to deeper analysis of the impacts of climate change on peace and security.

Alongside a new, strong climate agreement, another priority will be the formulation of new global sustainable development goals that must apply to all countries. Financing for sustainable development is crucial and requires a coherent policy on development. Sweden will be a bridgebuilder and have a strong voice in international development policy. The Government stands by its commitment to contribute one per cent of gross national income to aid.

Taking a broader view of security, gaps between rich and poor must be regarded as a cause of tensions and conflicts. Combating poverty and inequality is also a security policy task. Aid and development cooperation are important components of these conflict prevention efforts.

We will continue to seek effective and common tools to fight international terrorism, without compromising the fundamental values of democracy and the rule of law that we must defend.

Among the new security threats that must be fought, we are seeing cyberattacks, espionage, cybercrime and digital propaganda wars. Acute

outbreaks of epidemics, such as Ebola, are another reminder of the threats to our security. This also applies to the increasing prevalence of antibiotic resistance, which is a danger to health and the environment. The Government wants more effective efforts within the WHO and other bodies to address the challenges to our health.

The Government therefore intends to invite experts and representatives of civil society and government to a special conference. The Government will hold cross-party talks about the broad security challenges facing Sweden and how they can be addressed.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

In these unsettled times, it is crucial that we take resolute action for disarmament and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Sweden will work together with like-minded countries to draw attention to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and to eliminate all nuclear weapons.

We will work for more effective implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and the universal adherence to and implementation of the UN Arms Trade Treaty.

Decisions on life and death cannot be delegated to machines. We therefore want to see continued discussions on autonomous weapons systems. North Korea's attempts to develop nuclear weapons are a cause for concern. The Government wants to contribute to disarmament and peaceful development on the Korean peninsula through a policy of critical engagement.

A conclusion of the negotiations on Iran's nuclear technology programme will be very important for the region and for the goal of non-proliferation.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

We are concerned by the tensions between Israel and Palestine. Sweden will push for intensified EU engagement for lasting peace, together with the UN and other parties in the region, and the rest of the world.

The Government values continued broad and good relations with Israel, and we are showing our long-term commitment to Palestine by introducing a new five-year aid strategy with significantly higher aid volumes.

The radicalisation that grows out of hopelessness must be countered. Young Israelis and Palestinians must be convinced to believe in a better future. Through our recognition of the State of Palestine, Sweden wanted to demonstrate that the two-state solution is not merely an abstract vision. There is a political path away from hopelessness and violence.

The situation in the Middle East remains worrying, and in some places desperate. The whole international community must support the peace efforts in Syria led by the UN. What began as a popular uprising against Assad's repressive regime has developed into a humanitarian disaster, with repercussions far beyond Syria's borders. We must all give our support to the moderate forces around the region that seek consensus across geographical, ethnic or religious boundaries.

Sweden, like the rest of the EU, is part of the broad coalition against ISIL. We are one of the largest humanitarian donors. The Government is looking into the possibility of sending Swedish military personnel to Iraq to help train troops fighting ISIL.

Atrocities must be recognised for what they are. ISIL's violence and terrorism are of the most pervasive and heinous kind. There must be consequences for such crimes. Those guilty must be held to account and punished, be it for genocide, crimes against humanity or other mass atrocities. The Government, together with the other EU countries, has urged the UN Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

In large parts of Africa, Latin America and Asia, important developments are under way.

Sweden needs to continuously review and renew its cooperation and dialogue with an Africa undergoing rapid change. Our cooperation and dialogue are rooted in a historically established commitment that spans the entire African continent. Conflicts are still occurring, international crisis management operations remain necessary and the rules for conflict minerals need to be tightened. But we must also embrace sustainable economic growth and greater regional responsibility, not least on the part of the African Union.

In Latin America, Sweden looks forward to deepening political contacts and economic relations, especially through our broad strategic partnership with Brazil. The EU's free trade agreements provide opportunities to develop Sweden's economic exchange with a number of countries, based on long-term Swedish support for freedom and democracy development.

The rapprochement between the United States and Cuba is historic and inspires hope. One important component of the Government's commitment to democracy, human rights and reforms in Cuba is the re-establishment of a bilateral dialogue.

The economic, political and demographic developments in Asia in recent decades are unparalleled. Sweden must make use of the resulting new opportunities opening up there. We want to contribute to sustainable social development on a democratic foundation and with respect for human rights.

The Government is seeking closer economic and political cooperation with China, and it goes without saying that this will involve a frank dialogue on human rights.

Sweden is strengthening its civilian involvement in Afghanistan, with a focus on the situation of women and girls. The security situation remains a challenge. Since the beginning of this year,

Sweden has been participating in the NATO-led military training and advisory mission – the Resolute Support Mission – and we are involved in the EU Police Mission.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden will promote free and fair world trade. The WTO must be strengthened as an organisation. We attach great importance to the Doha Round and to negotiations on environmental goods and services.

Special priority will be given to concluding the negotiations between the EU and the US on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership agreement, TTIP. In addition to economic reasons, the agreement is strategically important in order to strengthen the transatlantic link. A free trade agreement between the EU and the US should be both deep and comprehensive, and cover all important aspects of trade and investment. The Government's goal is to achieve as ambitious a result as possible to support growth and employment – without impairing the possibility of strengthening

environmental protection, the interests of wage earners and the health of people and animals.

The Government will work for progressive international trade agreements and to dismantle trade barriers. Within the EU, Sweden will push for a free and fair trade policy and a deeper internal market. Priority will be given to efforts aimed at entering into free trade agreements between the EU and other economically important actors. In the OECD, we will act to reduce protectionist tendencies, including from the G20 countries.

Promotion of exports, imports and investment in Sweden is an integral part of foreign policy and thus the responsibility of the entire Government. An export strategy will be prepared so that more small and medium-sized enterprises are able to enter an international market, and so that more Swedish companies are able to enter markets with high growth potential.

A presence in new growth markets requires active efforts on sustainable business practices. We want to see the innovative capacity of Swedish companies mobilised so as to contribute to more jobs, greater growth and sustainable development.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

A feminist foreign policy is now being formulated, the purpose of which is to combat discrimination against women, improve conditions for women and contribute to peace and development. Women's participation in decision-making must be strengthened in countries at peace, countries in conflict and countries in which reconstruction is under way. This will also strengthen the sustainability of our societies.

Concrete steps to promote the status and rights of women are also being taken through increased cooperation with civil society and with our partners in the EU and the UN. Together with our Nordic EU friends, we have proposed appointing an EU representative for gender equality and the implementation of Resolution 1325, which was adopted fifteen years ago this year. We will also continue our efforts to combat impunity for gender-based violence, which is necessary both in times of peace and in connection with armed conflicts.

UN Member States should advance efforts for the human rights of women and girls, their right to economic empowerment and their right to control their own bodies. It is particularly important this year, when the international

community is to affirm the commitments concerning women's conditions that were made in Beijing in 1995. These conditions must be improved – not undermined.

A feminist foreign policy will be an integral part of activities throughout the Swedish Foreign Service, and aims to strengthen women's rights, improve women's access to resources and increase women's representation.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The insecurity in our region, the ruthlessness of terrorism, the irrefutable fact of climate change, the vulnerability of the cyber society and the injustice of inequality all serve as a reminder. It is precisely at this moment – in unsettled times – that we must not hesitate.

The values that guide Swedish foreign policy still stand out as an uncommonly modern basis on which to organise a community. Cooperation with our neighbours, to guarantee peace and create common security. Solidarity that knows no borders, aimed at increasing equality and eradicating poverty. Gender equality and a feminist foreign policy, since human rights are also women's rights. Sustainable development, in light of the fact that last year the world was warmer than at any time since records began in 1880.

These are the building blocks for a foreign and security policy to feed into a broader discussion in our country. A policy that is guided by the necessity of common security and the realisation that we share a common destiny. Where my destiny is your destiny, and the destiny of others is our own.

The Government is determined that, in these unsettled times, Sweden will take global responsibility by being a strong voice in the world. For freedom, peace and human rights. For democracy, equality and solidarity.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech in the UN Security Council: "Protection of civilians in armed conflict"

Published 30 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

United Nations Security Council, New York 30 januari 2015 Check against delivery.

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

First, let me thank the Assistant Secretary-General Kyung-wha Kang and Dr Helen Durham from the ICRC. I would also like to thank, in particular, Ms Ilwad Elman from the Women, Peace and Security working group. The role and influence of civil society in preventing conflict and building peace are essential and must be supported.

For more than 150 years, the international community has been in agreement that warfare should be made less inhumane, through the rules and principles of international humanitarian law. Civilians should be protected in armed conflict. We need to prevent and to respond to mass atrocity crimes, in accordance with the Responsibility to Protect. However, these rules and principles are challenged and sometimes even ignored. Civilians are particularly exposed in today's complex and often protracted conflicts, as we have seen in the Middle East and in West and Central Africa. This is for instance the case in Syria (and Iraq) where hospitals and schools are being made the actual targets of warfare. This must stop.

Women, men, girls and boys face different threats and difficulties during and after conflict. International humanitarian law does not always assist in

addressing these threats and difficulties. The laws of war were written during a time when only men were defined as combatants and the responsibilities of women were seen as far distant from the battlefield. A stronger gender perspective needs to be applied to international humanitarian law.

Mr. President,

Women and especially girls are particularly exposed to violence in conflict. Violence against women affects a third of all women globally. The violence is often amplified in areas affected by conflict. As we see in many parts of the world today, extremism and terrorism are prominent features of conflict situations, often constituting new kinds of threats to women's rights and lives and causing flight and displacement. We need to prevent and combat these violations of women and girls' fundamental human rights.

Gender inequalities lie at the heart of the issue. Progress on gender equality and women's rights is a goal in its own right but it also remains a critical factor in achieving poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Furthermore gender equality helps to prevent sexual violence in/and armed conflicts. We must therefore firmly address the root causes of gender inequality. This includes changing laws, norms, practices and attitudes in societies that are denying women and girls' human rights. It also means pursuing laws, including equal rights to inheritance, and policies that ensure women's political and economic empowerment, secure sexual and reproductive health and rights and policies that improve women's security. And not least, we must guarantee the right to quality education for all women and girls.

The fight against impunity for sexual and gender-based violence is also crucial. Each state has a duty and a responsibility to investigate and prosecute such crimes. It is primarily at the domestic level that solutions to the impunity gap must be found. The role of the International Criminal Court is complementary, but nevertheless crucial in ensuring that accountability is achieved. We therefore welcome and support the undertakings and in particular the special policy of the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in order to more efficiently investigate and prosecute SGBV crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court. We furthermore recall the unique capacity of Justice Rapid Response, in close cooperation with UN Women, to address situations where expertise is needed for investigating SGBV crimes.

Mr. President,

Women are first and foremost actors and agents of change. Sustainable peace and security can never be achieved if half the population is excluded. In excluding women, we are also excluding the contribution of those sectors of society which are considered as feminine or to be women's duties. These often include raising children, education, health care, and taking care of the elderly. When these sectors, which are vital to the long-term success of nations, are not adequately represented in decision-making, it is to the detriment of peace and security. We need the participation of both women and men in formal and informal processes, in mediation, peace negotiations, and humanitarian and peace-building efforts to bring in new angles, solutions and perspectives to problems.

Mr. President,

This year provides an unique opportunity to assess and accelerate the implementation of the WPS agenda. Currently, several critical reviews are under way, including the UN Secretary-General review of peace operations, the review of the UN's peacebuilding architecture, the review of the Beijing Platform for Action and the High-level Review of Resolution 1325. In order to ensure coherence, all these reviews and especially their recommendations and outcomes should take into account the implementation of 1325 objectives in a coordinated manner. To promote the Women, Peace and Security agenda is not an isolated issue. On the contrary, it is a major part of the Peace and Security agenda.

Mr. President,

Although there has been an increase in the number of mandates of UN missions that include references to women, peace and security, this is not enough. All mandates should be based on a gender-sensitive conflict analysis in order to also be tailored to the security needs and ensuring the participation of women and girls. Gender issues should be part of reporting requirements and all UN missions should have a gender advisor at the strategic level, supplied with resources respective to his/her tasks. Leadership is critical in ensuring progress on this agenda, at the highest levels of the UN, as in member states.

Lastly, I would like to underline the importance of the Post-2015 Agenda. Among others, the Nordic countries support the gender equality goal (Goal 5) and the goal on freedom from violence and peaceful societies (Goal 16) proposed by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development, which together includes targets concerning the prevention of all kinds of violence,

including violence against women and girls. We believe that the Post-2015 Agenda represents a unique opportunity to address violence against women, including sexual violence, on a fundamental level. It is a chance to make real progress!

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the United States Institute for Peace

Published 29 January 2015 Updated 10 August 2015

United States Institute of Peace, Washington D.C. 29 January 2015. Check against delivery.

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is a pleasure and honour to address you today. Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words about Sweden's feminist foreign policy and the global challenges facing us today.

I particularly look forward to what is certain to be a rich discussion following my introductory remarks.

Let me start by saying how impressed I am by USIP's commitment to advancing the agenda for gender and peacebuilding, while consistently aiming to improve action on the ground. If we are to more effectively address the challenges facing women – and indeed facing societies at large – the link between analytical work and operative measures clearly needs to be strengthened. USIP plays a crucial role in providing that link. I want to particularly thank Ambassador Bill Taylor for opening USIP to us and so graciously hosting me here today. And I want to extend a warm thank you to Dr Kathleen Kuhenasst, Director of the Gender and Peacebuilding Center, for all the preparation she and her team have done for today's event, but more importantly for the work you do every day to move this agenda forward. Thank you!

I also want to take the opportunity to express my appreciation and support for the leadership of the US administration, and that of the many excellent

American civil society organisations, private sector actors and academic institutions for their efforts in advancing this agenda. It takes the effort of many to make a difference!

A feminist foreign policy

In October last year, as I walked to the Royal Palace in Stockholm for the formal transition of power following the September elections, a journalist asked me about my priorities and vision for Sweden's foreign policy. My answer was clear: We are going to pursue a feminist foreign policy.

My statement has since then been received with much enthusiasm, but also a fair share scepticism, to put it kindly. Just as the suffragettes at the turn of the 20th century, fighting for their political rights in the UK and the USA, were met with considerable derision – even the term “suffragettes” was initially intended as a mockery - the notion of “a feminist foreign policy” has also given rise to irony among some observers. However, looking back, history proved women right and our democratic institutions are stronger for it. Today, the idea that women could be excluded from Parliament, or their right to vote questioned, would be seen as an utter contradiction in terms. So as we move forward, I take great strength in Gandhi's words: “First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.”

A feminist foreign policy essentially seeks to address what former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has so aptly described as “the great unfinished business of the 21st century”.

Many countries, including my own, are still characterised by the systematic subordination of women. In many parts of the world, the fact that women and girls continue to be denied their human rights constitutes a growing threat to peace and security. Women are also increasingly becoming the target of violence as a means of control to prevent them from exercising their rights.

A newly published report by the World Bank shows that in most of the world, no place is less safe for a woman than her own home. More than 700 million women globally are subject to physical or sexual violence at the hands of their husbands, boyfriends or partners. Not only is impunity widespread, in many countries intimate partner violence remains outside the law, and in some cases even allowed by law.

The extent of this problem is dramatic and in many places violence against women and girls is seen as the norm even by women themselves. In the World Bank's recent analysis, derived from 52 developing countries, one in

three women agree that wife beating is justified for going out without permission.

Striving towards gender equality is not only a goal in itself, but also a precondition for achieving our wider foreign, development and security policy objectives. Working towards greater gender equality and ensuring women's rights is therefore at the heart of the Swedish Government's foreign policy. I will focus here today on the 'how' and the 'what' of our feminist foreign policy. What are our priority areas and what are the tools at our disposal to advance the feminist foreign policy agenda?

a. Rights, representation and resources There are three indispensable and interdependent concepts that are crucial to the 'how' of moving the feminist foreign policy agenda forward: RIGHTS, REPRESENTATION and RESOURCES – “the feminist toolbox”.

First, respect for human rights and the rule of law constitute essential starting points for every discussion about gender equality. Ensuring women's rights and access to justice must be seen as central to achieving the overall human rights agenda. This is far from today's reality. Women's rights are often seen as a specific and separate issue. We will need to work multilaterally and bilaterally, creating global coalitions in order to ensure that gender perspectives are included in strategic discussions, decisions and, most importantly, concretised at country level.

Second, increasing women's representation across the board – in governance and peacebuilding efforts, in economies and core institutions – is a *sine qua non* in achieving gender equality. Only through women's active participation at different levels of decision making can we transform agendas so that the needs and interests of women are truly reflected and addressed.

Reality on the ground gives considerable scope for improvement: out of 585 negotiated peace agreements from 1990 to 2010, only 92 contained references to women. From 1992 to 2011, fewer than 4 per cent of signatories of peace agreements, and less than 10 per cent of peace negotiators, were women. Furthermore, women head only 19 per cent of all UN field missions. 97 per cent of military peacekeepers are men. Do I need to go much further? We will actively advocate women's inclusion in all peacebuilding processes, but also initiate measures in order to create a network of women mediators that can be called upon. I do not want anyone to say that there were no competent women around to involve.

We will continue to support women's organisations in conflict and post-

conflict settings, in cooperation with civil society and through the UN. Achieving a better gender balance in UN peacekeeping operations is long overdue and we will give this issue full priority.

Finally, resources to achieve these ends must be increased and channelled in such a way so as to ensure that essential gender goals have financial backing. As an example: today only one per cent of spending in security sector reform is allocated to initiatives which consider gender equality a significant objective. Furthermore, in a sample of six post-conflict countries, less than eight per cent of spending was specifically budgeted to empower women or promote gender equality. Increasing and redirecting resources towards gender-specific targets will require political commitment and specific budgeting, but more importantly budgetary methods that direct major flows of money to support gender targets. We will develop and bring such methods to bear at home and in foreign policy settings.

Achieving gender equality will require new and coherent approaches, upstream and downstream, including everything from agenda setting, information and data gathering, analysis and decision-making, and intervention design to follow-up and accountability. Accountability will be key.

b. Prioritised areas: Much of what we are already doing – politically, in pursuing international law and within the context of Swedish development cooperation – will continue to be prioritised within the feminist foreign policy framework. We will continue to give priority to the following five interdependent pillars, which we see as essential to achieving gender equality targets and improving the lives of women and girls.

1. Rule of law and human rights. These are crucial elements and constitute both the means and the end. Delivering on binding commitments and developing central aspects of international law in a gender-sensitive manner are of paramount importance.

Despite the difficulties experienced in many contexts, we must aspire to move beyond merely defending current achievements – not least to counteract the notion that women's rights can be denied by reference to traditional norms and religious beliefs.

2. Combating gender-based and sexual violence in peace time and in conflict remains a core priority.

- Violence against women and girls remains a global epidemic. Women in particular are vulnerable in conflict. Gender discrimination and deep inequalities are at the heart of this issue. It is only through consistent work to achieve progress at all levels that we can hope to mitigate women's particular vulnerabilities. The fight against impunity for sexual and gender-based violence, in peace time as in conflict, is of course crucial.

- Let me elaborate a bit further on gender-based violence in conflict: 2015 will mark the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the ground-breaking resolution 1325, which established the agenda on women, peace and security. However, ensuring results on the ground is still an outstanding challenge in many ways.

- Our goal must be to bring gender aspects and priorities to the heart of peacebuilding and peacekeeping. We must ensure women's full inclusion in all phases of formal and informal processes. Women's representation remains marginal and gender aspects tend to be seen as complementary, rather than central to the successful outcome of the operations. Sustainable peace and security can never be achieved if half the population is excluded.

- A number of reviews directly related to women, peace and security are currently under way. In addition to the 1325 review later this year, the UN Secretary-General's review of peace operations and the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture offer crucial avenues for addressing several of these aspects and ensuring implementation of the main objectives of resolution 1325 across the board.

3. The third pillar, which Sweden has consistently championed for a long time, concerns sexual and reproductive health and rights.

- This is an area of work that represents perhaps the greatest normative challenges. While maternal health – and to a certain degree even reproductive health – have become accepted benchmarks, sexual and reproductive rights remain highly controversial. This is true in many parts of the world, including the EU. Important progress and central elements of the EU acquis have regrettably been undermined, so we have work to do in our own backyard as well as on the global level.

- The issue of women's reproductive rights is an issue that concerns the whole of society, men and women alike. Involving men in this work is therefore just as crucial as increasing women's representation in relevant contexts and forums. Education and dialogue are key.

4. The fourth pillar concerns another crucial building block of a feminist foreign policy: the economic empowerment of women for overall development and growth. We must combat discrimination in the labour market, but also promote women's legal rights with regard to inheritance, land acquisition and possession, as well as equal access to various social services.

5. Finally, we will also integrate feminist perspectives in our work to promote sustainable development and tackle climate change and other related threats. The post-2015 agenda will offer important opportunities to mobilise a feminist agenda and promote gender-sensitive approaches in all of these areas.

Putting our own house in order for delivery on a feminist foreign policy

Success will, however, ultimately depend on our ability to mobilise, inspire ownership and develop adequate working methods. This in turn will require investing in capacity building and raising competence levels. I have therefore initiated an overhaul of my foreign service in order to ensure that the necessary competencies are developed and integrated into all sectors of the Ministry's work. Following a great example by the US administration, I have appointed an ambassador at large for women's issues and gender equality to be responsible for coordinating Sweden's feminist foreign policy. We have also taken steps to involve civil society at an early stage of this process. The role of civil society will be crucial both upstream in defining priorities and downstream in implementing the policy on the ground.

Conclusion

Before I close, I would like to say a few words on women's rights defenders. They are true heroes of our time. Fighting relentlessly for women's rights, often in very difficult circumstances and at their own peril, they prove that women are at the forefront of the struggle for equality and change. But their struggle comes at an unacceptably high price.

Many of these women are confronted on a daily basis by an incomprehensible level of hate, threats and violence. In a recent survey conducted by the Swedish NGO "Kvinna to Kvinna", more than 60 per cent of the women interviewed had experienced public abuse, violence or received online threats; 14 per cent reported that they had been the victims

of attempted murder, 29 per cent had received death threats in public places and 21 per cent had been sexually harassed.

By calling for increased influence and measures aimed at improving the lives of women, women's rights defenders are in fact challenging existing power structures and the distribution of power. Violence is a way of trying to silence these efforts for change and development. Therefore, supporting and defending the women who are fighting for women's rights is crucial to the overall struggle for human rights, peace, democracy and the rule of law. I count on your support.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Presentation of the Challenges Forum report "Designing Mandates" to UN Secretary- General Ban Ki-moon, 27 January 2015

Published 27 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

UN Headquarters, New York 27 januari 2015 Check
against delivery.

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, Partners, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address you today on behalf of the Challenges Forum Partnership, which brings together practitioners and decision-makers from 21 countries and six continents committed to making peace operations more effective and better fit to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Peace operations is one of the most important and visible instruments in the UN tool box, and the demand for them is ever growing. While this can be seen as a positive sign of the trust and confidence that the international community places in the UN for managing conflicts, it also puts increasing pressure on the UN – alongside regional and other actors – to deliver more effectively on their peacekeeping mandates.

My own country, Sweden, is deeply committed to peacekeeping. Over the years, more than 80 000 Swedes have served in UN peace operations. Our deployment to MINUSMA, in Mali, is the most recent expression of this commitment. As we are now deploying, our troops will join their colleagues from other troop contributing countries in UN missions around the globe, who put their lives in harm's way in the pursuit of peace. They will face

many challenges.

What can we do in response to the changing nature of conflict and the new kinds of challenges facing peacekeepers in different conflict arenas around the world?

First of all, we must recognise that although there are challenges, these are not insurmountable. By partnership and cooperation between all stakeholders we can find a common way forward.

There is a need to rethink and transform the approaches to UN peace operations. Many times the developments on the ground have outpaced the progress in strategic-level policy and operational guidance.

Going forward, we need to:

- 1) close the gap between the strategic and tactical levels of peace operations, not least with regard to the ability to respond more swiftly to contingencies at all levels;
- 2) enhance cooperation between the UN and regional organizations engaged in peace operations, and
- 3) better equip and train peacekeepers in order for peace operations to fulfil their mandates in increasingly volatile environments.

These are some of the main conclusions of the report *Designing Mandates and Capabilities for Future Peace Operations* by the Challenges Forum Partnership.

This report is the result of a two-year undertaking and contains a range of findings and 24 targeted and realistic recommendations. I would like to highlight two issues in particular:

First, the need for gender mainstreaming, both in the way that the peace operations are designed, and how they conduct their work in the area of operation. Much has happened since UNSCR 1325 was adopted in 2000, not least on the normative level, but work is still lagging behind in practice. Gender mainstreaming in peace operations is critical simply because it does make a real difference for the effective implementation of peacekeeping mandates. Reaching out and encouraging the active involvement of women in the peace efforts, in the local communities and around the negotiation tables, enhances the prospects for a lasting peace. I know from personal

experience, in my capacity as SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, how important this is.

Second, there is a need to further incorporate modern tools and technology in peace operations, as a means for tackling new and emerging threats. This serves the purpose of enhancing the safety and security both of the civilian population of the host nation and the peacekeepers themselves, and thus also improving the operational efficiency of the mission. With our contribution to MINUSMA, Sweden aims to help develop the capacity of UN operations to gather and process intelligence, which is expected to contribute to a more effective implementation of Security Council mandates.

On two previous occasions, the Challenges Forum Partnership has presented major reports on the challenges of peace operations to the UN Secretary-General, in 2002 and in 2006. The first was presented by my dear friend Anna Lindh, the late Foreign Minister of Sweden. Today, it is my honour to present a third Challenges Forum report to you, Mr. Secretary-General.

Before doing so, I would like to conclude by thanking everyone who has contributed, intellectually and otherwise, to the work of the Designing Mandates report. This includes all Partner Organizations, as well as the International Secretariat of the Challenges Forum.

The report's findings and recommendations have a wide buy-in from Partner Organizations from both the Global South and the Global North. We hope that it will may inform the ongoing review of UN peace operations.

Mr. Secretary-General, on behalf of the Challenges Forum Partner Organizations, it is indeed a great honour for me to present this report Designing Mandates and Capabilities for Future Peace Operations to you, and to ensure you of the Challenges Forum Partnership's continued and unwavering support to enhancing peace operations, one of the most valuable tools of the UN.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at the UN Peacebuilding Commission-meeting on ebola

Published 26 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

New York 26 januari 2015 Check against delivery.

Let me first express my deepest condolences to the families of all those who have perished in the Ebola epidemic. I commend Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea for their determination in facing this formidable challenge. And I pay tribute to the many brave healthcare workers engaged in the medical response and acknowledge the support provided by the UN and other international partners. Continued attention and support to fight Ebola is still needed.

Sweden has made significant contributions to the response to Ebola. We have provided about USD 73 million, as well as healthcare workers and other experts – mainly in Liberia, but also in Sierra Leone.

As Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Liberia configuration, we have actively advocated that commitments and pledges made to the global Ebola response must be translated into action on the ground.

We have also stressed the importance of addressing immediate peacebuilding needs and meeting the broader security, developmental and governance challenges along with the medical public health response.

And we have pointed to the need to prepare for the medium term by planning for enhanced and accelerated peacebuilding support in the aftermath of the immediate crisis.

Alongside emergency support, beginning to prepare for the post-Ebola recovery phase will be critical. Not least considering the severe impact the epidemic has had on the economy.

However, the current outbreak also once again demonstrates how urgent it is

that all countries have strong, resilient and integrated health systems, capable of fully implementing the International Health Regulations and having the capacity for health-related emergency preparedness. They must also make progress towards achieving universal health coverage that promotes universal, equitable access to health services and ensures affordable, quality service delivery.

The post-Ebola recovery in Liberia will take place as the UN peacekeeping mission (UNMIL) begins to transition out, and as preparations commence for the important presidential elections in 2017. Although the epidemic has affected men and women to the same degree when it comes to the total number of infected individuals, in some respects women have been particularly hard hit. A recent World Bank survey from Liberia shows that in the last three months, 60 per cent of the women were unemployed, as compared with 40 per cent for the male population. Women have also been severely hit by the non-existent or limited access to healthcare in connection with antenatal care, births and the health of newborns.

We therefore look forward to the Ebola Recovery Assessment led by UNDP. We welcome the inclusive process, with special emphasis on the affected countries in which the assessment will be conducted. We note that the review will cover four areas of priority: peacebuilding, social services, economic recovery and infrastructure.

Let me stress that peacebuilding is not only about governance and the rule of law. It must be an integrated part of all four of these pillars. Capacity building and the strengthening of national institutions must be at the centre of these efforts. We hope that the findings of this assessment will include recommendations on the way forward and provide input for a renewed and focused commitment to peacebuilding in all the affected countries.

The PBC will continue to play an important role in providing a platform for coordination and mutual commitment, and in linking the relevant developmental, political and security aspects. We look forward to continuing to support this process, not least in the role of Chair of the PBC Organisational Committee for 2015, for which we have been nominated by the Western European and Others Group and hope to be appointed shortly.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the SIEPS conference ‘Does the EU take Fundamental Rights Seriously?’

Published 08 December 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Royal Coin Cabinet, Stockholm 8 december 2014
Check against delivery.

Friends of human rights, friends of the EU,

Earlier this autumn I was at Kulturhuset for the commemoration of Armistice Day. There we listened to Hédi Fried, a survivor of Auschwitz. The story of her life led me to think of an essay by author Per Wirtén, who points out that the European peace project is not symbolised by some shining statue of liberty. It is not naive euphoria but rather our dark history that underscores the necessity of peace – and thus of the EU.

Wirtén writes with gravity that in Auschwitz you become a European. Seeing a whole new generation of young people visiting concentration camps and synagogues, he feels optimism. He believes a European self-awareness – rooted in the seriousness of history – is coming into being. The insight that we must learn from history in order to avoid it being repeated was the conclusion drawn by Hédi Fried that evening at Kulturhuset as well.

Sweden’s decision 20 years ago to fully shoulder its European responsibility and join the EU was a wise one. In a troubled time, with conflicts both in our own region and in Syria and Iraq, the values upon which the EU rests provide an excellent foundation for the role that Sweden should play in

European and international politics.

One example of the values that the EU rests on is the protection of human rights, which is the main topic of today's conference. I would like to thank the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies and the Swedish Foundation for Human Rights for organising this afternoon and encouraging an important debate.

* * *

Let me begin by raising three examples with a view to adding some further perspectives on the overall issue of human rights and protection of human rights.

I recently took part in a conference on 'Femdefenders' – women who demand to have their human rights taken seriously, despite constant opposition. Every year, more than a billion women and girls are subjected to violence. This is the most common cause of death and the main cause of impaired mobility among women. The report 'Femdefenders' published by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation describes one of the reasons why women are not able to enjoy their human rights: hatred of the courageous women who are on the front line fighting for those very rights.

The European Trade Union Institute, based in Brussels, monitors conditions in the European labour market. The report 'Benchmarking Working Europe 2014' charts a disturbing development in the wake of the financial crisis. Between 2008 and 2014, the number of EU citizens who are unemployed increased from 16 million to over 25 million. In many countries, labour rights have come under pressure. Among young people in particular, unemployment is high and working conditions are poor. In the UK, the debate has come to focus on the growth of zero-hours contracts, a form of employment in which the employer does not promise the employee any working hours at all.

Last week I participated in the OSCE Ministerial Council in Basel. Civil society organisations held a conference in parallel to our ministerial meeting. Their report describes an increase in violence due to hate, affecting various religious and ethnic groups, migrants, Roma and LGBTQ people. The report presents several suggestions on what the OSCE can do to stop the violence and hatred that in some countries is spread even by the media and during election campaigns – two institutions that should actually guarantee human rights.

* * *

After these broad reflections, I would like to turn specifically to the EU's role in protecting human rights in the EU. First I will talk about the current situation: what are Sweden and the EU doing at a time of multiple challenges, and what principles guide us? After that, I will comment on EU proposals on strengthening the rule of law. Finally, I will discuss EU enlargement and our eastern neighbourhood.

* * *

1. The current situation: what are we doing, and what are our guiding principles?

Human rights are one of the cornerstones of our foreign policy. They guide Sweden's action in the EU and globally. They establish that all human beings, irrespective of country, culture and context, are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

But unfortunately we live at a time when our common values are being challenged, as racist and populist parties grow in several EU Member States. This trend is not only affecting the Swedish Parliament, the Riksdag, as we saw last week; it is also affecting EU cooperation and the work of the European Parliament.

Despite the differences within our Union, we must now hold on even more strongly to the common values on which the EU rests. It is therefore important to recall what Sweden and the EU are already doing to strengthen the protection of human rights and the rule of law in Europe.

The fundamental principle is that power must never become arbitrary and individuals must be able to assert their rights. Here at home, we have the Instrument of Government, which declares that all power is exercised under the law. The Treaty on European Union speaks of the rule of law as a fundamental value.

Human rights live in symbiosis with the rule of law. A functioning state governed by law is the prerequisite for people being able to enjoy their rights. Having said that, the rule of law is not just a means to an end; it is also an end in itself.

What I am talking about now is not the rule of law as a separate sector, or as

something that only concerns the police, prosecutors or courts. I am talking about a principle that must prevail wherever public power is exercised and individuals' rights are affected.

Sweden has long been an important actor in reforming legislation and strengthening legal institutions in developing countries and conflict environments. As many of you know, I have personal experience of this kind of work, not least following my time as United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

In that capacity I met women in Bosnia and Herzegovina who had been subjected to sexual abuse in connection with the war in the 1990s, but who have still not obtained redress via the rule of law. A woman may be forced to see the man who committed the assaults grinning in the queue at the bank. Naturally the result is that confidence in the rule of law is undermined.

* * *

Sweden has also played a leading role in developing new tools to strengthen the rule of law in public administration. I recently visited Ukraine, where Sweden is now starting extensive cooperation together with the Folke Bernadotte Academy, which is also represented here today. The measures being taken aim, for example, to ensure that individuals are treated in a legally certain way when they apply for ID documents, various types of permits, or basic needs such as electricity and water.

One of our most important tasks right now is to ensure that the rule of law is explicitly included in the UN's new development goals. This is a challenge, but governance and the protection of rights should have a given place in such an important document. I would therefore like to emphasise that the Swedish Government will actively promote making the rule of law a separate objective with clearly defined indicators, even if the competition is tough as the list of desirable objectives and priorities is already long.

2. EU proposals: strengthen the rule of law!

As I mentioned, we are witnessing disturbing developments in some EU Member States. The independence of legal institutions is being curtailed, people's fundamental rights are being violated, the ability of civil society to function is being impaired. This is unacceptable and unworthy of a citizens' Europe.

The EU must therefore develop the instruments to assert and defend respect for human rights and the rule of law. This applies both with respect to the EU's own citizens and in relation to countries outside the EU. But then the Member States themselves must live up to the EU's common values.

The Venice Commission of the Council of Europe has stated that certain constitutional amendments implemented in Hungary threaten the independence of the judiciary and jeopardise the principles of the separation of powers. The European Commission and the European Parliament have also criticised Hungary in certain respects. This, in part, is the backdrop to an interesting question that has come to the fore: how is the EU to deal with issues of Member States' compliance with fundamental rights and the rule of law? Another issue discussed is the situation of the Roma.

The challenges to the rule of law are not unopposed. Several Member States, including Sweden, have called for clearer action from the Commission when a Member State acts in a way that is incompatible with EU values.

It was therefore very welcome when the Commission presented its proposal on a new EU framework to strengthen the rule of law. The Commission has a special responsibility as guardian of the treaties. The new framework clarifies this responsibility and the power of the Commission to act.

The idea is to give the Commission tools to conduct dialogue and make recommendations when a Member State risks infringing the fundamental values to which it has committed itself. The framework will be activated in the case of serious and systemic threats to the rule of law, when the national systems are not deemed capable of averting these threats.

The framework complements the mechanisms already offered by the sanction procedure in Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union, and the Commission's powers to initiate infringement procedures.

The Government considers it important that the framework covers the maintenance of EU values and that it is applied in situations where individual cases indicate structural shortcomings to do with the rule of law. These might include cases where judges are dismissed from office or from a case without just cause or cases in which the ability of civil society organisations to function is seriously curtailed.

* * *

Another welcome development is that the First Vice President of the Commission, Frans Timmermans, has been given overall responsibility for matters relating to the rule of law and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. This sends an important signal that these issues must always be considered in the work of the EU.

Right now the Member States are also discussing how the Council can develop its own work to strengthen the rule of law. One method discussed is regular dialogues in the Council to increase the shared understanding of compliance with the rule of law.

One element of such a dialogue might be how to make better use of existing information, such as reports from the Council of Europe and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. This would avoid unnecessary duplication.

I hope that these new tools will enable the Commission and the Council to complement one another, with a view to strengthening work on the rule of law and contributing to the EU's democratic legitimacy. Ultimately this is about the credibility of the EU as a citizens' Europe.

3. EU enlargement and our eastern neighbourhood

In his essay, Per Wirtén describes a car journey with his daughters through eastern Europe. They travel through towns and countryside that Wirtén had last visited a few years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The author writes about a social, economic and political miracle that can only be compared with the boom years in western Europe between 1945 and 1970. But that recovery was largely dependent on support from the United States. Eastern Europe has risen thanks to the EU's own intrinsic strength.

The political and economic reforms that the enlargement process has brought have also played a decisive role in transforming these countries into functioning states under the rule of law, where human rights are respected. The enlargement process is undoubtedly one of the most important tools we have for EU influence in our vicinity as well.

So our efforts to safeguard human rights do not end at the EU's borders. Strengthening human rights within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy has high priority. By means of the 'more for more' principle, the EU is encouraging much-needed reforms in the partner countries. The more reforms a country implements, the more financial

incentives it enjoys.

The Eastern Partnership is based on the partner countries' gradual association with the EU's principles and fundamental values. The recently signed association agreements with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, for example, contain important human rights clauses.

* * *

Europe is also unique in having the Council of Europe, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the European Court of Human Rights, with their strong contribution to a working legal order. As is well known, individual people can hold governments to account before a European court for infringements of fundamental rights – a unique process without parallel elsewhere in the world. To join the EU, a state must also become a member of the Council of Europe and sign the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

The Council of Europe also has another role: to be a bridge between the EU and the Council's members in the EU's eastern neighbourhood. The aim is to strengthen the pan-European protection of fundamental rights and freedoms. Consequently, the Council of Europe has a key role in consolidating human rights and promoting democratic development.

The crisis in Ukraine has made this role even more obvious. The process of strengthening the organisation of society in Ukraine – and the structures of the judicial system and administration – is a laborious task that will only achieve success in the medium term. It is a process that requires purposefulness, perseverance, strength of will – and a continuous struggle against the corruption that risks undermining the process of reform.

* * *

There have also been great developments in the EU's foreign policy approach to human rights and democracy in recent years. The Strategic Framework and the associated Action Plan, together with the appointment of the EU's first Special Representative for Human Rights, have created real conditions for more concerted action. Since the mid-1990s, the EU has also engaged in separate expert-level dialogues on human rights with non-EU countries.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to measure the impact of the EU's human rights efforts. However, one concrete result is that the EU has succeeded in securing the release of many human rights activists through active and engaged efforts.

* * *

Friend of human rights, friends of Europe,

At the end of his essay on Europe, Per Wirtén quotes Swedish feminist and author Elin Wägner. Wägner made a comparison that is very appropriate at this time in December, when darkness already descends in the afternoon. Your ideals are like old-fashioned bicycle lights: they only shine when you're cycling forwards.

Now I look forward to listening to your discussions. I expect to find inspiration for our common efforts to spread light across the European continent, where human rights must be safeguarded – and xenophobia driven back.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the seminar about #femdefenders, arranged by Kvinna till Kvinna

Published 28 November 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Medlehavsmuseet, Stockholm 28 november 2014
Check against delivery.

Dear friends,

It is an honour to be here with key women human rights defenders from all around the globe. Let us start by declaring that women who defend women's rights are defending all human rights. Human rights are indivisible.

The organiser of today's conference – Kvinna till Kvinna – supports no more than 130 women's organisations in five regions afflicted by conflict. Thank you for your important work, and for bringing us together today.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the mandate of the 'Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences'. The current special rapporteur, Rashida Manjoo, notes that we therefore have an important opportunity. It's time to reflect on the global developments towards the elimination of violence against women and girls. At the same time we must also identify new and remaining gaps and challenges.

Manjoo, whom I have met on several occasions, concludes that violence against women is – and I quote – “a pervasive and widespread human rights violation” that has “reached epidemic proportions in some parts of the world”. A recent WHO report indicates that violence against women is the

number one cause of death and disability among women – violence that affects well above one billion women and girls.

That is a statistic that almost makes you lose all hope. But when you lose all hope, you can always find it again.

In the new report ‘Femdefenders’, published by Kvinna till Kvinna, the Secretary General Lena Ag writes the following, and I quote again:

“Women are not only victims. Throughout the world there are those who organise themselves and resist. People who stand up for girls’ and women’s right to education, the right to their own bodies, the right to move freely in society – and the right to be involved in shaping the future of our societies. They are our femdefenders.”

As I continued to read the report, my hope grew as I read about Brikena Puka from Albania and Lara Aharonian from Armenia. These brave women are here today and they will be joined by Mary Jane Real from the Philippines in a discussion later.

And for those of you who have travelled far: when it’s 08.40 on a November morning in Sweden, you have the right to be tired. But standing here I have the opportunity to look out over a room full of femdefenders, determined to fight for women’s rights.

I mentioned hope, and that’s what we must give each other.

* * *

I would like to make three main points. First, I will talk about the hate and threats against women who stand up for their rights. Secondly, what does this mean for a feminist foreign policy? Thirdly, I will comment on a few policy proposals I have received from Kvinna till Kvinna.

* * *

1. The general picture

The new report that I mentioned, ‘Femdefenders’, maps and reveals the hate expressed against women who stand up for their rights. The report also highlights the often systemic and structural discrimination and violence facing women human rights defenders.

There are a number of different threats which I have seen in my own work – each summarised by Kvinna till Kvinna in a few words – that femdefenders are facing across the globe:

- Sexualised violence.
- Isolation through scare tactics if you dare to act.
- Rumours and slander.
- Silence and lack of action.
- Authorities as perpetrators.
- Shrinking space for human rights through restrictive legislation.
- Monitoring and mapping on the internet.

These threats must be brought to the attention of the public. Visibility helps in addressing the fact that far too many individuals and organisations engaged in promoting and defending human rights do face threats and harassment. Moreover, they suffer insecurity and restrictions in freedom of expression.

I recall a meeting in Colombia, where violations against human rights are a persistent problem. I met a group of women in a small wooden house in an IDP camp. Plastic chairs were brought out and put in a circle, and the women told us their stories.

One woman described how she locked herself in every evening, fearing for her life. Her husband had beaten her up badly; she had lost her teeth and had bruises everywhere. The next woman told a story about how her daughter had been missing for the last ten years, nobody knowing what had happened. Then a woman described how her whole family had been threatened because of her fight for human rights, and how you might have to be separated from your loved ones in order not to put also them into danger.

It was an afternoon of sad stories and desperation, also because they saw no point in going to the police. They knew that some of the policemen had raped women in the camp. The question must be asked: What happens to a woman, to a family, to a village and to an entire country when there is a total lack of justice?

It must also be known and dealt with that women who are human rights defenders often face particular risks. Hina Jilani, previously the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders, has no illusions about why women defenders arouse more hostility than their male colleagues: “As women, human rights defenders may defy cultural, religious

or social norms about femininity and the role of women in a particular country or society.”

Hina Jilani’s words ring true to us all, but the question is how a feminist foreign policy can be a part of the solution.

* * *

2. A feminist foreign policy

As you might have heard, the Swedish Government will pursue a feminist foreign policy. I have started to develop this ambition around three concepts: representation, resources, and respect.

Representation, which includes influence over agenda-setting, starts by asking a simple question. Who takes part in conducting foreign policy – at all levels? It starts at the highest level over at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs – where all the four top positions, two ministers and two state secretaries, are held by women. It must continue in every other part of the Ministry: when ambassadors are appointed, when mediators and their teams are sent to conflicts, and when a position as mid-level executive is filled. But it is also about the knowledge and awareness about gender equality among all our staff in the Ministry, both at home and abroad. To this end, I have already initiated a process within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs involving all of our different departments.

This signal seems to have an effect already. When I have ambassadors visiting me, they often start by saying that they, for example, “have appointed three new women to the government in their country, and today we have this and that proportion of women in politics.” Something seems to be happening.

The term resources highlight Sweden’s ambitious international work, for example in development. Let me use an example about a bridge in Sri Lanka, which in a simple way captures what it means to have a gender perspective when distributing resources.

Sweden has an impressive number of activities and projects abroad, but when we distribute our foreign aid – do we always make sure to include a gender perspective in what we do? I think the answer is increasingly so. But when the plan for this bridge in Sri Lanka was presented, women could point out that one thing was missing: a lane for pedestrians. Men travel by cars and

motorbikes, but women and children often walk. In the end, the bridge turned out to have an effect on gender. How a bridge is built can discriminate against women in their everyday life. Therefore it can also be a symbol of the necessity to always include a gender perspective when we distribute resources.

Respect is about what femdefenders do on a daily basis: it's about women's rights, and let me develop this part of a feminist foreign policy in more detail.

It is my ambition to actively address the structural and historical inequalities in power relations from a rights perspective. Inequalities are founded on discrimination and reinforced by extremism and fundamentalism, which are root causes and serve to condone the violence. These matters are also pointed out in the UN resolution on protection of women human rights defenders. The resolution was adopted in the UN General Assembly last year.

The protection of women's enjoyment of human rights is of fundamental importance for each and every individual. It is a must for the prosperity and development of societies at large. No country can afford gender-based discrimination, which also constitutes a major obstacle to sustainable development.

If you aim at pursuing a feminist foreign policy, the work must follow two paths when dealing with women's human rights. There are areas where we must aim for prohibition, such as in relation to gender-based discrimination, forced marriages and female genital mutilation.

Secondly, there are areas where the aim is progress, such as in regard to equal rights to inheritance, access to education and health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights. These areas are key to women's empowerment.

To this end, it is pivotal to promote UN special rapporteurs – like you, Asma Jahangir. In these roles the rapporteurs can help strengthen national investigation, prosecution, legal reforms and law enforcement to promote women's human rights.

One focus now is to support the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in promoting gender justice by combating impunity for sexual and gender-based crimes. We must also support the ICRC in engendering international humanitarian law.

In order to promote women's rights, it is crucial to cooperate with civil society and the organisations represented here today. Without people like you, with the courage you have demonstrated in spite of harassment, violence and personal sufferings, women's human rights would have been even worse than they are today.

I do indeed want to pursue, expand and explore further approaches to cooperating with you for the common goals we have in strengthening women's rights. I will need your advice when moving forward with our feminist foreign policy. But first, let me bring out the tool-box and discuss a few concrete policy proposals.

3. The feminist foreign policy tool-box

Before coming here today, I received some very useful recommendations from Kvinna till Kvinna. Let me mention them, while adding a short comment.

a. "Recognition and rights: The single biggest threat to women's rights defenders is the lack of recognition from governments and international bodies. The work on women's human rights is not seen as part of the 'real' work to promote human rights."

Comment: This analysis is correct. I can promise to support and hopefully develop the existing legal framework supporting the work of femdefenders.

b. "Support: Strong women's organisations increase the chances for better laws and policy in terms of gender-based violence."

Comment: Absolutely, this is also something I learnt as the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General. In terms of funding and support, the Government has presented a budget that hopefully will pass through the Riksdag next week. I'm glad to announce that we will increase the support to women's domestic violence shelters by an additional SEK 100 million.

c. "Meet: By meeting women's rights defenders during official visits to their countries and by inviting them to international conferences we can hear their analysis."

Comment: I saw in today's paper that Lena Ag, the Secretary General of Kvinna till Kvinna, asks if I met with women's organisations in Ukraine. The answer is yes, that was the first thing we did. I met with La Strada – a

Ukrainian civil society organisation working on women's issues.

During my travels abroad I will always ask to meet with civil society organisations before I meet with representatives from the government. I will do so since I know that it will give me different and important perspectives. In Ukraine I also discussed the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) with the Prime Minister, and during our press conference he actually promised to ratify it.

I have also declared that our foreign policy will be solidly based in civil society, and being here this morning is one example.

d. "Diplomatic dialogue: Kvinna till Kvinna also urge me to underline the importance of organisational freedom and femdefenders' living conditions in the diplomatic dialogue with countries such as Afghanistan, Egypt, DR Congo and Russia."

Comment: My answer is yes. To stand up for women's rights will always be part of Swedish foreign policy. This is exactly what we use diplomacy for.

e. "Knowledge and awareness: Sweden's diplomatic corps should work strategically on these matters and also undergo training so they have the right skills regarding these issues, and a specific manual should be developed, like the Norwegian Action plan for human rights defenders."

Comment: We already have a fantastic diplomatic corps, but I am willing to look into how awareness can be improved. I will definitely read the Norwegian Action Plan. We always feel a bit triggered when the Norwegians are moving ahead of us.

f. "Update EU guidelines: The EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders turns 10 this year. Kvinna till Kvinna suggest that Sweden should invite the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis. The purpose would be to update the guidelines with a gender perspective in accordance with UN General Assembly resolution "Protecting Women Human Rights".

Comment: I cannot make such a promise here, but the idea to invite Stavros Lambrinidis need to update the guidelines is noted. And in such a discussion I am sure that Asma Jahangir, who is here with us today, would have valuable comments.

* * *

In addition, Kvinna till Kvinna have two proposals that I will need to reflect on further.

One is about security and the need for legislation to be reviewed and adapted to the new times we live in. As I mentioned earlier, much of the threats and violence against femdefenders today take place over the internet.

The second proposal regards the establishment of a system that could provide femdefenders with temporary visas and temporary residence permits. In addition, Kvinna till Kvinna propose that the Government should give the Migration Board the task of developing administrators' expertise. The focus should be on sexual violence and trafficking, but also the specific threat against women's rights defenders.

Again, I have noted the ideas and I look forward to discussing them further, both with you and with my colleagues in the Government.

* * *

I started by saying that November might be dark in Sweden, and that we need to give each other hope. One person who can inspire us all is the Swedish feminist and author Elin Wägner. She once made a very accurate comparison that is also very fitting on a November morning. She compared values and ideals to old-fashion bicycle lights: They don't light up until you pedal forwards.

I will remember Wägner's words when I move forward in order to implement a feminist foreign policy. In all my work as a foreign minister, our policies must be built on the idea of gender equality. It's about having a foreign policy for 100 per cent of the world's population. It's about never accepting a world in which violence against women is the number one cause of death and disability among women.

So let's listen to Elin Wägner. November might be dark in Sweden, and developments in many parts of the world are worrying. Therefore we have to move on. Let us listen to our values and strive forward together.

In that way, millions of lights will light up the world.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Annika Söder's address to the plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly on Palestine

Published 24 November 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

United Nations General Assembly 24 november 2014
Check against delivery

Mr President,

Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union but would like to take the opportunity to make a few additional remarks.

Let me say upfront that the Swedish recognition of the State of Palestine aims at making the parties less unequal and to improve the prospects for a negotiated final status agreement. We are taking sides for peace, not for one party. And we are joining 134 other states.

Our decision is built on human rights and engagement in finding a peaceful solution since Count Bernadotte in the 1940s, our early contacts with PLO through Olof Palme and the, successful work with Egypt and Sweden to start a dialogue with the US and PLO in 1988. And the many Swedes that went to experience Kibbutz life in the 1960s and onwards. We have a longstanding relation with Israel.

Now, young people in both Palestine and Israel need to see that there are alternatives to violence. Our hope is that the recognition will strengthen constructive and moderate forces on both sides, will contribute to an end of the occupation and help to stop a development towards a one state reality.

It is critical times. The recent vicious circle of violence – the devastating Gaza war and the recent increase of provocations, violence and terrorist attacks in Jerusalem – is a painful warning signal of urgency. Sweden condemns the horrific terrorist attack on Jewish worshipers in Jerusalem last week. All actors have to unite to prevent the political conflict to turn into a spiral of violence with also religious dimensions. If not, the prospects of reaching a two-state solution that meets the aspirations of both parties would be gone. The lack of progress fuels new acts of violence in the immediate area, but also in the wider Middle East.

There are no acceptable excuses for provocations, terrorist attacks, rockets towards civilians or other violent actions. The Israeli settlement expansion, the demolitions, land confiscation, forcible transfer and resettlements in Palestine – which is not in accordance with international law – are making a negotiated final status agreement on a sustainable two state solution not only more difficult, but soon almost impossible.

The conditions in Gaza are unacceptable and unsustainable and a return to the situation before the Gaza war is not an option. Status quo means that the two-State solution is fading away during the rapid deterioration of the situation on the ground, both in Gaza and in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The borders of Gaza must be opened for construction material, goods and people. The trade possibilities must increase. The inhabitants of Gaza need to see immediate improvements of their living conditions so that they don't lose hope about the future and the faith in the international community.

Against this backdrop, the time has come for a more active involvement by the international community. The UN Security Council, the USA, the EU, the Arab League and the Quartet must assist the parties with clear parameters and with a defined time frame aimed at the realisation of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the conflict. The goal is that Israel and Palestine could live side by side in peace and security within recognised borders, based on the pre-1967 borders.

The international community has a responsibility to protect and to reassure constructive and moderate actors in Palestine, which adhere to non-violence, recognition of Israel, recognition of previous agreements. Sweden will certainly contribute.

On today's occasion it is high time to turn words into concrete actions on the

ground. At this moment it is important to support President Abbas, strengthen the Palestinian Authority and the Consensus government in the West Bank and in Gaza. Sweden has recently adopted a new five year development strategy for Palestine with a total amount of 200 million USD, an increase with 50 percent. Just this week we will deposit the annual contribution to the Palestinian Authority through the PEGASE-mechanism with an amount approximately of 6 million USD.

This year it is 65 years since UNRWA was established to support millions of Palestinians forced to flee their homes. Sweden has been, and will continue to be, one of the main supporters of UNRWA and this year we have contributed with approximately 50 million USD to the agency. We are proud to exercise the chairmanship of its AdCom.

Mr. President,

Let me end by saying that we expect both the Palestinian and Israeli leaderships to do their utmost to ensure that both peoples soon may live in prosperity, peace and security.

Only with peace can true and full security be obtained.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the High-Level Partnership Forum on Delivering Somalia's New Deal Compact

Published 19 November 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

High-Level Partnership Forum on Delivering Somalia's New Deal Compact, Copenhagen 19 november 2014
Check against delivery

Mr President, Excellencies,

Thank you for bringing us together here today, and for setting the agenda through your opening statements.

Twenty years ago, I read an article in my local newspaper about eight refugee boys, orphans, from Somalia, arriving in my small town. I called the municipality and offered to be a contact family. Young Mohammed became our third boy in the family. We learned something about his sorrows and frustrations, his longing and hopes and love for his country. We also had an exotic exchange of experiences – of camels and skiing respectively.

No one describes the challenges Somalia faces better than you, President Mohamud. It is first and foremost the daily life of your citizens and the future of your country that are at stake. When we talk about the forming of a stable federal state, poverty reduction and social services delivery, it is the key tasks for you and your government that we are talking about. You have formulated your Vision 2016. We, as international partners, have provided sustained support and cooperation.

It is sometimes said that “the meeting is the message”. This is a meeting with a very clear message.

I have three points to make.

First: there is a need for clear, brave and determined political leadership, in order not to halt or reverse progress made. As in any country, political leadership is about listening, finding compromises and working together. It is about mobilising political will and rising above politics of personalities and advancing the interest of the citizens. No one can have their way in every single detail. But everyone can – and must – play their part in shaping a long-term political solution that ensures the unity, stability and prosperity of the country. We all know how difficult this can be. I hope that we can be of help to each other, and share each other’s experiences.

This is important for Somalia, but also for how we as partners engage with, and support, the Somali government’s priorities.

Time is not really on our side. The pace needs to accelerate if Vision 2016 is to be realised. The most critical laws must be passed and vital commissions set up. Schools, roads and hospitals must be built. Employment opportunities for Somali young people must be identified.

And – this is my second message – the voice of Somali women must be strengthened.

Women make up some 60 per cent of the population, but less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians at national and regional levels in Somalia. A young girl in Somalia today is less likely to go to school than her brother. Even if she – and not her brother – is the one with the better business skills or more talent, her capacity is less likely to be utilised to its full potential. This is a waste of human resources that no society can afford. And it is a matter of fundamental human rights that no country can ignore. I am encouraged by all the work that has already started.

We need to see an end to women and girls in Somalia being socially, economically and politically discriminated against. We need an enhanced legal and social framework to tackle gender inequality. And we need to pay attention to the fight against gender-based violence.

There is no magic solution for tackling gender inequality. But it is my firm belief that without gender equality there is no sustainable solution to the long-term challenges in Somalia.

In other words: nothing about them without them. No women, no peace.

The third message I'd like to convey is one of support, and of cooperation.

Partners stand ready to continue to assist in building a sovereign and secure Somalia with democratic and inclusive political institutions. Coordination is, as always, key – and always complicated. The dialogue between all donors could be so much stronger. The international support to the Somali security sector and AMISOM needs to be sustained. Our development cooperation has to work faster and with more flexibility and creativity than usual. It needs to link in with humanitarian assistance and security and stabilisation efforts, and ensure that tangible support quickly reaches the population also outside Mogadishu, especially in newly recovered areas. In all of this, the UN is a key partner and we commend the leadership of the SRSG and the work of the integrated UN mission.

Sweden is ready to continue its substantial partnership with Somalia. It is a partnership of political engagement, development and security. The Swedish development cooperation in Somalia is long-term. Our support of USD 45 million per year is aimed at peace-building, job-creation, the strengthening of democratic institutions, health and private sector development. It focuses in particular on the needs of women and children. We have a substantial humanitarian assistance – USD 23 million last year.

And Sweden is supporting the strengthening of the Somali security sector, primarily through the EU missions on the ground and at sea. We are currently preparing for our fourth contribution to Operation Atalanta.

It is also a partnership of people. We have a significant Somali diaspora – nearly 60 000 people – in Sweden. They are an asset to us. Thank you, Mr President, for letting us benefit from the talent and experience of your citizens. And they are, of course, an asset to you. There ought to be more effective ways of harnessing their strong capacity and willingness to engage.

And it is a partnership for seeing opportunities. In June, we held a Somali trade and investment conference in Stockholm on the role of private actors in state-building and job-creation. Some 150 participants came to explore the emerging business opportunities. We are now looking into ways of supporting diaspora investments in Somalia.

Friends,

My message has been threefold: political leadership, a stronger voice for the women of Somalia, and coordinated and long-term international support.

What is at stake here is – of course – the future of Somalia, but also the possibility of being a shining international example. Strong national institutions, determined people and a committed international community have pushed Somalia forward in a way few believed to be possible only a few years ago. A failed state with the potential of becoming a great success story and a source of inspiration and hope for many societies affected by conflict and crisis.

So let's make sure – through brave and determined efforts – that this is the story of Somalia that will be remembered.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Speech at United Nations Association of Sweden seminar ahead of United Nations Day

Published 22 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

United Nations Association of Sweden seminar ahead of
United Nations Day, Stockholm Concert Hall 22 oktober
2014

NB. Check against delivery.

Friends of the UN,

Picture a school chemistry lesson in Birmingham. A 17 year-old girl from Pakistan receives the news that she has won the Nobel Peace Prize. On the same day, she gives a speech at the Library of Birmingham. She has to stand on a box to be able to see her audience from the high podium. But she waited until the end of the school day to speak. Attending all the day's lessons was more important than anything else.

From the library's rostrum, Malala dedicates the prize to all those children who are voiceless. Her fight against violence and for girls' right to education spreads hope, energy and warmth.

She is the greatest threat to the Taliban: a girl with a book!

Malala shares the prize with Indian child rights activist Kailash Satyarthi, who is held to be maintaining the tradition of Gandhi. In response to a direct question, the Norwegian Nobel Committee acknowledged that the choice of laureates also sends a signal against extremism and violence in the Middle East. A violence exemplified by extremist group ISIL's atrocious offences.

* * *

Friends of the UN,

In the Statement of Government Policy, the Prime Minister emphasised that we want to see a strong and reformed UN. The United Nations must regain and develop its place in Swedish foreign policy. The capacity of the UN system to tackle peace- and state-building still needs to be strengthened. As supporters of the UN, we will also set high requirements for the efficiency, transparency and functionality of the UN.

If peace and security are to reach the most vulnerable, the UN's peace support operations and UN development assistance must go hand in hand. Lasting peace is built from the bottom up. It must involve everyone.

Promoting and respecting international law and human rights are key priorities for the Swedish cooperation government. This is one of many aspects of our UN engagement that are firmly established.

I would like to begin by calling attention to Sweden's candidacy for the UN Security Council for the period 2017–2018. The Security Council is a unique platform that offers the opportunity to disseminate Swedish peace policy, influence the course of global politics and pursue our agenda. Over the last two weeks we have shifted our candidacy up a gear. It has Nordic support and is now being pursued by the Government with full force.

* * *

Today, I would also like to take the opportunity to expand on the agenda for our engagement in the UN. It can be summed up in four points.

- Peace.
- Social equality.
- Gender equality.
- Sustainability.

These timeless concepts will guide our work, and I would like to say a few words about how we will fill out these fine-sounding words with concrete actions.

Of course, they all hang together – we know that. No peace without gender equality, no sustainability without peace, and no gender equality without social equality. In the words of Olof Palme, we share a common destiny.

* * *

First peace.

Let me start with our own neighbourhood. Russia's annexation of Crimea is a clear breach of international law. Sweden, together with the EU and the rest of the international community, has a great responsibility to counter violations of Ukraine's territorial integrity, violations of its sovereignty and destabilisation of the country.

At the same time, we must support Ukraine's own reform efforts. In light of developments, Sweden's contribution to operations in Eastern Europe will increase.

Sweden contributes substantially to the OSCE's special monitoring mission, which carries out independent monitoring of the situation in Ukraine and works with conflict prevention. Sweden also contributes to the Delegation of the EU in Kiev.

Sweden also plans to make a considerable staff contribution to the new EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform in Ukraine. And of course: we will continue to stand up for international law, and assert Ukraine's right to independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

* * *

And so I would like to move on to today's theme, the situation in Syria and Iraq and the threat from ISIL.

First, it must once again be emphasised that this is a matter of human rights, and of solidarity between people. The Government has condemned ISIL and its ruthless actions in no uncertain terms. Reports indicate serious, systematic and extensive abuses of human rights and breaches of international humanitarian law.

Murder, torture and rape are taking place on a large scale. These heinous actions, directed at the civilian population, may constitute crimes against humanity. Those responsible must be held accountable.

Now, we must do two things in parallel. We must tackle the immediate crisis, and work in the longer term for a political solution.

To tackle the immediate crisis, Sweden's primary contribution is our

humanitarian assistance to those affected. Since 2011, we have contributed more than SEK 1.3 billion to help people on the ground.

In the next few days, an additional Swedish contribution of more than SEK 100 million will follow as we earmark parts of our core support to the World Food Programme for Syria. We have also taken in more than 55 000 asylum seekers from Syria, more than any other EU country.

The only way forward in Syria that is sustainable in the long term is to bring about a political process and solution. Since the conflict began in 2011, Sweden and the EU have been working in this direction. Efforts have been undertaken in close cooperation with former UN Special Representative for Syria Lakhdar Brahimi. They will continue under the new Special Representative, Staffan de Mistura, with whom I spoke very recently.

The regime has also continued to commit grave human rights abuses. More than 200 000 people, including 135 000 civilians, have been killed.

The UN Security Council and various UN bodies have an important role to play. Naturally, Sweden will act in and through the UN to contribute to political solutions. We welcome the adoption by the Security Council of three resolutions in the fight against ISIL. We would like to see a continuation of concerted action.

But at the same time, we regret that Russia is blocking the Security Council from acting to bring an end to the conflict in Syria. This illustrates yet again that the Security Council needs to be reformed, a task to which Sweden is keen to contribute.

* * *

The proposals and instruments mentioned by the United Nations Association of Sweden in an opinion piece today – for example the UN ‘Uniting for Peace’ mechanism – are interesting. It is important to embrace openness and take stock of the entire UN toolbox when situations are urgent.

It is also important to put the problem of ISIL in context. Without a solution to the wider conflict in Syria, it will be impossible to successfully combat ISIL. I have noted the proposals in the article, and I welcome the debate. But to move forward there must be broad-based support. We are not there yet.

* * *

We know that the conflict between Israel and Palestine has a major impact on international peace and security. The conflict can only be resolved through a two-state solution, negotiated in accordance with the principles of international law. It must guarantee the legitimate demands of both the Palestinians and the Israelis for national self-determination and security.

A two-state solution requires mutual recognition and a will to coexist peacefully. Sweden will therefore recognise the State of Palestine.

* * *

As we are talking about peace, I also want to raise the need for, and importance of, UN operations. With our contribution to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali, MINUSMA, Sweden is beginning its first substantial contribution to a peace support operation run by the UN since the operation in Liberia in 2006.

Our contribution in Mali will encompass around 250 people, and is expected to be fully operational in the first quarter of 2015.

Sweden's commitment to UN peace support activities is nothing new. More than 80 000 Swedes have taken part in UN peace support operations over the years. This is a proud tradition that the new Swedish Government wants to continue.

Of course, our engagement in UN peace support activities is not only military in nature. We also contribute civilian personnel – police officers, advisers and prison officers – to a range of UN operations around the world, including in South Sudan, Afghanistan, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Middle East. We will continue this work.

* * *

And so to social equality.

In today's world it is often the economic and social gaps rather than purely military tensions that cause armed conflict.

For this reason, efforts to combat poverty in the world are crucial. The Swedish one per cent target for international development cooperation provides a very tangible illustration of our solidarity with people throughout the world fighting poverty.

Sweden will engage in the work on the UN's new development goals, the post-2015 agenda. Along with the Minister for International Development Cooperation, I will return to this subject on another occasion. But allow me to emphasise here and now that one dimension of social inequality is when people have to work in unacceptable conditions.

Take the example of the textile factory in a high-rise block in Bangladesh that had no emergency exits when a fire broke out. The fire forced workers to their deaths jumping out of windows several stories up.

Poverty must be combated by promoting both work and decent working conditions. The rights of workers must be guaranteed. Through the UN and the international financial institutions, rules for work can be created and effective employment policy encouraged.

Free trade unions and human rights in working life are crucial in the fight against poverty.

* * *

Gender equality is the third point on our UN agenda.

The role of women is a particular priority. In UN activities, Sweden must be perceived as a clear feminist voice, and as a strong partner for gender equality. We must be leaders in the fight for women's and girls' rights.

Sweden will take a holistic approach to global gender equality issues. From financial and political empowerment to the right to decide over their own bodies and sexuality, via women's role in conflicts and peacebuilding, and fighting all forms of violence against women and girls.

This will be a tough task in the hardened international climate, in which unholy alliances are often formed between conservative forces to minimise women's power and influence. But we will not give in. Women have a right to power, life and security.

As friends of the UN, you probably know that I cannot fail to mention Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820. The reasons are obvious. Women's role in peace processes is crucial to achieving peace. Sexual violence in war and conflict must be highlighted and fought.

I want to contribute my experience of working on the role of women in war – and in the building of peace.

* * *

The fourth point on our UN agenda is sustainability.

I returned yesterday from the EU General Affairs Council in Luxembourg, where climate change was discussed. Ahead of the climate summit in Paris next year, the EU must take on a global leadership role. In this context, our shared destiny becomes unmistakable. Sweden will engage in the climate efforts of both the UN and the EU with political determination, knowledge and resources.

But sustainability is about both climate change and our common security – and ultimately, the survival of our planet. Disarmament and non-proliferation will form a large part of Sweden's engagement in the UN. The excessive supply and occurrence of weapons in today's world is not sustainable.

Last week we raised Sweden's profile on disarmament issues. In the General Assembly's First Committee, the Government announced that Sweden will participate in the Humanitarian Initiative, which points to the enormous humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. More than 150 countries back the initiative, and many of them have been waiting for Sweden to join. This has now finally taken place.

The illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons is the greatest everyday threat to human security. The UN's new Arms Trade Treaty can contribute to a more responsible arms trade. I welcome the fact that the issue of gender-based violence is included in the ATT.

Sweden will continue to work actively for disarmament with respect to B and C weapons. The use of chemical weapons in Syria is terrible, unacceptable – and prohibited. Sweden will continue its efforts against these weapons.

And I want to spell it out: Sweden wants to abolish all nuclear weapons, which is a principle that the 189 parties to the non-proliferation treaty have signed up to.

I also want to stress the following: life and death decisions cannot be delegated to machines. We have a duty to assess the legality of new weapons. We therefore look forward to continued discussions on autonomous weapon systems, taking the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons as a starting point.

* * *

Friends of the UN,

Sweden's long-standing and strong support to the United Nations has earned us respect in the international community. We want to carry on this tradition. This is why we have a clear UN agenda. For peace, social equality, gender equality and sustainability.

The special status of the UN in Sweden – among the Swedish public, higher education institutions, popular movements and civil society – must be safeguarded. That is why it was important to me to come here today. I will try to take every opportunity that may contribute to greater popular support for foreign policy.

* * *

In her speech in Birmingham, Malala said that when she was younger, her dream was to be a doctor. But now she has decided to be a politician.

I look forward to Malala's company – and that of new generations of young politicians – as we together shape the answer to one of the most important questions of our time: how the UN, our most important global actor, is to be used to manage the common destiny of the world's citizens.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Address at The Cairo Conference on Palestine - Reconstructing Gaza

Published 12 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

The Cairo Conference on Palestine - Reconstructing Gaza, Cairo 12 oktober 2014 Please check against delivery.

Excellencies, friends,

A six year-old girl in Gaza has experienced three wars during her lifetime. During the course of a few short weeks this past summer, more than 500 children died. Families were torn apart. Schools were destroyed. The hopes and aspirations of young Palestinians - the generation of the future - were once again crushed.

Now, arms seem to have come to rest again.

We need to keep it that way, through determined diplomatic and political efforts, and through substantial economic support. My country is trying to do both.

The Government of Sweden will recognise the State of Palestine.

Some say this announcement is premature - that it will make the peace process more difficult. Our own worry is rather the opposite - that it might be too late.

The peace process is stalled. Facts on the ground are rapidly changing and will soon render a two-state solution not only more difficult, but almost impossible.

There really is no time to waste. Our recognition aims at making the parties to the conflict less unequal. It aims at supporting moderate Palestinians, providing a positive injection into the dynamics of the Middle East Peace Process, and sending a clear and convincing signal to younger generations that there is an alternative to violence and an alternative to the status quo.

Sweden firmly believes that a negotiated two-state solution that guarantees the legitimate aspirations of both peoples in terms of security and national self-determination remains the solution.

We commend the impressive state-building efforts and reforms undertaken by the Palestinian Authority - often under very difficult circumstances. The Palestinian Authority has state-readiness. This has been recognised by the international community.

But recognition also means responsibility. Just as we have expectations on Israel - and they have been clearly voiced, including by the EU - we also have expectations on Palestine, not least since there is a willingness to continue reforms, and to have a strong and well-functioning consensus government in place. We expect the Palestinian government to fight corruption and nepotism, to guarantee respect for civil and political rights, to create opportunities for public participation and accountability, and to increase the political influence of women.

And we expect it - as well as the Government of Israel - to do everything to ensure that both peoples can live in peace and security. This cannot be done through bombs or rockets, war or violence, humiliation or threats. Genuine security can only be achieved through peace.

The consensus government in itself is a confirmation of the unity of the whole of Palestine: the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza. They belong together, and they should be physically linked to each other, with Gaza as a window to the sea. This fact should be a guiding star for the international community in our aid to Palestine.

The focus today is on the people of Gaza.

The war made an already critical situation worse, generating immense needs: housing, infrastructure, schools and medical relief. To meet these needs, and to facilitate the development of a sustainable economy, the policy of the closure of Gaza must come to an end. Restrictions must be lifted. Mechanisms for import and - perhaps even more importantly - export are

crucial conditions for economic development, state-building and basic services delivery. I welcome the constructive engagement of Israel in the establishment of the tripartite agreement to allow imports of construction material to Gaza. It is a small but important first step towards opening the borders.

The Swedish Government will soon adopt a new five-year plan for its development assistance to Palestine. It will focus on state-building, environment, climate and sanitation as well as private sector development. It will aim at creating conditions for women to enjoy their rights, shape political decisions and participate fully in the economy. And it will increase already the significant Swedish support to Palestine. Swedish annual assistance to the Palestinians amounts to over USD 100 million, including USD 40 million in core funding of UNRWA. This year USD 20 million has been assigned to humanitarian aid to Gaza. Today, I can announce that Sweden has decided to contribute an additional USD 10 million to Gaza in humanitarian and development support.

Palestinians need our solidarity and our long-term support to live on their land in dignity and peace.

We must not lose track of the real goal: a negotiated two-state solution and an end to the occupation.

We should all realise that giving people hope for a better life is a strategic way to obtain sustainable peace.

We owe this to the children of Gaza.

Thank you.